

# Statistics Brief

► Global Trade and Transport

## Global Freight Data Highlight Continuous Dependency on Asia-led Growth

The latest update of global freight data collected by the International Transport Forum at the OECD through December 2013 reinforces Asia's role as the locomotive of growth:

- **USA and EU27 external trade, measured in tonnes of goods moved, remain stagnant;**
- **Dependency on Asia, especially China, for global growth intensifies;**
- **Brazil's external trade by air, considered as a lead indicator, declines to below pre-crisis levels;**
- **Inland freight remains weak in the EU area, the USA and the Russian Federation.**

The overall picture for global freight remains uncertain. Total external trade by sea (in tonnes) remains below pre-crisis levels (June 2008) in the EU-27 and the United States (-2% and -7%). Also external trade by air, considered as a lead indicator, has stagnated below pre-crisis peak in both regions (-5% and -3%). In general, demand remains weak in developed economies. Imports by sea to USA have declined throughout 2013 and were 27% below their pre-crisis levels at the end of the year. Imports by sea to EU remain at 10% below pre-crisis levels. Imports by air remain at June 2008 levels in both regions (Figure 1).

► **Import by sea to US 27% below pre-crisis level**

Asia, especially China, remains the locomotive for growth. Exports to Asia by sea increased both in the EU-27 and the USA and were 53% and 30% above their pre-crisis levels respectively. EU-27 and the USA exports by sea to China, measured in tonnes of goods moved, were 83% and 142% above the July 2008 levels respectively. The dependency on China is also illustrated by data on New Zealand exports to China. Exports by sea have more than tripled since pre-crisis peak (Figures 2-10).

► **EU-27 exports by sea up 53%**

Data for Brazil shows diverging trends between air and sea freight. Total external trade by sea, measured in tonnes, increased to 23% above pre-crisis levels. Imports continued to increase, driven partly by major infrastructure construction projects for the World Cup and Olympics. However, external trade by air has been declining since 2011 reaching 7% below the July 2008 levels in December 2013 (Figures 6-8).

► **Diverging trends for air and sea freight in Brazil**

Freight transported by road and rail in the EU stagnate at -14% and -8% below pre-crisis peak respectively, reflecting continuous weak domestic demand. Rail freight volumes in the Russian Federation recovered earlier but show signs of slowing down while rail freight in China maintains its growth momentum (Figures 11-12).

► **EU rail and road freight stagnates**

Figure 1. **External trade, percentage change from June 2008**  
(Tonnes, monthly trend, seasonally adjusted)

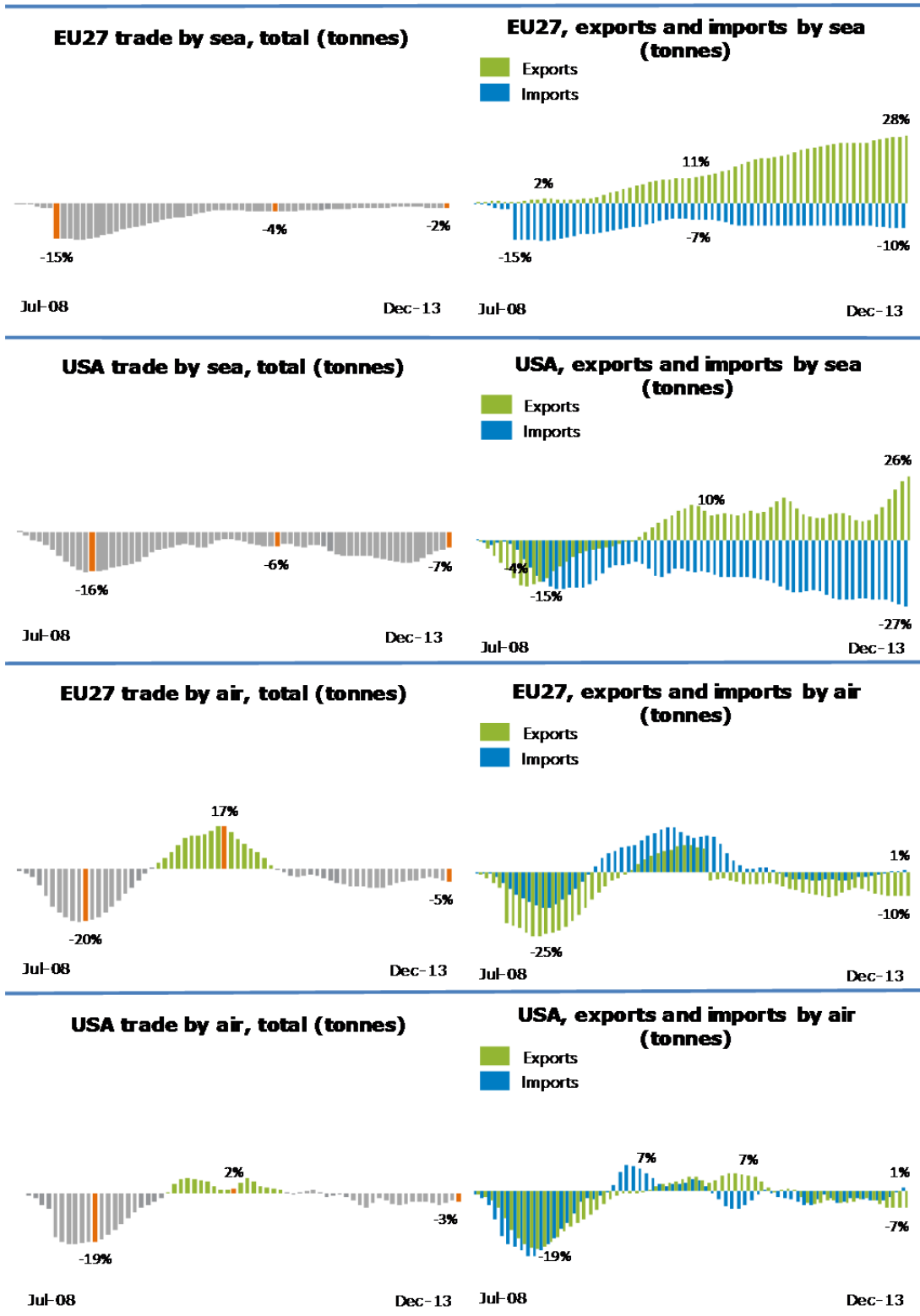


Figure 2. EU external trade by sea, percentage change from June 2008  
(Tonnes, monthly trend, seasonally adjusted)

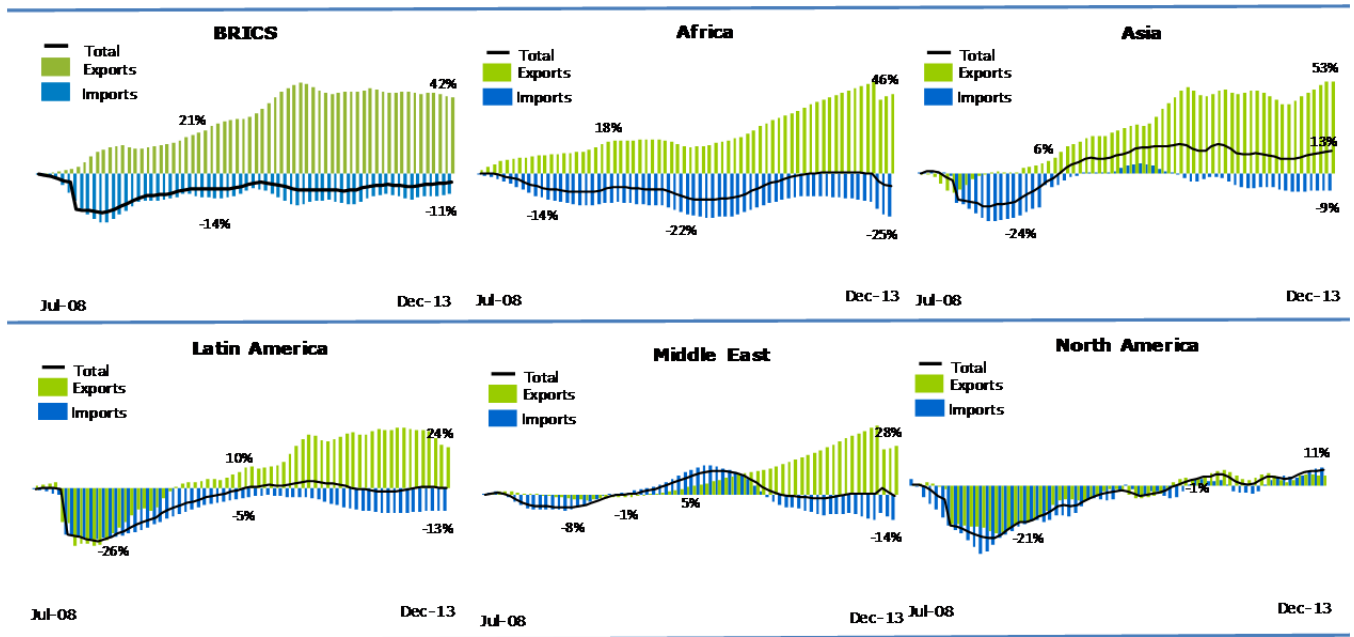


Figure 3. EU external trade by air, percentage change from June 2008  
(Tonnes, monthly trend, seasonally adjusted)

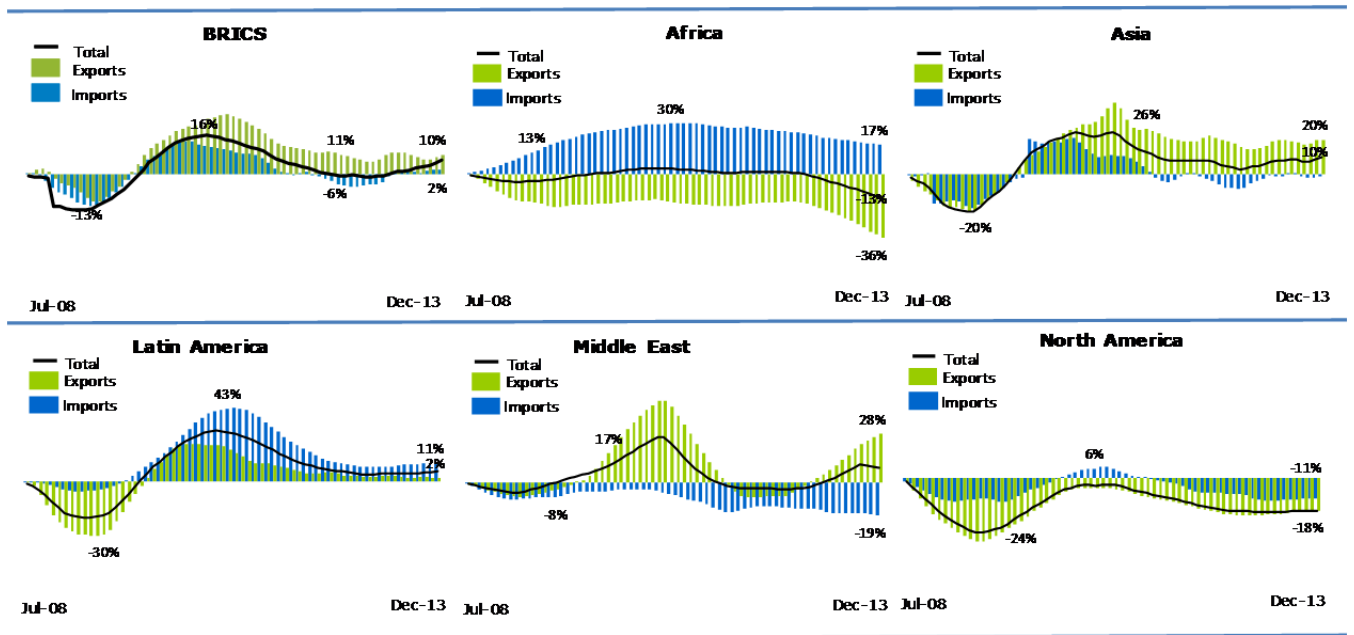


Figure 4. **USA external trade by sea, percentage change from June 2008**  
(Tonnes, monthly trend, seasonally adjusted)

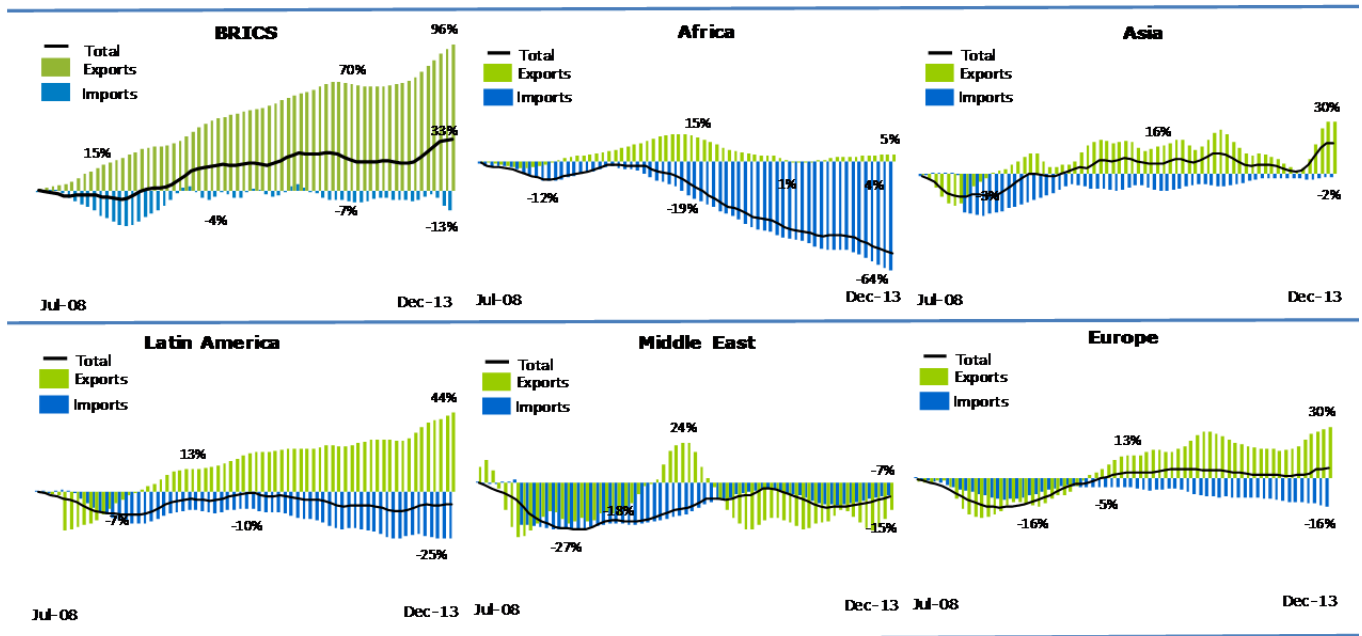


Figure 5. **USA external trade by air, percentage change from June 2008**  
(Tonnes, monthly trend, seasonally adjusted)

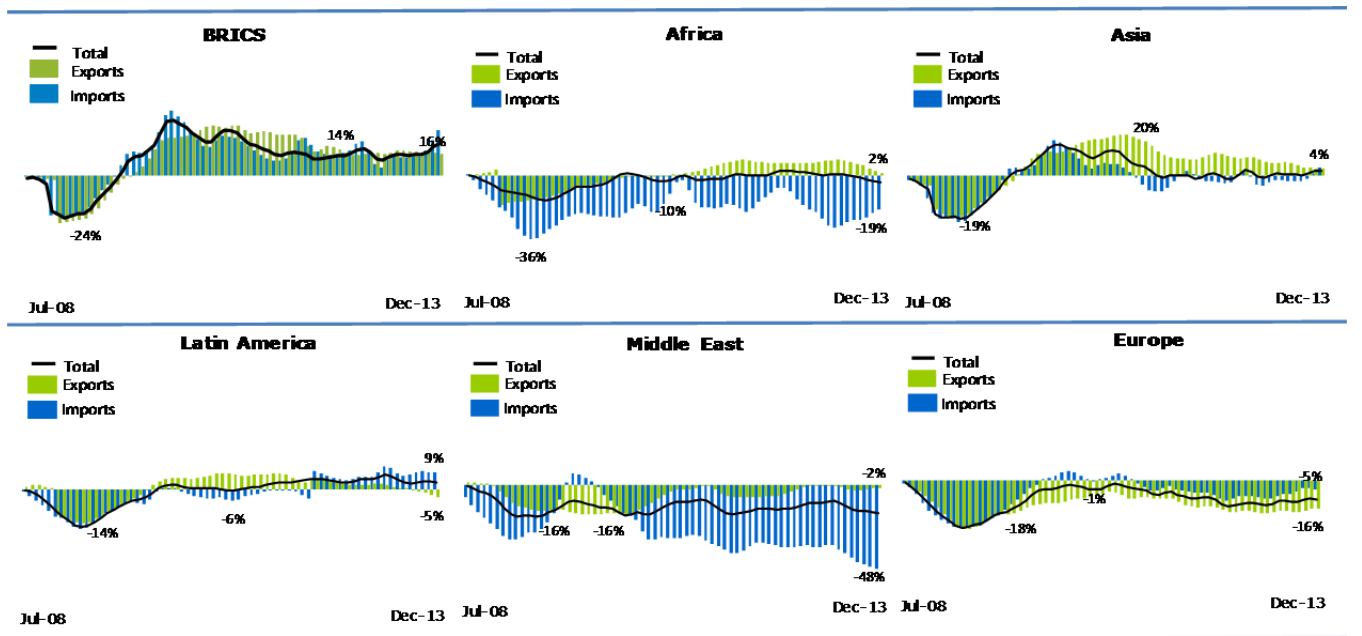


Figure 6. **Brazil external trade, percentage change from June 2008**  
(Tonnes, monthly trend, seasonally adjusted)

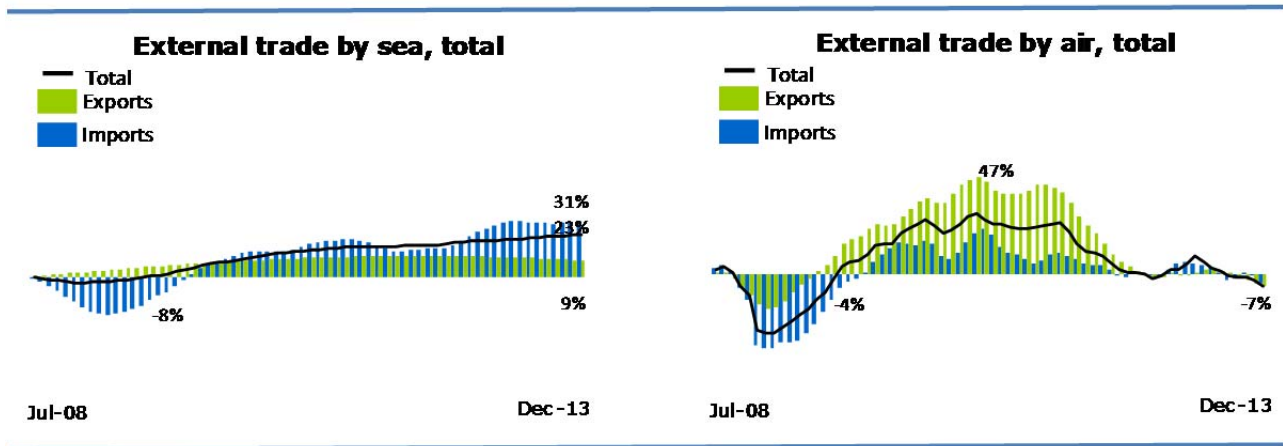


Figure 7. **Brazil external trade by sea, percentage change from June 2008**  
(Tonnes, monthly trend, seasonally adjusted)

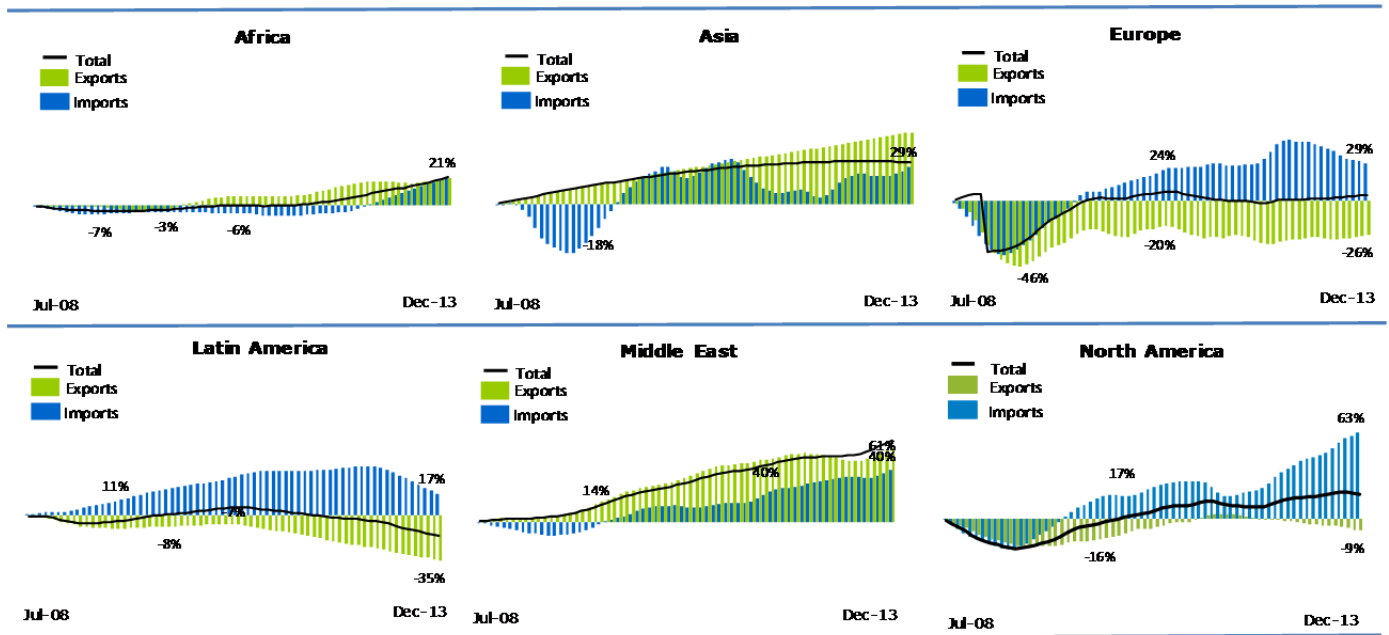


Figure 8. **Brazil external trade by air, percentage change from June 2008**  
(Tonnes, monthly trend, seasonally adjusted)

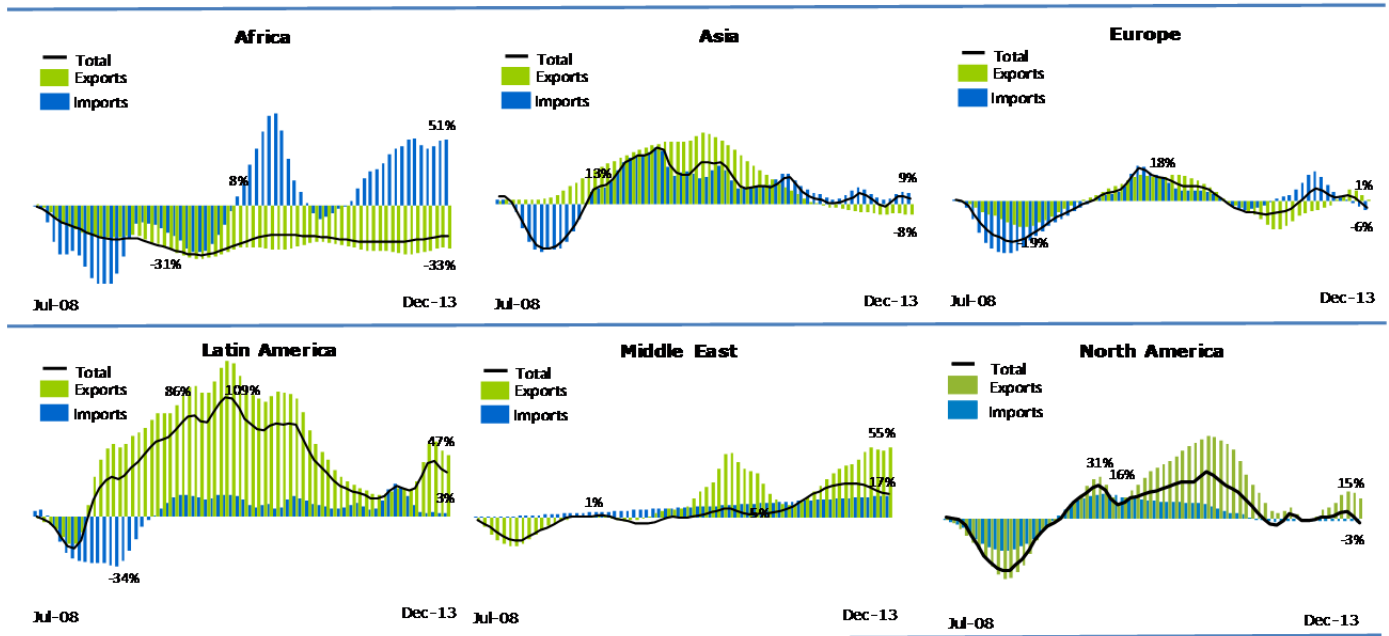


Figure 9. **External trade with China, percentage change from June 2008**  
(Tonnes, monthly trend, seasonally adjusted)

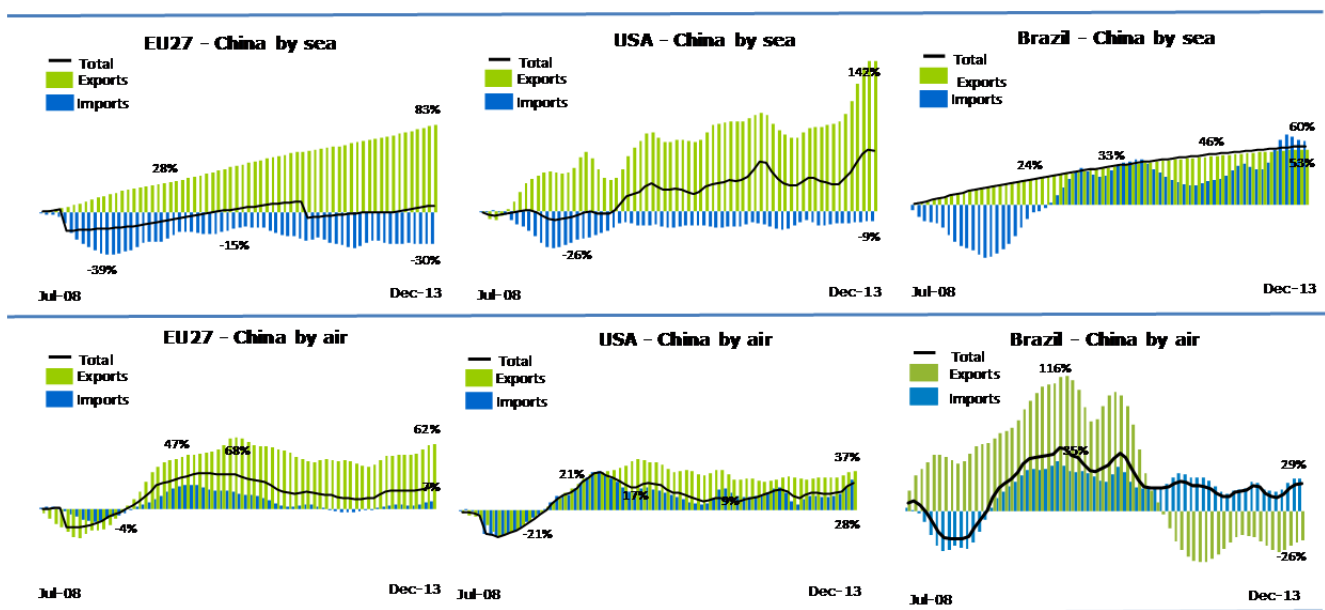


Figure 10. **New Zealand external trade, percentage change from June 2008**  
(Tonnes, monthly trend, seasonally adjusted)

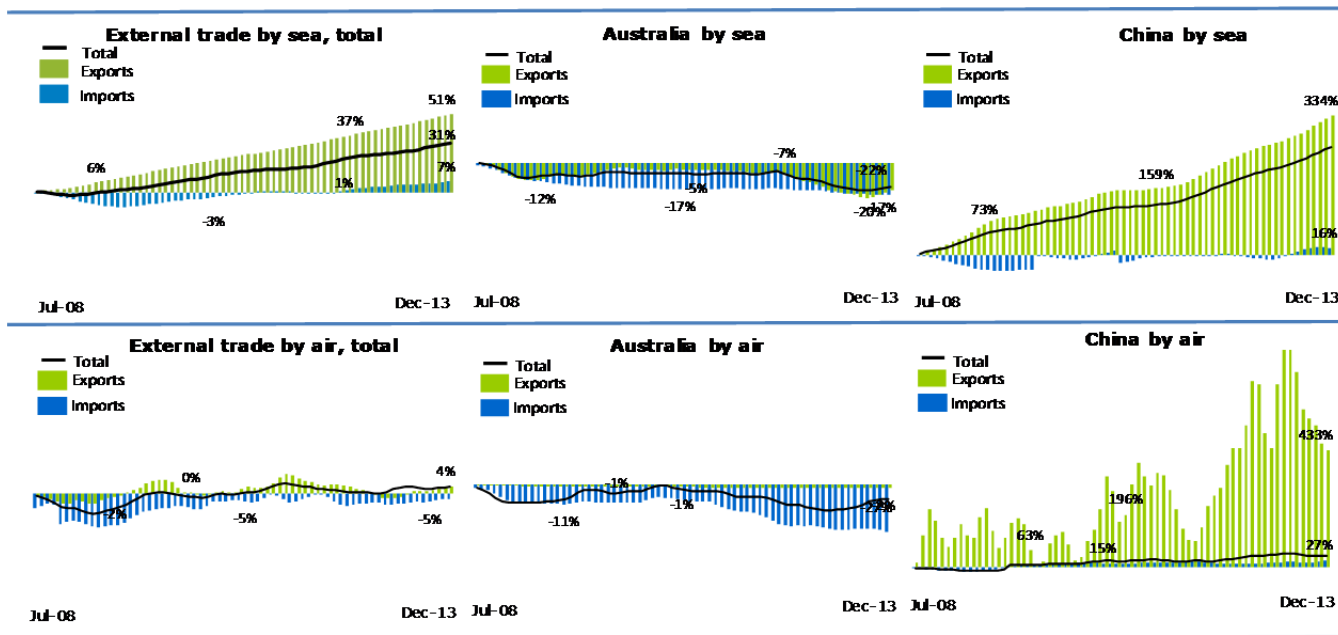
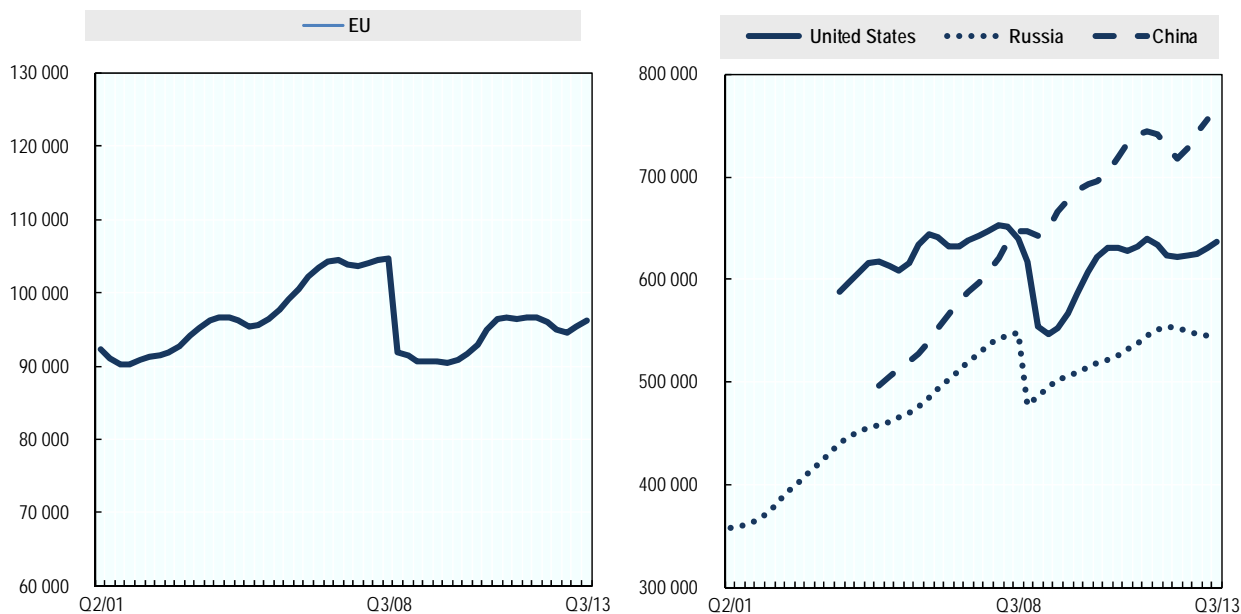
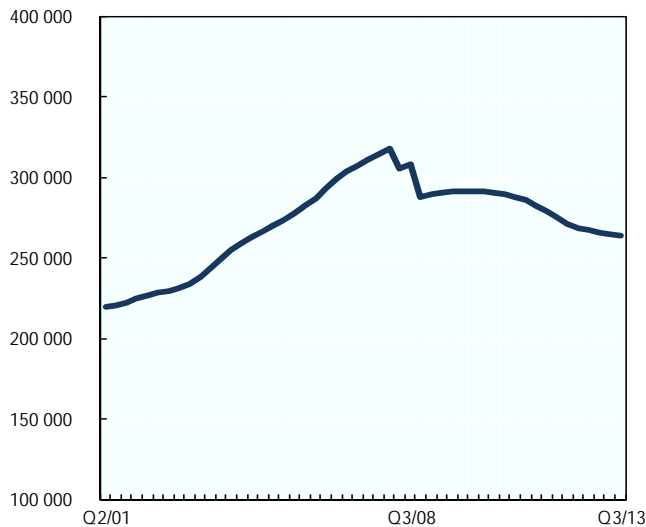


Figure 11. **National and international rail freight**  
(Million tonne-km, trend, seasonally adjusted)



**Note:** China data is sourced from National Bureau of Statistics of China. EU rail freight data includes: Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom. These cover around 90% of total rail freight in the EU.

Figure 12. **National and international road freight in the EU**  
(Million tonne-km, trend, seasonally adjusted)



**Note:** Data on road freight in the EU area include Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom. These cover around 85% of total road freight in the EU.

#### Methodological note

The International Transport Forum Statistics Brief on Global Trade and Transport presents the latest global freight transport trends based on the Global Trade and Transport Database and the ITF Quarterly Transport Statistics. These data are collected by the Secretariat through a questionnaire and from external sources, including Eurostat, US Census and Japan Customs. National data are seasonally adjusted by the International Transport Forum Secretariat for analytical purposes.

Short-term data is normally compiled to allow timely identification of changes in any indicator and especially to identify possible turning points. However, monthly or quarterly transport statistics are often characterised by seasonal patterns. Seasonal adjustment filters out usual seasonal fluctuations that recur with similar intensity in the same season every year. Trend, in turn, excludes also other irregular factors (such as strikes and impact of weather) from a time series. A time series from which the seasonal variations have been eliminated basically allows for the comparison of data between two quarters for which seasonal patterns are different, also helping to identify turning points and the underlying direction of the change.

Seasonal adjustment is carried out with the Demetra program using the TRAMO/SEATS adjustment method. Seasonally adjusted estimates may differ from those produced by national authorities due to differences in the adjustment methodology.

For more detailed description of methodology, [click here](#).

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For additional information on our transport statistics, go to [www.internationaltransportforum.org/statistics/shortterm/index.html](http://www.internationaltransportforum.org/statistics/shortterm/index.html).



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