

## II. Merchandise trade

World merchandise trade grew by 2 per cent in volume terms in 2012 against a backdrop of weak global demand and declining prices. This is significantly less than the 5 per cent increase recorded in 2011.

### Key developments in 2012: a snapshot

48

### Trade data

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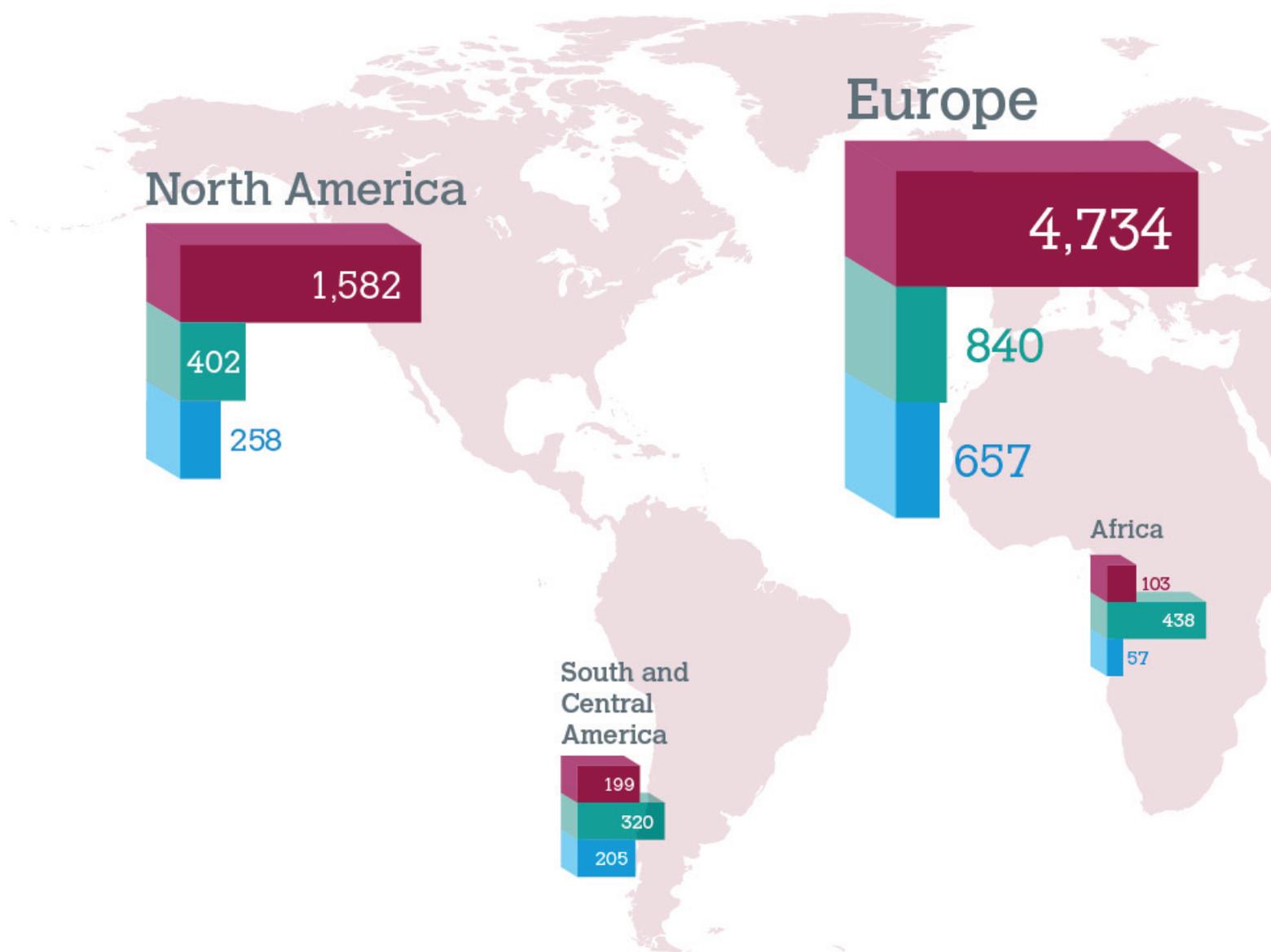


#### Where to find more online:

you can access and download the Excel files for the tables via [www.wto.org/statistics](http://www.wto.org/statistics)

# Asia's exports of manufactured goods rose to US\$ 4.4 trillion in 2012

Merchandise exports by region and product, 2012 (US\$ billion)



5%

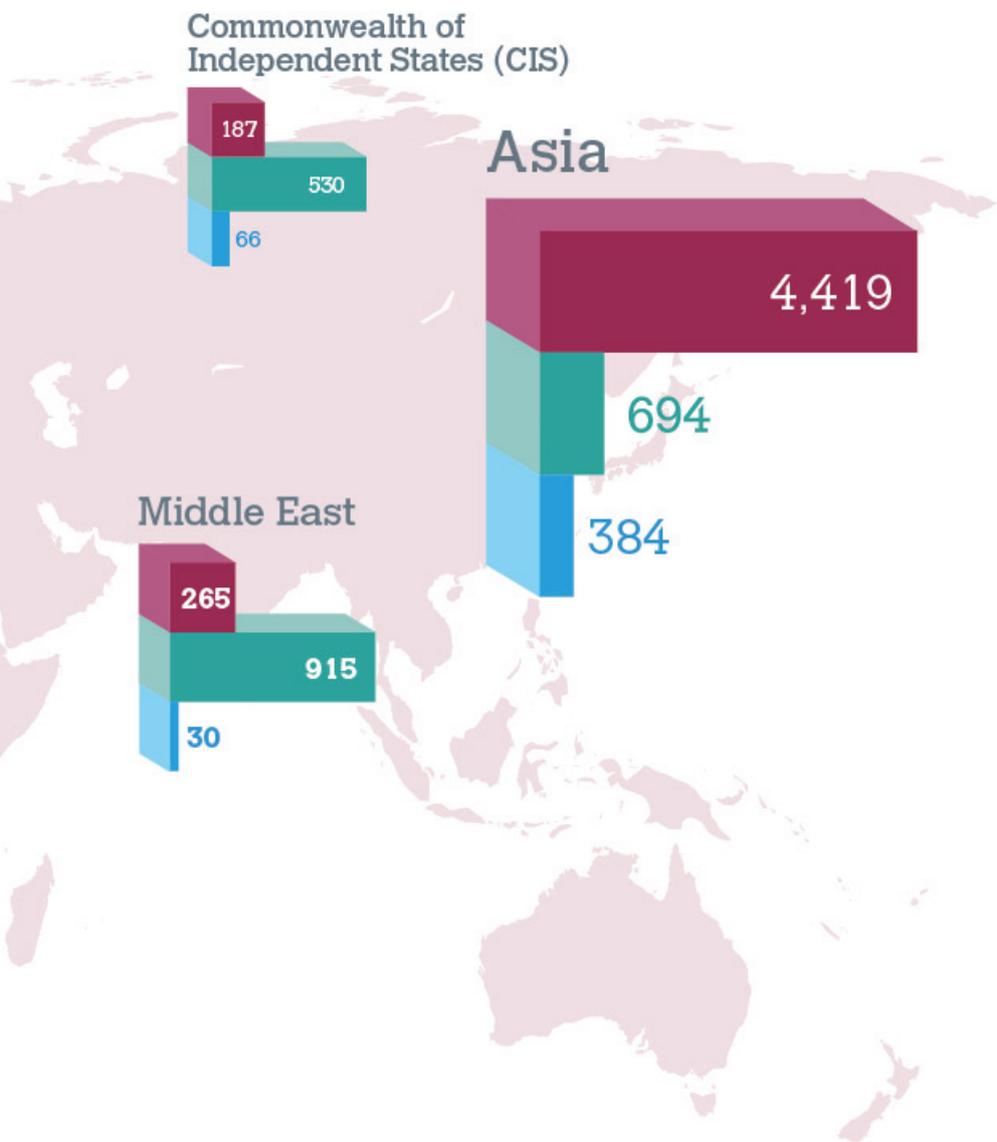
decline in Europe's exports of manufactured goods in 2012



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[www.wto.org/its2013](http://www.wto.org/its2013): Table A10



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- The value of Asia's exports of manufactured goods expanded by 3 per cent in 2012 whereas Europe's exports declined by 2 per cent. As a result, Asia's share in world exports of manufactured goods rose to 38 per cent, compared with 41 per cent for Europe - down from 43 per cent in 2011.
- With the exception of the Commonwealth of Independent States (+15 per cent) and North America (+3 per cent), all regions registered declines in exports of agricultural products in 2012.
- Africa and the Middle East increased their exports of fuels and mining products in 2012, by 9 per cent and 6 per cent respectively.



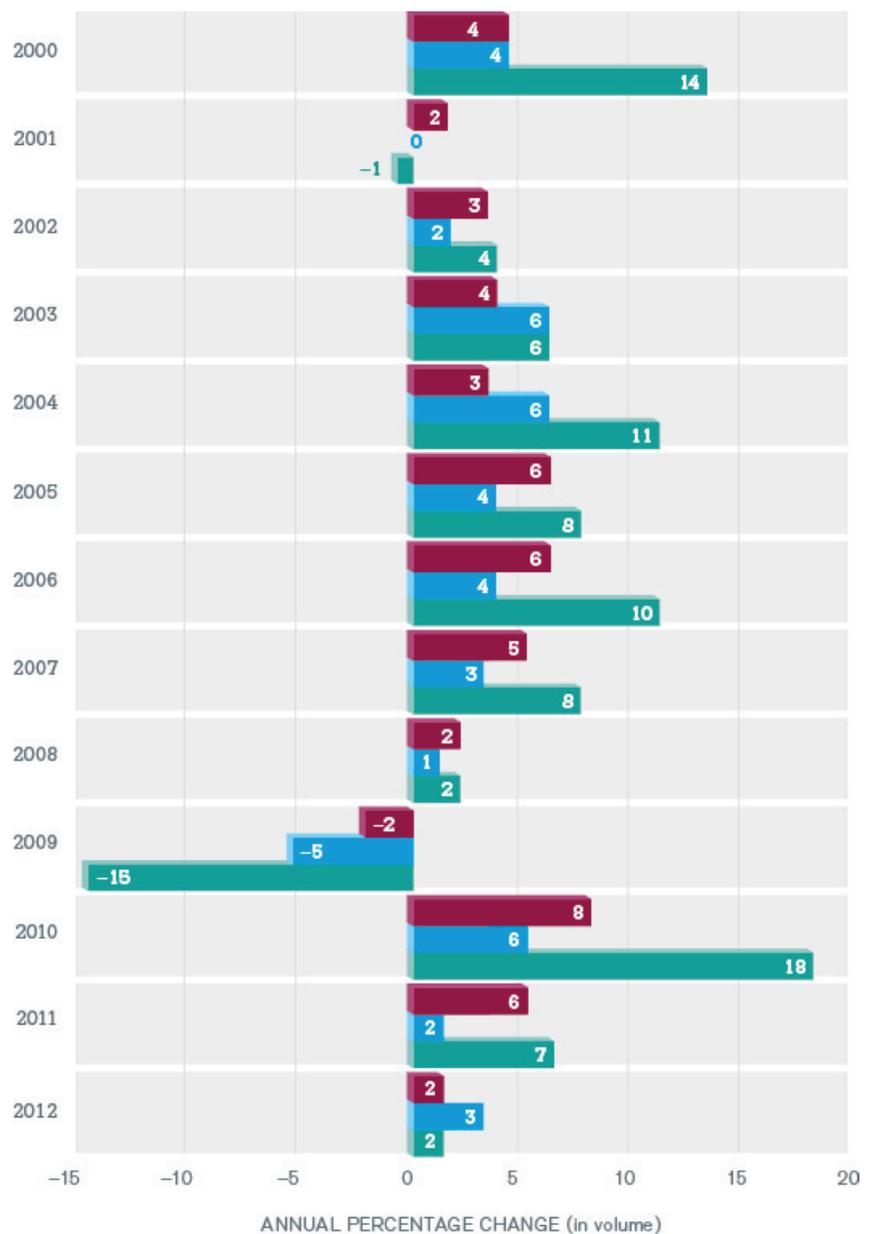
All figures are in US\$ billion

**12%** share of South and Central America in world exports of agricultural products in 2012

## Volume of merchandise exports expanded moderately in 2012

- Growth in the volume of merchandise exports in 2012 was the lowest for the last two decades, excluding the recession-led contractions in 2001 and 2009. All major product groups recorded roughly the same growth rates.

### Volume of world merchandise exports by product group, 2000–2012



3%

Increase in export volume of fuels and mining products in 2012

2%

Increase in export volume of manufactured goods in 2012



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[www.wto.org/its2013](http://www.wto.org/its2013): Table A1

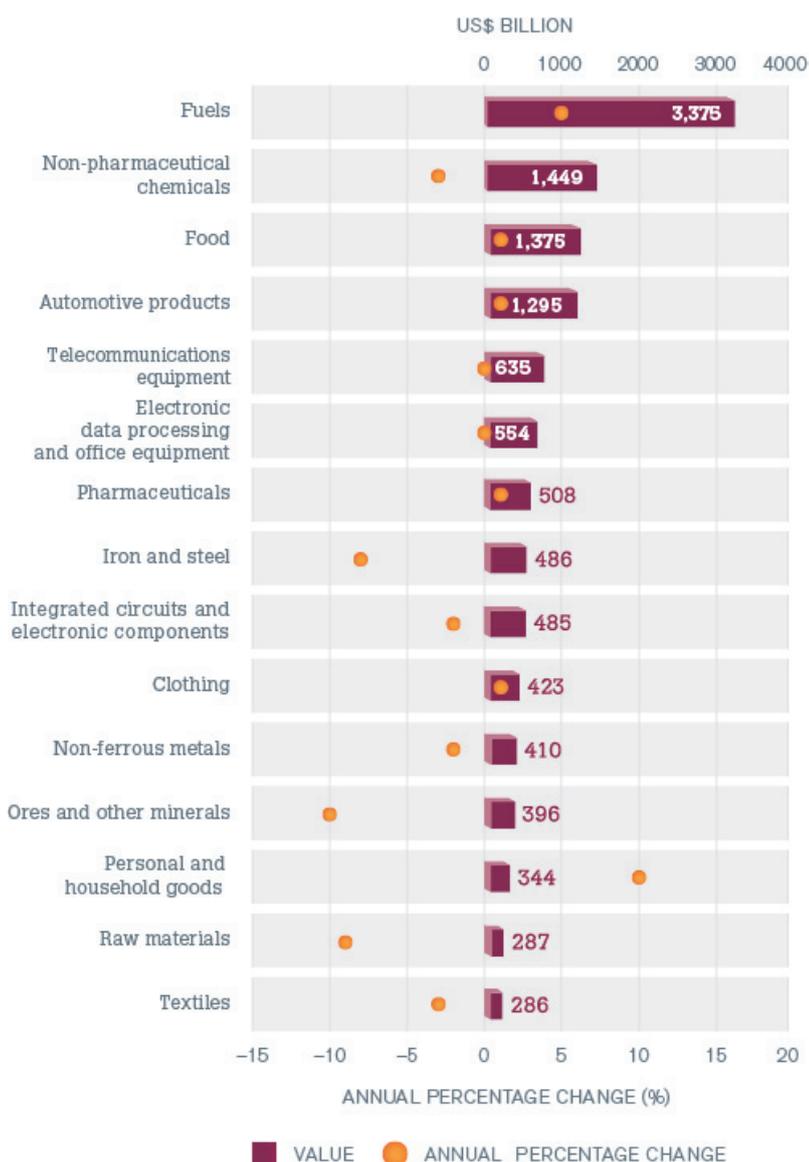


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# Ores and other minerals record sharpest decline in value

- The strongest growth in the value of merchandise exports was recorded by personal and household goods (+10 per cent). Fuels had the next highest growth (+5 per cent). Exports of other product groups remained relatively stable or even went down. Sharp declines in export value were registered for ores and other minerals (-10 per cent), agricultural raw materials (-9 per cent) and iron and steel (-8 per cent).
- Fuels increased its share in world merchandise exports from 9 per cent in 2000 to almost 19 per cent in 2012. The share of machinery and transport equipment in world exports shrank from 42 per cent in 2000 to 32 per cent in 2012. This was mostly due to the steady decline in the prices of office and telecom equipment.

## World merchandise exports by product group, 2012



World exports of ores and other minerals in 2012

US\$ 396 bn

9

Percentage points increase in the share of fuels in world exports between 2000 and 2012



Where to find more:  
Table II.1

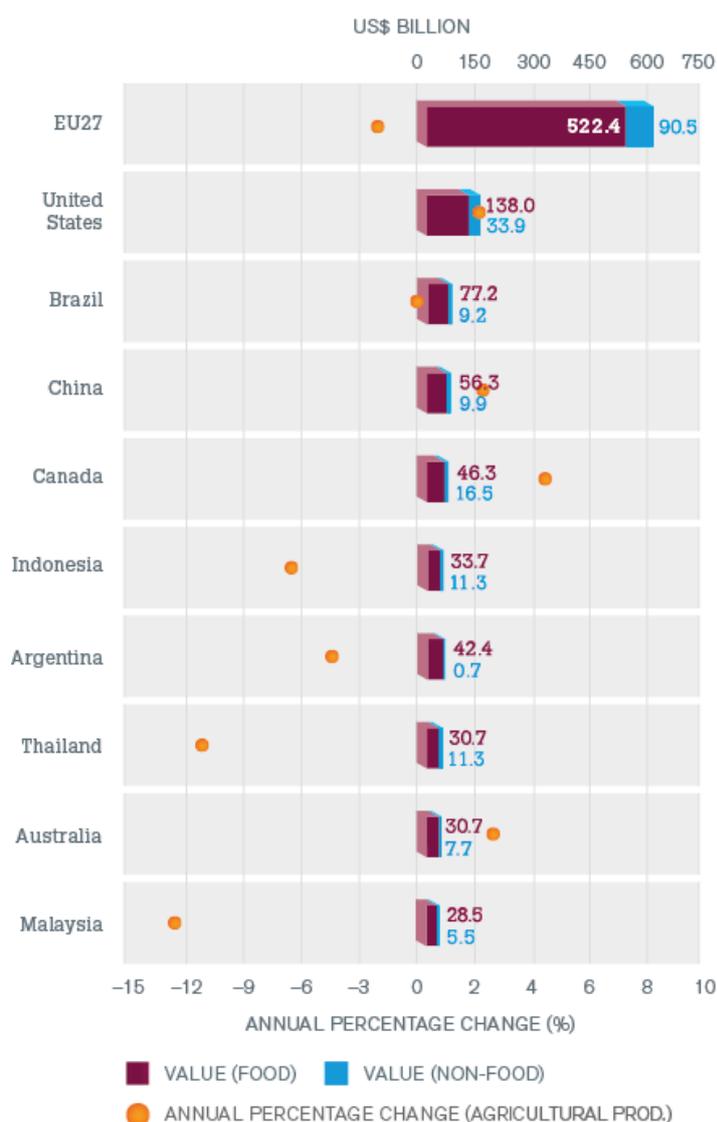


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## World exports of agricultural products stagnate

- World exports of agricultural products stagnated at US\$ 1,657 billion in 2012, mainly as a result of depressed prices. Prices of food dropped by 0.4 per cent while those of agricultural raw materials increased modestly by 1.6 per cent.
- Half of the top ten exporters of agricultural products registered growth in 2012. Canada, with a 4.5 per cent increase, achieved the highest growth. Malaysia and Thailand, however, experienced declines of 12.7 per cent and 11.7 per cent respectively.
- World food exports, which accounted for 83 per cent of agricultural exports in 2012, expanded by 1.1 per cent, to US\$ 1,375 billion. The value of non-food agricultural products fell to US\$ 281 billion from US\$ 300 billion in 2011 (-6.3 per cent).

### Major exporters of agricultural products, 2012



EU exports of food in 2012

US\$ 522 bn

13%

Decrease in Malaysia's exports of agricultural products in 2012



Where to find more:  
Tables II.15 and II.20



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# China becomes second-largest importer of fuels and mining products

- EU imports of fuels and mining products amounted to US\$ 1,034 billion in 2012, approximately the same value as the previous year. China expanded its imports of fuels and mining products by 3.4 per cent to US\$ 533 billion, overtaking the United States as the second-largest importer. US imports of fuel fell by 7.1 per cent due to a sharp increase in domestic production of crude oil.
- Among the top importers of fuels, India increased its imports by the most (+18 per cent) in 2012, followed by China (+14 per cent).
- China's imports of non-fuel mining products fell by 8 per cent in 2012 and the European Union's imports dropped by 17 per cent. As a result, the value of China's imports (US\$ 221 billion) is very close to the European Union's (US\$ 228 billion). In 2011, the difference was much greater (US\$ 241 billion vs. US\$ 274 billion).

## Major importers of fuels and mining products, 2012



China's imports of fuels and mining products in 2012

US\$ 533 bn

13%

Share of the United States in world fuel imports in 2012

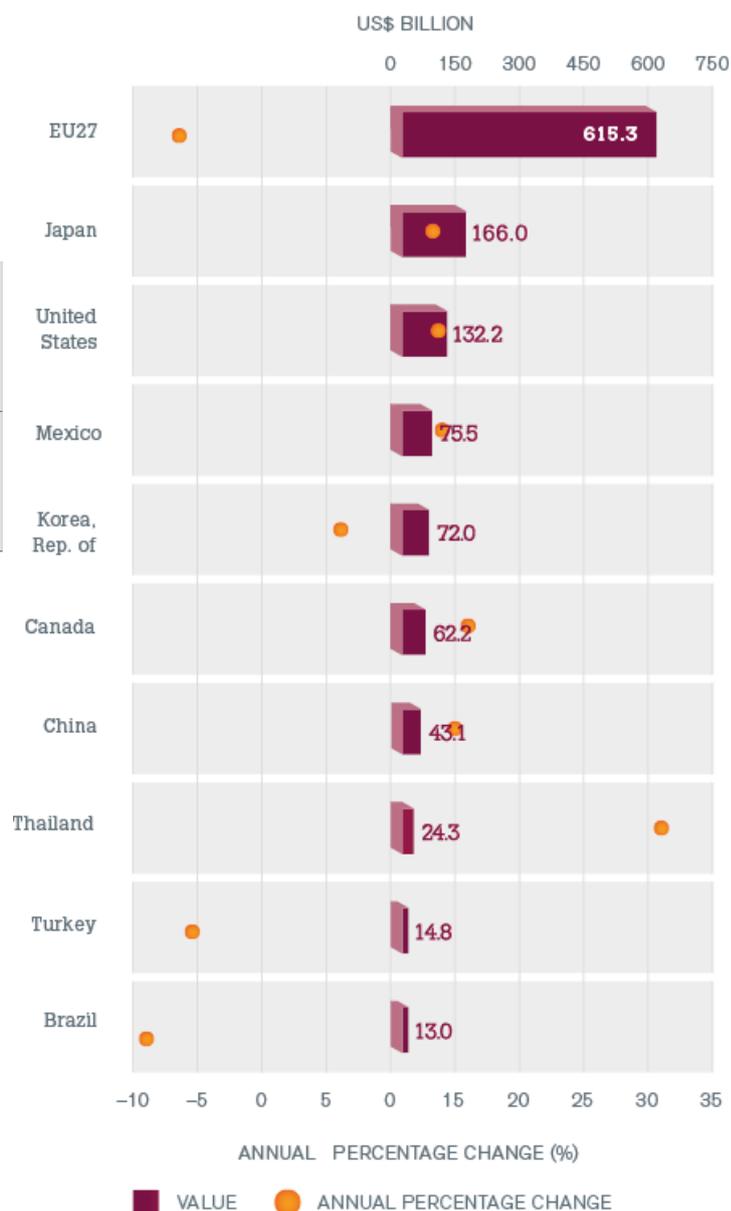
Where to find more:  
Table II.27

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## EU share in exports of automotive products falls below 50%

- In 2012, the share of the European Union in world exports of automotive products fell below 50 per cent (down from 51 per cent in 2011) for the first time since 2001.
- Among the top ten exporters of automotive products, the greatest declines in 2012 were recorded by Brazil (-9.5 per cent), the European Union (-7 per cent) and Turkey (-5.4 per cent). The other members of the top ten posted remarkable growth. Recovering from the 2011 flooding, Thailand recorded the highest growth (32.8 per cent). Mexico overtook the Republic of Korea as the fourth-largest exporter, returning to the position it had occupied in 2010.

### Major exporters of automotive products, 2012



47%

Share of EU exports in world exports of automotive products

11%

Increase in US exports of automotive products in 2012



Where to find more:  
Table II.59

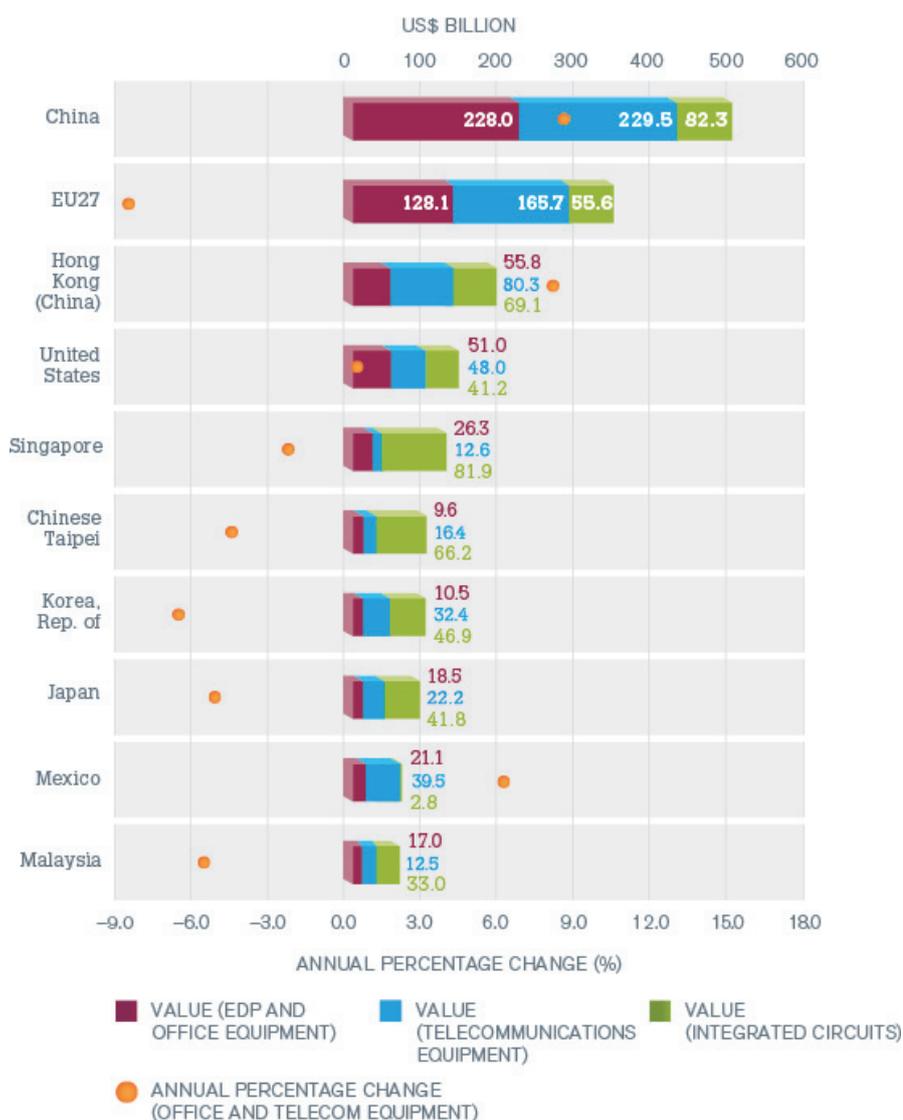


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# Exports of office and telecom equipment decline for most countries

- The share of office and telecom equipment in world merchandise exports remained at 9 per cent in 2012. Seven of the ten top exporters of office and telecom equipment experienced negative growth, ranging from -0.6 per cent for the United States to -8.5 per cent for the European Union. However, notable increases in exports were registered by China (8.7 per cent), Hong Kong, China (8.2 per cent) and Mexico (6.1 per cent).
- China's share in world exports of electronic data processing (EDP) and office equipment increased to 41 per cent in 2012 from 39 per cent in 2011.
- The European Union's share in world exports of integrated circuits and electronic components fell to 11 per cent in 2012 from 14 per cent in 2011.

## Major exporters of office and telecom equipment, 2012



8.7%

Increase in China's exports of office and telecom equipment in 2012

41%

Share of China in world exports of EDP and office equipment



Where to find more:  
Table II.42



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# Exports of textiles and clothing fall below 2011 value

- World exports of textiles and clothing stagnated in 2012. Half of the top ten exporters achieved export growth (between 0.2 and 7.5 per cent) but the other half recorded declines varying between -2.3 and -8.0 per cent. The highest growth in exports (7.5 per cent) was achieved by Viet Nam.
- China continues to be the leading exporter of textiles and clothing. Its share in world exports increased to 33 per cent for textiles (up from 32 per cent in 2011) and to 38 per cent for clothing (up from 37 per cent).
- The European Union and the United States remain the major markets for clothing, accounting for 38 per cent and 20 per cent respectively of world imports in 2012.

## Major exporters of textiles & clothing, 2012



8%

Decrease in EU exports of textiles and clothing in 2012

US\$ 708 bn

World exports of textiles and clothing in 2012



Where to find more:  
Tables II.64 and II.69



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