Market evolution: Construction machinery parts (CN 8431) — 2015–2025

Introduction

The market for construction and heavy machinery parts (CN 8431) is a bellwether for global infrastructure investment and industrial activity. Over the 2015–2025 period, the European Union's external trade in these parts experienced a notable divergence between value and volume trends, a reshuffling of trade partners, and a sharp increase in market concentration. This report examines the evolution of EU exports and imports, highlighting the key dynamics that have reshaped the sector.

The Reconfiguration of Trade Partnerships and Supply Chains

The EU's trade relationships in machinery parts have undergone significant restructuring, driven by geopolitical events and shifting competitive advantages.

The US market strengthens as the cornerstone of EU exports

EU exports to the United States rose from €1.49 bn in 2015 to €2.25 bn in 2025, a 51.3 % increase. Together with the United Kingdom and Australia, these markets absorbed a growing share of EU shipments, offsetting declines elsewhere.

Export Partner	2015 (€ bn)	2025 (€ bn)	Change
United States	1.49	2.25	+51.3 %
United Kingdom	0.80	0.97	+20.7 %
China	0.94	0.71	–24.5 %
Australia	0.32	0.59	+84.4 %
Russian Federation	0.38	0.00	–99.9 %

Source: Top partners by value

China's retreat and the rise of alternative suppliers in imports

On the import side, China consolidated its position as the dominant supplier, with purchases climbing 133 % to €1.86 bn. India and Türkiye emerged as rapidly growing sources, while imports from the United Kingdom and Japan contracted.

Import Partner	2015 (€ bn)	2025 (€ bn)	Change
China	0.80	1.86	+133.0 %
Türkiye	0.14	0.35	+143.9 %
India	0.06	0.16	+183.9 %
United Kingdom	0.62	0.43	–30.8 %
United States	0.44	0.37	–15.8 %

Source: Top partners by value

Concentration rises sharply on the import side

The Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (HHI) for imports rose from 1,338 to 2,133 (up 59 %), signalling a more concentrated supply base largely driven by China’s growing share. Export concentration also increased, from 552 to 791 (up 43 %), reflecting the growing weight of the US market.

- Concentration trends

The Price-Driven Value Growth Amidst Declining Volumes

While headline trade values grew in both directions, the underlying volume and price dynamics reveal contrasting patterns: export value gains were entirely price-driven, whereas import growth was led by volume.

Export value gains are entirely price-driven; import growth is volume-led

Flow	Value Change	Quantity Change	Unit Price Change
EU Exports	+1.8 %	–20.5 %	+28.1 %
EU Imports	+35.4 %	+33.6 %	+1.3 %

The trade surplus narrowed from €6.7 bn to €5.7 bn, a decline of 14.5 %, as import volumes surged while export volumes contracted. The EU’s net exporter position therefore weakened in volume terms even as high-value parts kept the surplus positive.

- Aggregate trade trends

Segment-level price dynamics reveal divergent cost pressures

Decomposing the subcategories shows the steepest export price rises in “parts for boring or sinking machinery” (843143) and “parts for lifting/handling machinery” (843139). On the import side, price variations were more subdued, except for a notable spike in “parts of pulley tackles and hoists” (843110).

- Product segment breakdown

Supply Shocks and Domestic Production: A Surge in EU Production Value

The period witnessed distinct price shock events in trade and an extraordinary increase in the value of EU domestic production, contrasting with stagnant output quantities.

A price shock from India and a Nigerian outlier define recent volatility

Among the detected anomalies, a price shock on imports from India occurred in 2022, with a 17.4 % upward shift in unit values, while a sharp drop in export prices to Nigeria in 2021 reflected an isolated volume spike. These events underline the sensitivity of certain supply chains to abrupt cost changes.

- Volatility and shocks

EU production value soars while output stagnates, pointing to widespread inflation

EU production of CN 8431 parts saw its value explode from €5.0 bn in 2015 (first available) to €13.8 bn in 2024, a 174.8 % increase, while the quantity produced edged up only 3.5 %. This mirrors the export price trend and suggests that cost inflation—for materials, energy, and labour—has been the dominant force across the entire sector.

Indicator	2015	2024	Change
Production value	€5.0 bn	€13.8 bn	+174.8 %
Production quantity	150.6 mn kg	155.9 mn kg	+3.5 %

- Production volumes

Conclusion

Between 2015 and 2025, the EU’s trade in construction machinery parts was marked by a fundamental tension: nominal trade values rose, but export volumes fell while import volumes surged. The EU’s competitive position was sustained by high-value, high-price segments, but its trade surplus eroded in real terms. Geopolitical disruptions—most visibly the near-total collapse of the Russian market—combined with the rapid expansion of

Chinese and Indian supply, have redrawn the trade map and increased import concentration. Meanwhile, domestic production value skyrocketed despite flat output, pointing to an environment of persistent cost inflation that will continue to shape the sector's dynamics.

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If you need advice on European trade policy, or representation for your interests in Brussels, feel free to contact me at support@tradedashboard.eu. You can find my CV at this address.