

Media release

scienceindustries

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Foreign trade in 2018 for Chemistry Pharma Life Sciences:

Chemistry Pharma Life Sciences as biggest Swiss export industry continues to grow

Exports for Chemistry Pharma Life Sciences improved to a new record high of CHF 104.33 billion in 2018. At 44.7%, the share of total Swiss exports was on a par with the previous year, so that Chemistry Pharma Life Sciences is still the largest export industry in Switzerland. The US continued to expand its position as the biggest purchaser of chemical and pharmaceutical products from Switzerland, while exports to the UK fell almost by half.

In step with total Swiss exports (+5.7%), the Chemistry Pharma Life Sciences companies increased their exports by 5.8% year-on-year in 2018 in spite of global economic uncertainties. The sector reached a new all-time high with an export volume of CHF 104.33 billion. Imports grew at the same time by 7.3% to CHF 50.1 billion, thus increasing Chemistry Pharma Life Sciences' export surplus by CHF 2.4 billion to CHF 54.2 billion in total. Of this surplus, 95.2% was generated by pharmaceutical products.

Pharmaceutical products account for lion's share of total Swiss exports

Exports of pharmaceutical products grew by 5.3% year-on-year to CHF 88.3 billion, which equals 84.6% of total Chemistry Pharma Life Sciences exports and 38% of total Swiss exports.

Considerably more (+15%) organic raw and base materials were exported in 2018 than in the previous year (+10.5%). Exports of essential oils and aromatic substances also increased by 4.5%. Exports of plant protection products, however, contracted by -4% and now account for only 1.7% of total Chemistry Pharma Life Sciences exports.

Exports by segment	2017 in CHF billion	2018 in CHF billion	+/- in %	Share in %
Total exports	98.60	104.33	5.8	100.0
of which				
- Organic products	3.71	4.27	15.0	4.1
- Pharmaceutical products, vitamins, diagnostics	83.89	88.31	5.3	84.6
- Plant protection products	1.81	1.73	-4.0	1.7
- Dyes and pigments	0.40	0.40	0.9	0.4
- Essential oils, aromatic substances	1.72	1.80	4.5	1.7
- Other segments	7.07	7.82	10.5	7.5

Exports to UK fell by half

Exports to the EU stagnated (+1.3%). However, at CHF 49.8 billion, almost half of all exports were destined for countries in the EU, which is still the most important trading partner of Chemistry Pharma Life Sciences. The strongest growth of 15.2% to CHF 25.34 billion and 11% to CHF 4.53 billion was reported for North America and Latin America respectively. The BRIC countries posted strong growth of 6.7% to CHF 8.86 billion, followed by "other regions" at 5.1% to CHF 3.27 billion.

The US cemented its position as the most important purchaser of Chemistry Pharma Life Sciences products with a further increase of 16.2% to a total share of exports of 21.8%. With an export volume of CHF 22.7 billion, the US is well ahead of Germany, the second most important country of export, which stagnated at CHF 15.8 billion (+0.2%). At CHF 5.9 billion, Italy followed at some distance in third place. China as a BRIC company moved up one place to the fourth-largest purchasing country of Swiss Chemistry, Pharma Life Sciences with CHF 4.9 billion. In spite of a decline of -3.7%, France is one of the top five purchasing countries with a volume of CHF 4.7 billion. Exports to the UK fell almost by half (-48.8%) to only CHF 2.8 billion, thus dropping the UK from fourth place in 2017 to ninth place. Exports to the other BRIC countries Brazil and Russia improved by 19.8% and 14.3% respectively, while exports to India stagnated at +1%. While the export surplus for the US rose from CHF 14.6 billion to CHF 17.9 billion, it shrank from CHF 3.4 billion to CHF 3.2 billion for Germany.

Exports by region	2017 in CHF billion	2018 in CHF billion	+/- in %	Share in %
Total exports	98.6	104.33	5.8	100.0
of which				
- Europe	51.86	52.84	1.9	50.7
- of which EU countries	49.18	49.84	1.3	47.8
- North America	22.00	25.34	15.2	24.3
- Latin America	4.08	4.53	11.0	4.3
- Asia	17.55	18.35	4.6	17.6
- Other regions	3.11	3.27	5.1	3.1
- BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China)	8.30	8.86	6.7	8.5

EU supplies more than three-quarters of imports

78.5% of the imports of Chemistry Pharma Life Sciences come from the EU countries, which is on a par with the previous year. The EU is therefore still the most important supplier of raw materials, semi-finished and finished products for Chemistry Pharma Life Sciences. Germany leads the pack with around one-quarter (25.2%) of imports, followed by Ireland (15.9%), the US (9.5%) and Italy (8%).

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About scienceindustries:

scienceindustries, the Swiss Business Association Chemistry Pharma Life Sciences, works to ensure excellent international framework conditions for its around 250 member companies. The Chemistry Pharma Life Sciences industry employs some 67,000 people in Switzerland. As Switzerland's biggest export industry, it makes an important contribution to Swiss prosperity.