

Media release

Foreign trade in 2020:

Chemistry Pharma Life Sciences are a buttress of the economy

Exports for Chemistry Pharma Life Sciences rose to CHF 116.40 billion in 2020 in spite of the COVID-19 crisis. Switzerland's foreign trade benefited significantly from the exports of our industry, which increased to 51.7% last year.

Zurich, 29 January 2021 In spite of the COVID-19 pandemic, the companies of the chemical, pharmaceutical and life sciences segment increased their exports in 2020 by 1.6% year-on-year and posted an export volume of CHF 116.40 billion. At the same time, imports declined by -2.8% to CHF 51.23 billion. The member companies of scienceindustries thus generated an export surplus of CHF 65.17 billion, which is up 5.3% on the previous year.

Pharmaceutical products still the most important product group

At 85.1% of the total exports of our industries, pharmaceutical products, vitamins and diagnostics are still the most important product group. Exports increased by 1.6% to CHF 99.09 billion compared to the previous year. This segment therefore represents 44% of total Swiss exports.

Exports of chemical raw and base materials were up substantially (+16.8%) on the previous year and accounted for 5.8% of the total exports of our industries. Exports of unshaped plastics contracted drastically (-12%). Exports of essential oils, aromatic substances (-7.8%), dyes and pigments also declined (-6.1%), as did exports of plant protection products and insecticides (-3.3%), and now account for 1.7% of our industries' total exports.

Exports by product group	2019 in CHF billion	2020 in CHF billion	+/- in %	Share in %
Total Swiss exports	242.34	225.07	-7.1	
Products of the chemical and pharmaceutical industry	114.57	116.40	1.6	100
- Chemical raw and base materials	5.80	6.77	16.8	5.8
- Unshaped plastics (primary forms)	2.08	1.97	-12	1.6
- Pharmaceutical products, vitamins, diagnostics	97.55	99.09	1.6	85.1
- Plant protection products and insecticides	2.03	1.97	-3.3	1.7
- Dyes and pigments	0.40	0.37	-6.1	0.3
- Essential oils, aromatic substances	1.83	1.68	-7.8	1.5
- Other segments	4.88	4.55	-6.7	4.0

At CHF 53.87 billion, almost half (46.3%) of all exports were destined for countries in the EU, the most important trading partner of Chemistry Pharma Life Sciences. Exports to our most important markets rose by +4.8% year-on-year. In spite of declining by -1.2%, export volume to North America, the second most important purchasing region, was CHF 28.60 billion. Asia as an emerging market is already the third most important buyer of our innovative products and posted growth of 3.7% to CHF 20.45 billion. Mostly driven by China, exports to the BRIC countries grew with 4.9% to CHF 10.50 billion.

US again most important export country in 2020

With a share of 22.3% and a volume of CHF 25.92 billion, the USA is still the most important buyer of the products of the member companies of scienceindustries. The strong rise in 2019 slowed down significantly in 2020 and exports declined slightly by -0.6%. Exports to Germany, the second most important

country of export for our member companies, declined by -2.6% to CHF 17.30 billion. Italy followed at some distance in third place (CHF 6.83 billion). Compared to the previous year, China saw impressive growth at +18.9% and overtook Spain with a volume of CHF 6.67 billion. Spain did not match the high growth of 2019 and only increased slightly by 1.1% to CHF 5.83 billion.

Slovenia rose again significantly by +51.7% to CHF 4.66 billion, just behind France with an export volume of CHF 4.76 billion. Austria also recorded a strong increase (+35.9%) in exports from our industries, thus still ranking among the top10 countries, followed by the United Kingdom which received -3.9% less exports than in the previous year (CHF 2.93 billion).

Exports by region	2019 in CHF billion	2020 in CHF billion	+/- in %	Share in %
Total exports	114.57	116.40	1.6	100.0
- Europe	58.04	60.17	3.7	51.7
- of which EU countries	51.41	53.87	4.8	46.3
- North America	28.95	28.60	-1.2	24.6
- Asia	19.72	20.45	3.7	17.6
- BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China)	10.00	10.50	4.9	9.0
- South America	3.43	3.00	-12.5	2.6
- Africa	2.07	2.00	-3.7	1.7
- Oceania	1.35	1.18	-12.5	1.0
- Other regions	1.01	1.00	-1.1	0.8

EU remains biggest supplier for our industries

Almost three-quarters (71.4%) of the imports of Chemistry Pharma Life Sciences come from Europe. The EU is the most important supplier of raw materials, semi-finished and finished products, while the US is growing in importance as a supplier. Germany leads the pack with around one-quarter (26.4%) of imports, followed by the US (9.3%), Italy (8.9%), Spain (8.0%) and Ireland (7.8%).

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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 70,000 people in Switzerland. As Switzerland's biggest export industry, it makes an important contribution to Swiss prosperity. Swiss Chemistry Pharma Life Sciences rank second behind the US for competitiveness and are thus among the best in the world when it comes to performance, market position, innovation capacity and technological leadership.