

Statistics on vessels, port cargo and containers for the fourth quarter of 2020

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) today (March 4) released the statistics on vessels, port cargo and containers for the fourth quarter of 2020.

In the fourth quarter of 2020, total port cargo throughput decreased by 9.5% compared with the fourth quarter of 2019 to 61.3 million tonnes. Within this total, inward port cargo and outward port cargo decreased by 11.9% and 4.6% compared with the fourth quarter of 2019 to 40.3 million tonnes and 21.0 million tonnes respectively.

For 2020 as a whole, total port cargo throughput decreased by 5.3% compared with the whole year of 2019 to 249.3 million tonnes. Within this total, inward port cargo and outward port cargo decreased by 0.6% and 14.1% compared with the whole year of 2019 to 169.9 million tonnes and 79.4 million tonnes respectively.

On a seasonally adjusted quarter-to-quarter comparison, total port cargo throughput decreased by 6.5% in the fourth quarter of 2020. Within this total, inward port cargo decreased by 10.1% compared with the preceding quarter, while outward port cargo increased by 1.2% compared with the preceding quarter. The seasonally adjusted series enables more meaningful shorter-term comparison to be made for discerning possible variations in trends.

Port cargo

Within port cargo, seaborne and river cargo decreased by 12.1% and 5.3% in the fourth quarter of 2020 compared with the fourth quarter of 2019 to 36.9 million tonnes and 24.5 million tonnes respectively.

Within inward port cargo, imports decreased by 20.6% in the fourth quarter of 2020 compared with the fourth quarter of 2019 to 23.0 million tonnes, while inward transshipment increased by 3.2% in the fourth quarter of 2020 compared with the fourth quarter of 2019 to 17.3 million tonnes. For outward port cargo, exports (including domestic exports and re-exports) decreased by 19.7% in the fourth quarter of 2020 compared with the fourth quarter of 2019 to 5.1 million tonnes, while outward transshipment increased by 1.5% in the fourth quarter of 2020 compared with the fourth quarter of 2019 to 15.9 million tonnes.

Within port cargo, seaborne and river cargo decreased by 7.5% and 1.8% in the whole year of 2020 compared with the whole year of 2019 to 149.2 million tonnes and 100.1 million tonnes respectively.

Within inward port cargo, imports decreased by 1.1% in the whole year of 2020 compared with the whole year of 2019 to 105.2 million tonnes, while inward transshipment increased by 0.3% in the whole year of 2020 compared with the whole year of 2019 to 64.7 million tonnes. For outward port cargo, exports and outward transshipment decreased by 38.0% and 2.2% in the whole year of 2020 compared with the whole year of 2019 to 19.0 million tonnes and 60.4 million tonnes respectively.

The detailed port cargo statistics are summarised in Table 1.

The main countries/territories of loading of inward port cargo and countries/territories of discharge of outward port cargo are shown in Table 2 and Table 3 respectively.

Comparing the fourth quarter of 2020 with the fourth quarter of 2019, double-digit increase was recorded in the tonnage of inward port cargo loaded in Japan (+20.0%). On the other hand, double-digit decreases were recorded in the tonnage of inward port cargo loaded in Indonesia (-60.0%), Taiwan (-31.2%) and the United States of America (-30.1%). For outward port cargo, double-digit increases were recorded in the tonnage of outward port cargo discharged in Taiwan (+16.4%), Macao (+12.3%) and Malaysia (+11.3%). On the other hand, double-digit decreases were recorded in the tonnage of outward port cargo discharged in Thailand (-33.0%), the Philippines (-21.8%), Vietnam (-20.0%) and Korea (-16.1%).

Comparing the whole year of 2020 with the whole year of 2019, double-digit increase was recorded in the tonnage of inward port cargo loaded in Taiwan (+38.6%). On the other hand, double-digit decreases were recorded in the tonnage of inward port cargo loaded in Indonesia (-37.3%), the United States of America (-25.4%) and Singapore (-18.5%). For outward port cargo, double-digit increase was recorded in the tonnage of outward port cargo discharged in Taiwan (+10.5%). On the other hand, double-digit decreases were recorded in the tonnage of outward port cargo discharged in Vietnam (-21.5%), the mainland of China (-16.2%), the United States of America (-15.2%), Malaysia (-15.1%), Thailand (-15.1%), Japan (-14.3%) and the Philippines (-10.7%).

The principal commodities of inward port cargo and outward port cargo are shown in Table 4 and Table 5 respectively.

Comparing the fourth quarter of 2020 with the fourth quarter of 2019, double-digit decreases were recorded in the tonnage of inward port cargo of "petroleum, petroleum products and related materials" (-34.0%), "stone, sand and gravel" (-19.3%) and "logs and timber; wood, simply worked" (-12.8%). As for outward port cargo, double-digit decreases were recorded in the tonnage of "stone, sand and gravel" (-43.7%), "metalliferous ores and metal scrap" (-16.5%) and "pulp and waste paper" (-10.8%).

Comparing the whole year of 2020 with the whole year of 2019, double-digit changes were recorded in the tonnage of inward port cargo of "stone,

sand and gravel" (+17.1%) and "petroleum, petroleum products and related materials" (-28.5%). As for outward port cargo, double-digit decreases were recorded in the tonnage of "stone, sand and gravel" (-69.3%) and "metalliferous ores and metal scrap" (-19.6%).

Containers

In the fourth quarter of 2020, the port of Hong Kong handled 4.66 million TEUs of containers, representing an increase of 1.6% compared with the fourth quarter of 2019. Within this total, laden and empty containers increased by 1.3% and 3.1% to 3.97 million TEUs and 0.69 million TEUs respectively. Among laden containers, inward and outward containers increased by 1.8% and 0.8% to 2.10 million TEUs and 1.87 million TEUs respectively.

For 2020 as a whole, the port of Hong Kong handled 17.97 million TEUs of containers, representing a decrease of 1.8% compared with the whole year of 2019. Within this total, laden containers decreased by 3.9% to 15.05 million TEUs, while empty containers increased by 10.3% to 2.92 million TEUs. Among laden containers, inward and outward containers decreased by 2.3% and 5.6% to 7.97 million TEUs and 7.08 million TEUs respectively.

On a seasonally adjusted quarter-to-quarter comparison, laden container throughput decreased marginally by 0.1% in the fourth quarter of 2020. Within this total, inward laden containers decreased by 1.0%, while outward laden containers increased by 1.1%.

In the fourth quarter of 2020, seaborne laden containers decreased by 0.2% compared with the fourth quarter of 2019 to 2.74 million TEUs, while river laden containers increased by 4.8% to 1.22 million TEUs.

Within inward laden containers, imports decreased by 6.9% in the fourth quarter of 2020 compared with the fourth quarter of 2019 to 0.56 million TEUs, while inward transshipment increased by 5.4% in the fourth quarter of 2020 compared with the fourth quarter of 2019 to 1.53 million TEUs. For outward laden containers, exports decreased by 11.1% in the fourth quarter of 2020 compared with the fourth quarter of 2019 to 0.44 million TEUs, while outward transshipment increased by 5.0% in the fourth quarter of 2020 compared with the fourth quarter of 2019 to 1.43 million TEUs.

In the whole year of 2020, seaborne laden containers decreased by 5.6% compared with the whole year of 2019 to 10.36 million TEUs, while river laden containers increased by 0.3% to 4.68 million TEUs.

Within inward laden containers, imports decreased by 9.8% in the whole year of 2020 compared with the whole year of 2019 to 2.23 million TEUs, while inward transshipment increased by 1.0% in the whole year of 2020 compared with the whole year of 2019 to 5.74 million TEUs. For outward laden containers, exports and outward transshipment decreased by 16.5% and 1.5% in the whole year of 2020 compared with the whole year of 2019 to 1.71 million TEUs and 5.37 million TEUs respectively.

The detailed container statistics are summarised in Table 6.

Port cargo and laden container statistics are compiled from a sample of consignments listed in the cargo manifests supplied by shipping companies and agents to the C&SD.

Vessel arrivals

Comparing the fourth quarter of 2020 with the fourth quarter of 2019, the number of ocean vessel arrivals decreased by 36.2% to 4 237, with the total capacity also decreasing by 39.6% to 62.8 million net tons. Meanwhile, the number of river vessel arrivals decreased by 56.1% to 14 349, with the total capacity also decreasing by 45.8% to 16.1 million net tons.

Comparing the whole year of 2020 with the whole year of 2019, the number of ocean vessel arrivals decreased by 13.3% to 22 001, with the total capacity also decreasing by 12.8% to 347.5 million net tons. Meanwhile, the number of river vessel arrivals decreased by 51.5% to 65 830, with the total capacity also decreasing by 25.4% to 86.2 million net tons.

The statistics on vessel arrivals in Hong Kong are given in Table 7.

Vessel statistics are compiled by the Marine Department primarily from general declarations submitted by ship masters and authorised shipping agents. Pleasure vessels and fishing vessels plying exclusively within the river trade limits are excluded.

Further information

More detailed statistics on port cargo, containers and vessels are published in the report "Hong Kong Shipping Statistics, Fourth Quarter 2020". Users can download this publication at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp130.jsp?productCode=B1020008).

For enquiries about port cargo and container statistics, please contact the Outward Processing and Shipping Statistics Section of the C&SD (Tel: 2582 2126 or email: shipping@censtatd.gov.hk). For enquiries about vessel statistics, readers may contact the Statistics Section under the Planning, Development and Port Security Branch of the Marine Department (Tel: 2852 3662 or email: st-sec@mardep.gov.hk).