

News Release

Merchandise trade volume growth remains sluggish in first quarter 2008

A. Merchandise Trade Volume Data (customs-based data)

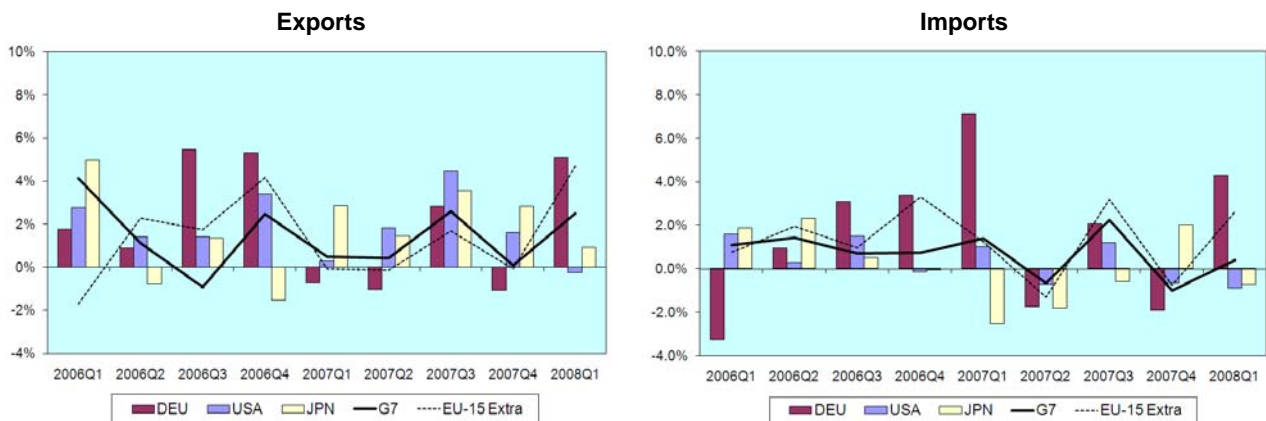
Despite a modest recovery of quarterly trade volumes (2.5% for exports and 0.4% for imports), year-on-year import volume growth of the **Group of Seven** continued to slow in the first quarter 2008 to only 1.0%, the lowest rate since the first quarter 2006. Exports were up 5.6% in the first quarter of 2008 compared with the same period in 2007.

Quarter-on-quarter, **Germany** and **France** largely contributed to the increase in export volumes of the **G7** with 5.1% and 8.7% respectively. Import volumes were also above the **G7** average with 4.3% and 4.1%. On a year-on-year basis, **Germany's** exports were up 5.8% and imports 2.6%, while **France's** export volumes were up 8.0% and imports 5.8%.

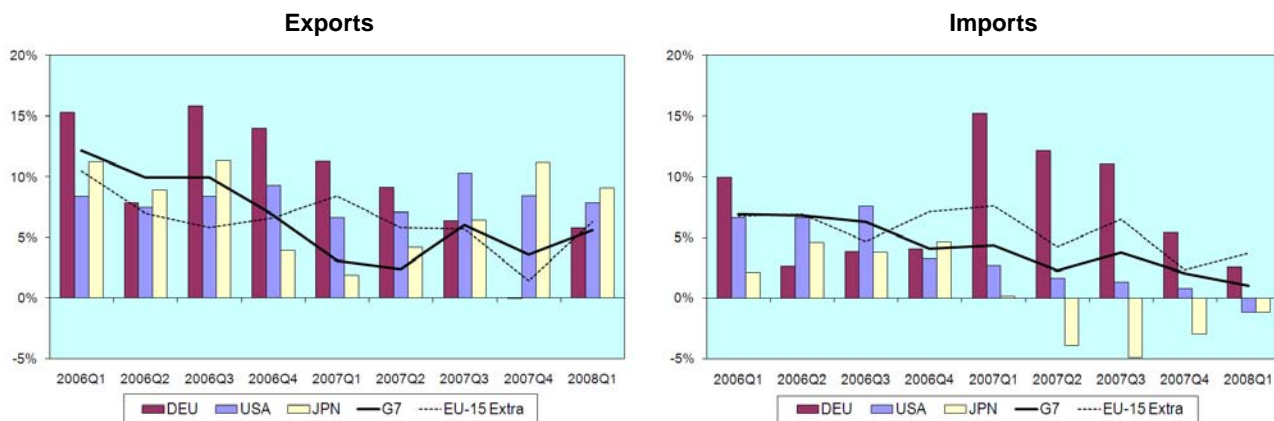
The **United States'** quarter-on-quarter export volumes fell 0.2% and imports were down 0.9%. Year-on-year, export volumes grew by 7.8% while imports fell 1.1% contributing, together with **Japan**, to the longer-term **G7** trend of declining import volume growth.

In the first quarter 2008, **Japanese** trade volume growth remained sluggish compared to the previous quarter. Exports rose 0.9% while imports fell 0.7%. Year-on-year Japan's exports grew 9.1% while imports fell by 1.1%.

Quarterly Volume Growth in Merchandise Trade
Percentage change on the previous quarter (seasonally adjusted)



Annual Volume Growth in Merchandise Trade
Percentage change on the same quarter of the previous year



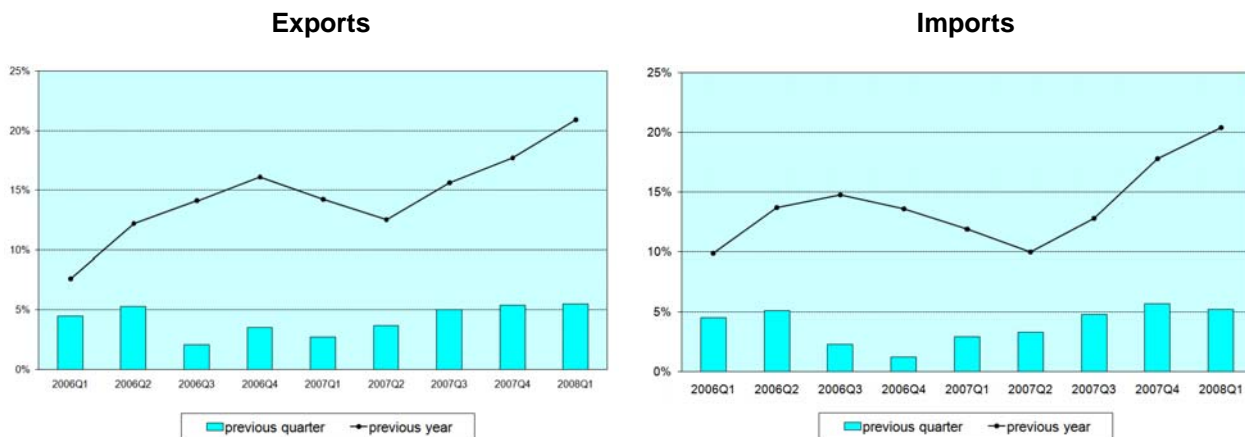
B. Trade in Goods and Services Values (balance of payments data)

Export growth of goods and services in **OECD countries**, measured in **current** US dollars, increased marginally to a seasonally-adjusted 5.5% quarter-on-quarter in the first quarter of 2008. The growth in imports decreased slightly to 5.2% in the same period.

In value terms, for trade in goods the quarter on quarter growth, for both exports and imports, exceeded the corresponding growth in trade in services in the first quarter. The growth in imports of services slowed sharply to 1.3% quarter on quarter.

Export value growth for goods and services in **OECD** countries rose to 20.9% year on year, and import growth rose to 20.4%.

Value Growth in OECD Trade in Goods and Services
Percentage change on the previous quarter and on the same quarter of the previous year



A. Merchandise Trade Volumes (customs-based data)

Merchandise Trade: Quarterly Export Volume Growth
Percentage change on the previous quarter (seasonally adjusted)

	2006				2007				2008
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1
Major Seven	4.1	1.1	-0.9	2.4	0.5	0.4	2.6	0.1	2.5
Canada	0.3	-2.8	-1.0	1.9	2.8	-0.4	-2.7	-0.6	-2.1
France	4.8	1.3	0.0	1.5	0.4	-0.9	2.2	-2.0	8.7
Germany	1.8	0.9	5.5	5.3	-0.7	-1.0	2.8	-1.1	5.1
Italy	3.2	1.8	-0.8	3.9	-1.0	2.2	1.4	-3.3	1.9
Japan	5.0	-0.8	1.3	-1.5	2.9	1.5	3.6	2.8	0.9
United Kingdom	14.9	6.2	-23.0	-0.2	-0.8	-0.9	0.6	-1.3	3.8
United States	2.8	1.4	1.4	3.4	0.3	1.8	4.5	1.6	-0.2
EU-15 Extra EU	-1.7	2.3	1.8	4.2	-0.1	-0.1	1.7	-0.1	4.7

Merchandise Trade: Quarterly Import Volume Growth
Percentage change on the previous quarter (seasonally adjusted)

	2006				2007				2008
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1
Major Seven	1.1	1.4	0.7	0.7	1.4	-0.7	2.3	-1.0	0.4
Canada	0.5	2.1	1.5	-0.2	1.6	0.6	4.2	1.5	-1.5
France	1.0	3.9	-0.7	0.8	1.1	0.9	3.0	-2.3	4.1
Germany	-3.3	1.0	3.1	3.4	7.1	-1.7	2.1	-1.9	4.3
Italy	2.9	-0.6	3.3	0.5	-0.9	0.2	5.0	-4.8	-2.4
Japan	1.8	2.3	0.5	0.0	-2.5	-1.8	-0.6	2.0	-0.7
United Kingdom	4.9	3.6	-5.5	1.5	-0.3	-0.4	5.5	-1.6	-0.7
United States	1.6	0.3	1.5	-0.1	1.0	-0.7	1.2	-0.7	-0.9
EU-15 Extra EU	0.8	1.9	1.0	3.3	1.2	-1.3	3.2	-0.8	2.6

Merchandise Trade: Annual Export Volume Growth
Percentage change on the same quarter of the previous year

	2006				2007				2008
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1
Major Seven	12.2	10.0	10.0	6.8	3.1	2.4	6.0	3.6	5.6
Canada	3.9	3.2	2.1	-1.6	0.9	3.3	1.5	-1.0	-5.6
France	11.8	10.8	12.8	7.8	3.2	1.0	3.2	-0.3	8.0
Germany	15.3	7.8	15.8	14.0	11.2	9.1	6.4	0.0	5.8
Italy	4.9	4.0	3.9	8.3	3.8	4.3	6.6	-0.8	2.2
Japan	11.2	8.9	11.3	3.9	1.9	4.2	6.4	11.2	9.1
United Kingdom	32.0	34.3	6.8	-6.2	-19.1	-24.4	-1.2	-2.3	2.2
United States	8.4	7.4	8.4	9.3	6.6	7.1	10.3	8.4	7.8
EU-15 Extra EU	10.5	7.0	5.8	6.6	8.4	5.8	5.7	1.4	6.3

Merchandise Trade: Annual Import Volume Growth
Percentage change on the same quarter of the previous year

	2006				2007				2008
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1
Major Seven	6.9	6.8	6.3	4.1	4.4	2.2	3.8	2.0	1.0
Canada	4.4	8.5	6.7	3.8	5.0	3.5	6.3	8.1	4.8
France	8.2	11.2	10.3	5.1	5.2	2.2	6.0	2.8	5.8
Germany	10.0	2.6	3.9	4.1	15.2	12.2	11.1	5.4	2.6
Italy	3.2	1.9	3.8	6.3	2.3	3.1	4.8	-0.8	-2.3
Japan	2.1	4.6	3.8	4.7	0.1	-3.9	-4.9	-3.0	-1.1
United Kingdom	11.6	14.0	5.0	4.2	-0.9	-4.7	6.3	3.1	2.7
United States	6.6	6.7	7.6	3.2	2.7	1.7	1.3	0.8	-1.1
EU-15 Extra EU	6.8	6.9	4.7	7.1	7.6	4.2	6.5	2.3	3.7

B. Trade in goods and services values (balance of payments data)

OECD Quarterly Value Growth (current prices USD)
Percentage change on the previous quarter (seasonally adjusted)

		2006				2007				2008
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1
EXPORTS	Goods & Services	4.5	5.3	2.1	3.5	2.7	3.7	5.0	5.4	5.5
	Goods	4.9	5.3	2.2	3.2	2.3	3.6	4.8	5.4	6.1
	Services	2.9	5.0	1.8	4.3	4.1	4.0	5.5	5.3	3.1
IMPORTS	Goods & Services	4.5	5.1	2.3	1.2	2.9	3.3	4.8	5.7	5.2
	Goods	4.9	5.2	2.5	0.6	2.7	3.2	5.0	5.4	6.2
	Services	3.1	4.7	1.5	3.6	3.8	3.5	4.3	6.5	1.3

OECD Annual Value Growth (current prices USD)
Percentage change on the same quarter of the previous year

		2006				2007				2008
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1
EXPORTS	Goods & Services	7.6	12.2	14.1	16.1	14.2	12.5	15.6	17.7	20.9
	Goods	8.6	12.9	14.8	16.5	13.7	11.8	14.6	17.0	21.4
	Services	4.4	9.9	11.6	14.8	16.0	14.9	19.1	20.2	19.1
IMPORTS	Goods & Services	9.9	13.7	14.8	13.6	11.9	10.0	12.8	17.8	20.4
	Goods	11.6	15.0	16.1	13.7	11.4	9.3	12.0	17.4	21.3
	Services	3.2	8.5	9.4	13.5	14.3	13.0	16.1	19.4	16.4



Methodological Notes

A. Merchandise Trade Volumes (customs-based data)

All merchandise data contained in this press release are based on the OECD's Monthly Statistics of International Trade (MSIT) database. Merchandise trade covers trade in goods, excluding services.

Trade data for area aggregates OECD and Major Seven include intra-area flows. However, trade data for the area aggregate EU-15 Extra EU is provided by Eurostat and exclude intra-area flows. Eurostat community statistics cover the European Union as a whole and include methodological differences that make precise comparison with OECD statistics impossible.

Seasonally adjusted data are calculated by the Secretariat using the X-12-Arima method. Aggregated annual and quarterly growth rates in volume terms are derived from series in constant 2000 US dollars.

The OECD's Monthly Statistics of International Trade (MSIT) cover aggregate indicators, trade unit value and volume indices and trade broken down by the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC) sections and by partner country. In addition to monthly and quarterly trade, OECD manages a comprehensive annual trade database by commodity and by partner country, called ITCS (International Trade by Commodity Statistics).

B. Trade in goods and services values (balance of payments data)

In principle balance of payments trade data covers transactions involving goods and services between residents and non-residents for a specific time period in the reporting economy. Merchandise trade data are based mainly on customs declarations concerning physical movements of goods across international frontiers for a specific time-period. The main differences between the two concepts of trade are summarized in the italic script below.

Balance of payments data are compiled from national data reported to OECD and which is published in the Main Economic Indicators database. Data for countries that have not reported, at the time of the release, have been estimated by the Secretariat.

Seasonal adjustment for trade in goods and services series in the balance of payments is provided by countries in the majority of cases, and is calculated by OECD Secretariat for the remainder.

In 2007 the total exports of goods and services of the 30 OECD member countries amounted to 11.0 trillion US Dollars, while imports were higher at 11.5 trillion USD. Goods accounted for 77% of OECD exports of goods and services and 81% of imports. G7 exports of goods and services in 2007 were 6.5 trillion USD and G7 imports of goods and services 7.0 trillion USD.

The **OECD-Total** covers the 30 OECD Member countries: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States.



Necessary adjustments of merchandise trade data for the balance of payments

Whereas data collection on international merchandise trade is mainly based on customs declarations, the balance of payments statement for trade in goods systematically summarizes goods transactions for a specific time period, for the most part involving changes of ownership between residents and non-residents. It covers general merchandise (which includes moveable goods), the movement of goods for processing (when no change of ownership occurs), the value of repairs on goods (not the value of goods undergoing repair), and goods procured in ports by non-resident carriers.

Customs data need to be supplemented with additional information to help produce the data required for national accounts and balance of payments purposes. The additional information includes:

- *Certain goods (for example goods for repair) are excluded from the detailed official trade statistics. These goods need to be recorded separately so that adjustments can be made.*
- *A separate collection of data on freight and insurance charges, as for merchandise trade statistics imports are recorded c.i.f. (cost, insurance and freight), whereas in balance of payments they are valued f.o.b (free on board).*
- *Timing differences - according to balance of payments methodology, the change of ownership is the principle determining coverage and timing, whereas in merchandise trade statistics the timing principle is based on the movement of the goods.*

Useful links:

This Press Release, as well as previous releases, can be found on the OECD web page, see [OECD Internet Site](#)

More information about detailed OECD statistics on trade in goods, including detailed monthly trade statistics, trade in services, balance of payments statistics, trade indicators and trade expert meetings can be found at [International Trade and Balance of Payments Statistics](#)

For more information on measurement of international trade see OECD "Statistics Brief" No. 1 October 2001 available at [Statistics Portal Site](#)

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