



Global Stainless Steel Production Up 8.3%



Figures released by the International Stainless Steel Forum (ISSF) show that stainless steel melt shop production in 2014 increased by 8.3% to 41.7Mmt and production increased in all regions except for Central and Eastern Europe.

China's year-end figure for 2014 was 21.6Mmt while the rest of Asia produced 9.3Mmt. Western Europe and Africa was in third place with 7.5Mmt and the America was in fourth place with 2.8Mmt. In last place was Central and Eastern Europe with just 277kt.

The ISSF is a non-profit research organisation, which serves as a world forum on all aspects of the international stainless steel industry.

Challenging Times for US Steel

Cheap imports, depressed energy market conditions and a charge for shutting down raw materials production facilities have all added up to a US\$75 million Q1 2015 loss for US Steel.

According to a report in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, sales fell 26% to US\$3.27 billion and shipments were down 20%.

The American steelmaker also announced that its flat-roll mills had operated at 60% of capacity during the period compared with 75% the previous quarter and 81% at the end of Q1 2014.

The company was charged US\$65 million for closing down coke production plants.

Mario Longhi, CEO of US Steel, said the results reflected 'extremely challenging market conditions'. He emphasised the negative effect of high import levels, which he said contributed to reduced volumes.

The challenging conditions facing the company have resulted in 2,800 workers being laid off and a further 1,700 tubular division workers being issued with layoff warnings.

European Commission to Impose Provisional Anti-dumping Measures



An investigation by the European Commission has found that imports of grain-oriented electrical steel (GOES) from Russia, USA, China, Japan, Korea are sold at dumped prices and, therefore, cause 'significant injury' to the European Union steel industry. The Commission's investigation found that dumping margins ranged from 22.6% to 60.1% for the foreign producers concerned, but that provisional duties imposed on the rogue producers ranged from 21.6% to 60.1%.

According to Axel Eggert, director-general of European steel lobbying group EUROFER, the duties imposed will do nothing to restrict the flow of GOES into the region but will simply restore free trade in the EU market at non-injurious prices.

Grain-oriented electrical steel is used in the production of power transformers and is a key element affecting efficiency. EUROFER believes that maintaining a healthy European production base for GOES is crucial for the long-term health of the EU transformer

industry as well as the upgrading of the EU electrical grid.

"It is not a question of pitting jobs in the European transformer industry against those in the European GOES industry. Both depend upon one another and the attainment of the Union's energy goals depends upon the health of both industries together," Eggert said. EUROFER argues that the only viable solution to the problem is that the price paid by transformer producers for GOES reflects the costs and normal profit involved in production.

"This is precisely what anti-dumping measures are designed to do," EUROFER points out. EUROFER hopes that, through resorting to anti-dumping measures, the price of transformers 'will reflect the real costs associated with manufacturing this end product and both the European GOES industry and the European transformer industry 'can enjoy sustainable financial health and maintain the highest possible number of manufacturing jobs in the Union'.

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