



Press release

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Swiss watch exports in the first half of 2022

An excellent first six months in terms of value and volume

Swiss watches enjoyed strong global demand in the first half of this year. There was an increase of watch exports to most markets with the notable exception of China and Hong Kong. The downturn in macroeconomic, geopolitical and health conditions has by and large only had a limited impact on the sector's results to date.

Swiss watch exports between January and June 2022 amounted to 11.9 billion francs, representing a growth of 11.9% compared with the first semester in 2021. While 70% of this increase stems from mechanical watches made of precious metals or steel, the other categories also contributed to the overall upward trend. The remarkable increase in exported watches should also be noted.

Forecasts for the Swiss watch industry in 2022 remain optimistic, despite a less favourable outlook overall and a higher degree of uncertainty. Watches will continue to benefit from a sustained demand and the appeal of the luxury market. However, the sector's turnover will be impacted by several obstacles such as difficulties in the supply of raw materials and investments, the rising cost of energy and transportation, the lack of manpower and the strength of the Swiss franc.

Products

Wristwatches accounted for more than 95% of watch exports in terms of value. They breached the 11 billion franc mark (11.3 billion) for the first time in the first half of this year with an increase of 11.9%. The corresponding number of parts also rose to 7.2 million units (+3.2%). This means that an additional 225,000 watches crossed Swiss borders between January and June. Notwithstanding this welcome growth, the industry is at an all-time low, attaining less than half of the figures recorded ten years ago.

Mechanical timepieces have enjoyed a significant upturn, despite a drop in volume (-3.3%). Quartz watches recorded an even more notable upward trend, which led to an overall rise in volume thanks to an increase of 8.2%.

Watches priced at over 3,000 francs (export price) accounted for most of the growth in terms of value (+15.5%). The 500-3,000 francs category (+6.0%) also contributed to this growth, while the 200-500 francs category (-19.1%) suffered a sharp drop. This category experienced a comparative decline in volume (-16.8%) vis-à-vis the trends of all the other categories, which saw a significant increase in their number of parts.



Markets

Asia absorbed half (49%) of the Swiss watch exports in the first semester. It remained steady at last year's level (+0.8%), split between markets experiencing sharp rises and sharp drops. Europe accounted for 30% of the market, thanks to a growth of 21.9%. America recorded the strongest growth (+31.0%) and also saw its share increase to 19%.

Swiss watch exports per market in the first half of 2022

Markets	Mil of CHF	Variation	Part
1. USA	1'864.4	+31.4%	15.7%
2. China	1'105.4	-26.3%	9.3%
3. Hong Kong	973.4	-11.5%	8.2%
4. Japan	837.0	+19.5%	7.0%
5. United Kingdom	778.3	+31.8%	6.5%
6. Singapore	762.6	+21.4%	6.4%
7. Germany	613.4	+25.4%	5.2%
8. France	573.3	+36.5%	4.8%
9. UAE	544.0	+17.6%	4.6%
10. Italy	468.1	+9.8%	3.9%
11. South Korea	376.2	+5.6%	3.2%
12. Spain	221.8	+41.8%	1.9%
13. Taiwan	182.7	+16.8%	1.5%
14. Saudi Arabia	172.5	+14.2%	1.4%
15. Australia	162.5	+22.0%	1.4%
World	11'901.5	+11.9%	

The majority of markets showed clear growth. Leading the way, the United States (+31.4%) was testament to the fact that demand is still high, and its market alone absorbed nearly 16% of Swiss watch exports. The US market benefited in particular from additional deliveries as a result of the difficulties affecting distribution in China.

In Asia, the Chinese market (-26.3%, of which -43.3% in the second quarter) was significantly disrupted by the anti-Covid measures in April and May. However, with 1.1 billion francs in six months, China lies significantly above its pre-pandemic results (+19.3%). Hong Kong (-11.5%) was also down, showing no real change from previous years. All other Asian markets have achieved significant growth.

Markets in Europe showed an even more marked upturn, for example: the United Kingdom (+31.8%), Germany (+25.4%) and France (+36.5%). The only exception was Russia (-64.3% in the first half of the year and -98.3% since the start of the conflict), but this did not have a major impact on the overall result (-0.7%).

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