# 4. External Relations

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| Export grew last year. |  | The total value of exports of goods[[1]](#footnote-2) at current prices reached 4,649.1 bn CZK in 2024 and was higher by 206.7 bn CZK (4.7%), year-on-year. International trade prices followed up on the previous turbulent development last year with an increase[[2]](#footnote-3), so a large part of the solid export growth can be attributed to price shifts. The year-on-year dynamics of exports varied considerably during the year (−0.2%, 4.4% and 10.5% in Q1 through to Q3). The increase of exports of goods then weakened again to 4.5% in Q4 alone and exports reached a total of 1,184.2 bn CZK (+51.2 bn). According to seasonally adjusted data, exports of goods fell by 0.6%, quarter-on-quarter, in Q4. It represented the first decrease since Q3 2023. | | |
|  |  | **Chart 9 Export and import of goods** (y-o-y change, in %) **and balance of international trade with goods** (in bn CZK, right axis) | | |
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| Source: CZSO | | |
| Exports outside of the EU grew more substantially. |  | Exports to non-EU countries increased significantly in cumulation for the whole year 2024 (+141.9 bn CZK, 16.2%). On the contrary, exports to EU increased only slightly (+64.6 bn CZK, 1.8%). Among the destinations where the value of exports increased the most last year, Great Britain held the first place (+39.3 bn CZK, 22.0%)[[3]](#footnote-4) and the United States of America (+21.1 billion, 18.8%) also ranked high. Exports to Poland (+24.6 bn CZK, 7.7%) and Germany (+19.1 bn, 1.4%) were also significant in absolute numbers, but export dynamics remain relatively low, especially for Germany. Exports to Turkey (+11.1 bn, 16.9%), China (+9.9 bn, 23.0%), Singapore (+9.5 bn, 129.5%) and Ukraine (+9.2 bn, 25.7%) were around 10 bn CZK. Smaller export destinations, which recorded a significant percentage increase of exports last year, included Japan (+5.9 bn, 49.6%)[[4]](#footnote-5), the United Arab Emirates (+4.4 bn, 29.5%), Azerbaijan (+2.0 bn, 46.7%)[[5]](#footnote-6) and Malaysia (+1.9 bn, 57.1%)[[6]](#footnote-7). There were not many decreases of exports recorded last year, and the most significant were in case of exports to Sweden (−3.6 bn CZK, −4.9%), Finland (−3.1 bn, −13.4%), Austria (−2.9 bn, −1.6%) and the Netherlands (−2.6 bn, −1.7%). | | |
| Higher growth of exports outside the EU persisted at the end of the year. |  | The increase of exports into the EU (+13.4 bn CZK, 1.5%) lagged behind exports to non-EU countries (+37.9 bn, 16.3%) also in Q4 2024 alone. Exports to Germany grew the most (see Table 2) and the increase of exports to Great Britain and Poland stayed high. Non-EU destinations – the United States, Ukraine, Israel, Belgium or Turkey – contributed significantly to the growth of exports. Among the minority of countries where exports of goods fell, year-on-year, France and Italy stood out. | | |
| Motor vehicles contributed the most to the growth of exports in 2024… |  | The value of exports of motor vehicles increased the most last year (+74.6 bn CZK, 6.1%), nevertheless the growth weakened compared to the previous two years. Exports of computers, electronic and optical appliances (+56.1 bn CZK, 15.2%), food products (+21.5 bn, 12.8%), electrical equipment (+15.9 bn, 3.5%), chemicals and chemical products (+14.3 bn, 6.9%) and rubber and plastic products (+11.5 bn, 5.4%) also grew strongly. Exports of other products of manufacturing (+9.1 bn CZK, 9.3%), activities of waste collection, treatment and disposal (+7.5 bn, 19.1%), basic pharmaceutical products (+7.2 bn, 10.7%), fabricated metal products (+6.8 bn, 2.5%) or paper and paper products (+5.3 bn, 6.7%) also expanded. Engineering did not thrive last year, which also led to a decrease of exports of machinery and equipment by 12.3 bn CZK (−2.4%), and the value of exports of basic metals (−9.4 bn, −5.9%) and coke and refined petroleum products (−8.8 bn, −17.2%) also decreased. | | |
| **Table 1 Sections of CPA classification with highest impact on goods exports development in Q4 2024** (year-on-year) | | |  | **Table 2 Countries with largest impact on exports of goods in Q4 2024** (year-on-year) |
| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | |  | bn CZK | % | | Computer, electr. and opt. appliances and equipment | +12.8 | +12.8 | | Electrical equipment | +8.9 | +8.0 | | Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning | +6.7 | +52.7 | | Food products | +5.8 | +12.8 | | Chemicals and chemical products | +4.1 | +7.6 | | Rubber and plastic products | +2.7 | +5.4 | | Other manufacturing products | +2.7 | +10.4 | | Motor vehicles (except for motorcycles) and parts | +2.4 | +0.7 | | Metalworking products | +1.9 | +2.8 | | Other transportation equipment | +1.6 | +7.9 | | Paper and paper products | +1.5 | +7.7 | | Wearing apparel | +0.8 | +12.2 | | Leather and related products | −1.0 | −19.7 | | Coke and refined oil products | −1.3 | −10.4 | | Machinery and equipment | −2.8 | −2.2 | | | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | |  | bn CZK | % | | Germany | +6.0 | +1.8 | | Great Britain | +5.8 | +12.7 | | Poland | +5.7 | +6.5 | | United States of America | +5.5 | +19.3 | | Israel | +4.1 | +116.4 | | Ukraine | +4.1 | +37.3 | | Belgium | +3.6 | +14.7 | | Turkey | +3.0 | +16.0 | | Austria | +2.7 | +6.4 | | Singapore | +2.0 | +121.9 | | China | +1.7 | +14.1 | | Azerbaijan | +1.2 | +94.5 | | South Korea | +1.2 | +40.1 | | Italy | −1.2 | −2.6 | | France | −2.7 | −4.7 | |
| Source: CZSO | | |  | Source: CZSO |
| …however, their exports increased only slightly in Q4 itself. |  | The growth of exports of motor vehicles, which contributed the most to the total increase of exports in the first three quarters of the year, weakened significantly in Q4. The exports of computers, electronic and optical appliances (see Table 1), electrical equipment, electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning, and food products grew the most at the end of the year. Exports of a minority of product types declined, mostly machinery and equipment, and coke and refined petroleum products. | | |
| Imports increased moderately last year. |  | The total value of goods imports increased by 101.2 bn CZK (2.3%) last year and reached 4,421.1 bn CZK. Import prices rose more moderately than export prices[[7]](#footnote-8). The year-on-year growth of imports was stronger in the second half of the year (−4.0%, 1.4%, 7.5% and 5.0% in Q1 through Q4). The value of goods imports increased by 54.2 bn CZK, year-on-year, to 1,140.4 bn CZK in Q4. The increase of imports was thus higher in nominal terms than the increase of exports at the end of the year, reflecting, among other things, the revived consumer demand amid a simultaneous downturn in export-oriented industry. According to seasonally adjusted data, imports increased by 0.7% in Q4, quarter-on-quarter. | | |
| Import from the EU grew more. |  | The relatively modest total increase of imports was largely supported by imports from the EU last year (+74.7 bn CZK, 2.8%). Imports from non-EU countries grew slower (+26.2 bn, 1.6%). Imports from Poland (+29.1 bn CZK, 7.5%), Taiwan (+14.7 bn CZK, 50.0%)[[8]](#footnote-9), Germany (+13.8 bn CZK, 1.4%), China (+12.3 bn CZK, 2.3%), Slovakia (+11.7 bn, 5.2%) and Azerbaijan (+9.9 bn, 33.3%) increased the most. Norway (−30.9 bn CZK −35.9%), where the result was affected by a decrease in natural gas prices, and the United Kingdom (−10.2 bn, −13.2%) dominated among the countries from which imports were lower, year-on-year. Significant percentage changes regarding imports were also recorded in Bulgaria (+5.6 bn CZK, 25.7%), South Africa (−5.2 bn, −31.3%) and Hong Kong (+0.4 bn, 23.3%). Imports from the EU increased by 33.0 bn CZK (4.9%) in Q4 alone and from non-EU countries by 21.6 bn CZK (5.3%). Imports from China grew the most (see Table 4), followed by a significant increase for Poland and Slovakia. Germany, Russia, Bulgaria, Italy or Austria still feature the more significant additions. A large drop was recorded for imports from Norway. | | |
| **Table 3 Sections of CPA classification with highest impact on goods imports development in Q4 2024** (year-on-year) | | |  | **Table 4 Countries with largest impact on imports of goods in Q4 2024** (year-on-year) |
| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | |  | bn CZK | % | | Computers, electr. and opt. appliances and equipment | +17.9 | +14.4 | | Metalworking products except for machinery and equipment | +16.0 | +32.7 | | Food products | +7.6 | +12.9 | | Basic metals | +4.9 | +6.9 | | Electric equipment | +4.7 | +4.4 | | Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning | +3.4 | +64.8 | | Other products of manufacturing | +2.8 | +11.2 | | Agricultural and gamekeeping products | +2.5 | +15.8 | | Tobacco products | +1.7 | +49.6 | | Chemicals and chemical products | +1.6 | +1.9 | | Wearing apparel | +1.2 | +7.4 | | Basic pharmaceutical products | +1.1 | +3.3 | | Machinery and equipment, n.c.e. | −2.1 | −2.2 | | Motor vehicles (except for motorcycles) and parts | −2.3 | −1.3 | | Oil and natural gas | −9.6 | −19.0 | | | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | |  | bn CZK | % | | China | +18.5 | +14.3 | | Poland | +10.4 | +10.8 | | Slovakia | +9.5 | +16.6 | | Russia | +4.9 | +21.7 | | Germany | +4.2 | +1.7 | | Bulgaria | +2.8 | +47.0 | | Italy | +2.7 | +5.7 | | Austria | +2.7 | +9.4 | | Ukraine | +2.3 | +34.4 | | Thailand | +1.8 | +33.1 | | Kazakhstan | −2.0 | −30.4 | | Hungary | −2.1 | −8.2 | | Great Britain | −2.7 | −14.1 | | United States of America | −3.1 | −9.5 | | Norway | −9.7 | −50.9 | |
| Source: CZSO | | |  | Source: CZSO |
| The value of oil and gas imports fell. |  | Imports of computers, electronic and optical appliances and equipment (+52.5 bn CZK, 11.4%), food products (+26.6 bn, 12.1%), fabricated metal products (+19.8 bn, 10.1%), motor vehicles and parts (+14.0 bn, 2.1%) and basic pharmaceutical products (+10.7 bn, 8.3%) increased the most last year. In contrast, the value of imports of oil and natural gas fell significantly under the influence of price developments (−24.4 bn CZK, −13.4%). Imports of electrical equipment were significantly lower (−19.1 bn, −4.2%)[[9]](#footnote-10) and the weakening in domestic industry and the dampening of investment activity resulted in a decrease of imports of machinery and equipment (−18.4 bn, −4.5%). Imports of computers, electronic and optical appliances (see Table 3) and fabricated metal products increased considerably in Q4 alone. Imports of food products, electrical equipment and basic metals increased more modestly. Imports of oil and natural gas, machinery and equipment, and motor vehicles decreased, year-on-year. | | |
| The international trade balance of goods reached a massive surplus last year. |  | The balance of international trade with goods cumulated since the beginning of the year reached a surplus of 228.0 bn CZK, which was the highest recorded value in the available time series. The surplus improved by 105.5 bn CZK, year-on-year. The recorded increase of surplus was achieved during Q1 to Q3 (+43.0 bn CZK, +35.4 bn CZK and +30.1 bn, respectively). The total balance of international trade with goods amounted to a surplus of 43.7 bn CZK in Q4 2024, which was a worse result[[10]](#footnote-11) by 2.9 bn CZK, year-on-year. According to seasonally adjusted data, the international trade surplus deteriorated, quarter-on-quarter, in Q4. | | |
| **Table 5 Sections of CPA classification with highest impact on international trade with goods balance development in Q4 2024** (year-on-year) | | |  | **Table 6 Countries with highest impact on international trade with goods balance development in Q4 2024** (year-on-year) |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | |  | bn CZK | | Oil and natural gas | +9.8 | | Motor vehicles (except for motorcycles) and parts | +4.7 | | Electrical equipment | +4.1 | | Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning | +3.3 | | Other transport and equipment | +2.5 | | Chemicals and chemical products | +2.4 | | Rubber and plastic products | +1.9 | | Black and brown coal and lignite | +1.0 | | Leather and associated products | −1.2 | | Tobacco products | −1.5 | | Food products | −1.8 | | Agricultural and gamekeeping products | −2.0 | | Computers, electr. and opt. appliances and equipment | −5.0 | | Basic metals | −5.5 | | Metalworking products except for machinery and equipment | −14.1 | | | |  | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  | bn CZK | | Norway | +9.8 | | United States of America | +8.7 | | Great Britain | +8.6 | | Israel | +4.1 | | Belgium | +4.1 | | Turkey | +2.8 | | Kazakhstan | +2.0 | | South Africa | +1.9 | | Spain | −2.1 | | Bulgaria | −2.6 | | Italy | −3.9 | | Poland | −4.7 | | Russia | −5.2 | | Slovakia | −10.4 | | China | −16.8 | |
| Source: CZSO | | |  | Source: CZSO |
| The year-on-year improvement of the surplus was caused by the trade with the EU last year. |  | Last year's overall improvement of the international trade balance with goods was a result of reduction of the trade deficit with non-EU countries by 115.7 bn CZK. On the contrary, the trade surplus with the EU narrowed by 10.1 bn CZK. The trade balance improved the most with the United Kingdom (+49.5 bn CZK), Norway (+33.9 bn), the United States of America (+19.0 bn), Turkey (+12.3 bn) and Singapore (+10.2 bn) last year. The most significant deterioration of the balance was recorded in the case of trade with Taiwan (−13.3 bn CZK). The total trade balance with the EU deteriorated by 19.6 bn CZK, year-on-year, in Q4, while it improved by 16.3 bn CZK for non-EU countries. Overall, countries with a trade balance deterioration were predominant. The total year-on-year deterioration of the trade balance with goods was mainly due to trade with China (see Table 6) and Slovakia. This was followed by smaller negative contributions of Russia, Poland or Italy. In contrast, the trade balance with Norway, Great Britain and the United States of America improved, year-on-year, in Q4. The contribution of Belgium or Israel was also significant. | | |
| Total surplus of trade with motor vehicles increased last year, but worsened, year-on-year, at the end of the year. |  | Trade of motor vehicles (+60.5 bn CZK), electrical equipment (+35.0 bn CZK), oil and natural gas (+25.1 bn) and black and hard coal and lignite (+10.1 bn) had the biggest impact on improving the international trade balance last year. The trade balance of coke and refined petroleum products (−18.0 bn CZK), fabricated metal products (−13.0 bn) and basic metals (−12.2 bn) on the contrary deteriorated. The international trade balance of the prevailing share of products deteriorated, year-on-year, in Q4 itself, nevertheless a large decrease of the trade surplus of fabricated metal products (see Table 5) had the biggest impact on the overall slump of the surplus. The balance of trade in computers, electronic and optical products and basic metals also deteriorated significantly. By contrast, the deficit in oil and natural gas moderated and trade in motor vehicles, electrical equipment and electricity also acted as an improvement in the overall balance. The trade balance of computers, electronic and optical appliances and equipment and basic metals also worsened notably. By contrast, the deficit of oil and natural gas moderated and trade with motor vehicles, electrical equipment and electricity also acted as an improvement of the total balance. | | |
|  |  | **Chart 10 Export and import of goods** (y-o-y change, in %) **and balance of international trade with goods** (in bn CZK, right axis) | | |
|  | | |
| Source: CZSO | | |

1. Data for international trade with goods are recalculated using the updated method based on higher rate of detail since year 2020, see [https://csu.gov.cz/update-of-the-compilation-method-international-trade-in-goods-change-of-ownership](https://csu.gov.cz/update-of-the-compilation-method-international-trade-in-goods-change-of-ownershipU). Unless stated otherwise, all figures are without seasonal adjustment and in current prices. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Prices of goods exports rose by 3.1% for the whole year 2024. In Q4 alone, export prices were 4.1% higher, year-on-year, and by 0.9%, quarter-on-quarter. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Motor vehicles and their parts accounted for the majority of the increase. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Particullarly the exports of computers, electronic and optical appliances increased for Singapore and Japan. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Increases in the order of tens of percent lasted here since 2021, especially in the field of computers and electronics. Exports of motor vehicles also increased significantly last year. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Increases across different sections of CPA classifications (chemicals and chemical products, computers, machinery and equipment, motor vehicles and parts). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. Prices of goods imports were higher by 1.5% in 2024. Import prices rose by 2.2%, year-on-year, in Q4 and by 0.9%, quarter-on-quarter. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. The increase in Taiwan was related to an increase of imports of computers and electronic and optical appliances. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. This year's decrease is related to last year's high comparison basis for products needed to install photovoltaic power plants (especially batteries). Imports peaked in the first half of 2023 and subsequently started to decline. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. From the perspective of historical time series, this still represents a significant surplus. The balance usually achieves lower surpluses in Q4 compared to the rest of the year. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)