Global transportation activity stalls in April

KEY FINDINGS

- Global Transportation Business Activity Index at 34-month low of 50.2
- Chemicals production rises but metals & mining output declines further
- Slowest decline in autos output in five months

Global Sector PMI indices are compiled from responses to questionnaires sent to purchasing managers in IHS Markit’s global PMI survey panels, covering over 27,000 private sector companies in more than 40 countries.

Indices are available for the basic materials, consumer goods, consumer services, financials, healthcare, industrials, technology and telecommunication services industry groups, and sub-sectors of these groups.

Global transportation activity stagnated in April, with the Business Activity Index for the sector at a 34-month low of 50.2. This sector forms part of the wider industrials group, where output rose at the slowest rate in the current 32-month growth sequence.

Elsewhere, chemicals output rose at a stronger rate, lifting overall basic materials output higher for the first time in seven months despite a further drop in metals & mining. The third constituent materials sector – forestry & paper products – registered broadly no change in output, ending a five-month downturn.

The global automobiles & auto parts sector remained in contraction in April. Output fell for the seventh month running, albeit at the weakest rate since last November. New orders fell at the sharpest rate since the series began in late-2009, however.

Other financials recorded the strongest growth of all sectors in April, followed by software & services. The rates of expansion were the fastest in ten and 12 months respectively.
Methodology

The IHS Markit Global Sector PMI™ indices are compiled by IHS Markit from responses to questionnaires sent to purchasing managers in IHS Markit’s global PMI survey panels, covering over 27,000 private sector companies in more than 40 countries.

IHS Markit maps individual company responses to industry sectors according to standard industry classification (SIC) codes. Global Sector PMI indices are available for the basic materials, consumer goods, consumer services, financials, healthcare, industrials, technology and telecommunication services industry groups, and sub-sectors of these groups.

Survey responses are collected in the second half of each month and indicate the direction of change compared to the previous month. Survey responses are weighted by country of origin, based on sectoral gross value added. A diffusion index is calculated for each survey variable. The index is the sum of the percentage of ‘higher’ responses and half the percentage of ‘unchanged’ responses. The indices vary between 0 and 100, with a reading above 50 indicating an overall increase compared to the previous month, and below 50 an overall decrease. The indices are then seasonally adjusted.

For manufacturing sectors, the headline figure is the Purchasing Managers’ Index™ (PMI). The PMI is a weighted average of the following five indices: New Orders (30%), Output (25%), Employment (20%), Suppliers’ Delivery Times (15%) and Stocks of Purchases (10%). For the PMI calculation the Suppliers’ Delivery Times Index is inverted so that it moves in a comparable direction to the other indices.

For services sectors, or sectors covering both manufacturing and services, the headline figure is the Business Activity Index. This is a diffusion index calculated from a question that asks for changes in the volume of business activity or output compared with one month previously.

For further information on the PMI survey methodology, please contact economics@ihsmarkit.com.

About PMI

Purchasing Managers’ Index™ (PMI™) surveys are now available for over 40 countries and also for key regions including the eurozone. They are the most closely watched business surveys in the world, favoured by central banks, financial markets and business decision makers for their ability to provide up-to-date, accurate and often unique monthly indicators of economic trends. To learn more go to ihsmarkit.com/products/pmi.html.

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