

Stainless Steel Production for First Half of 2013 : Mixed Results

Stainless steel crude steel production has been further growing in the first half of 2013 with an increase of 4.6% compared to the same period of 2012 according to Preliminary figures released by the International Stainless Steel Forum (ISSF). Total production for the first six months of 2013 was 18.6 million metric tons (mmt) these are 0.8 mmt more than in the same period of last year and it is another all-time-high. However the analysis by regions and even more by individual countries show very mixed results ranging from minus 15% to plus 15%.

In Asia with China excluded, stainless steel production decreased by 3.7% to 4.3 million tons. There was a mixed performance of the individual Asian countries in the period of review: While India showed increased production volumes the stainless crude steel production decreased in Japan, Korea and Taiwan, China. China increased the stainless steel production in the period of review by 15.1% to 8.8 mmt. Thus entire Asia now counts for approximately 70% of the world stainless crude steel production Western Europe/Africa experienced a shrinking development in stainless steel production during the first six months of 2013. Total production was 4.1 mmt (minus 4.0%) in this period. Also in this area there was a split development showing production changes from plus 2% to minus 15% after the first six months of 2013.

Stainless and Heat Resisting Crude Steel Production (in '000 mt)					
Region	Qrt 1 p	Qrt 2 p	Qrt 3 p	Qrt 4 p	Year P
Western Africa	2.157	1.948	==	==	4.105
Central + Eastern Europe	94	114	==	==	207
The Americas	600	597	==	==	1.197
China	4.404	4.414	==	==	8.818
Asia w/o China	2.146	2.149	==	==	4.295
World	9.401	9.221	==	==	18.622

Source : International Stainless Steel Forum (ISSF)

In The Americas region, stainless crude steel production decreased by 1.9% to 1.2 million tons in the first half of the year. Production in the Eastern Europe region showed a plus of 12.4% - mainly due to the strong performance of Russia- , with now some 0.2 mmt continuously on an almost negligible low volume level.

Comparing quarter by quarter shows a more negative development of stainless steel melting activities. All regions "except Eastern Europe "showed stagnating or decreasing melting volumes in quarter 2 compared to the previous quarter. China increased the stainless production quarter on quarter by just 0.2%. Asia showed a q-o-q decline by 3.9%, The Americas reported a 2.7% decrease in the same time. EuroAfrica reduced production significantly by 5.6% q-o-q. The globally achieved volume of 9.2 mmt is nevertheless the highest ever achieved production level for a second quarter.