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Mechanical Engineering Business Monitor for March

Strong order level growth closes out promising first quarter

Strong gains in order levels both for UK and export business showed through again in March. This is the third month in a row of solid order growth with substantially more firms recording gains than losses (+37 and +23 on UK and export order respectively).

It signalled the completion of a much improved first quarter and was the sixth month in a row that the balance of inquiries has been positive.

Martin Walder, EAMA chairman: "So far this year, solid increases in inquiries have translated into important improvements in order levels. As the government's underpinning measures unwind companies are ensuring that they have substantial continuing business. And according to the Monitor there may be something positive to report on employment if those orders keep coming in. Already there's a positive balance of +11% of firms saying that they have increased job opportunities."

(ends)

Notes to editors:

Business Monitor for March 2010 (120 responses) Change on previous month % responses (exporters 61% of sample)

Note: No December survey due to holiday period and other seasonal business interruptions

1 Prospects/Inquiries	UP		SAME		DOWN		UP/DOWN Difference	
	UK	Export	UK	Export	UK	Export	UK	Export
January 2009	15	13	24	47	61	40	-46	-27
February	22	23	38	54	40	23	-18	0
March	28	22	33	50	39	28	-11	-6
April	31	28	26	28	43	44	-12	-16
May	24	12	47	50	29	38	-1	-26
June	33	19	44	54	23	27	+10	-8
July	33	14	48	55	19	31	+14	-17
August	28	13	36	51	36	36	-8	-23
September	46	33	38	55	16	12	+30	+21
October	41	37	42	42	17	21	+24	+16
November	52	33	37	50	11	17	+41	+16
January 2010	58	42	33	49	9	9	+49	+33
February	50	52	41	37	9	11	+41	+41
March	58	38	38	55	4	7	+54	+31

2 Order intake	UP		SAME		DOWN		UP/DOWN Difference	
	UK	Export	UK	Export	UK	Export	UK	Export
January 2009	18	20	20	32	62	48	-44	-28
February	18	21	31	29	51	50	-33	-29
March	11	18	28	42	61	40	-50	-22
April	21	30	23	33	56	37	-37	-7
May	20	5	35	46	45	49	-25	-44
June	39	19	28	49	33	32	+6	-13
July	37	22	26	42	37	36	0	-14
August	33	22	23	41	44	37	-11	-15
September	51	34	26	43	23	23	+28	+11
October	40	23	43	56	17	21	+23	+2
November	34	22	39	44	27	34	+7	-12
January 2010	47	47	30	39	23	14	+24	+33
February	45	42	35	44	20	14	+25	+28
March	54	41	29	41	17	18	+37	+23

3 Jobs in the UK	UP	SAME	DOWN	UP - DOWN
January 2009	9	59	32	-23
February	0	67	33	-33
March	0	74	26	-26
April	2	65	33	-31
May	8	66	26	-18
June	8	71	21	-13
July	12	61	27	-15
August	8	70	22	-14
September	11	75	14	-3
October	19	56	25	-6
November	9	80	11	-2
January 2010	15	75	10	+5
February	18	65	17	+1
March	18	75	7	+11

4 Investment	Investment stopped	Plans deferred	Developing projects	Investing in all areas	Investing in staff	Other
January 2009	10	28	40	6	8	8
February	27	31	17	4	17	4
March	31	22	25	10	6	6
April	28	28	32	5	2	5
May*	22	28	35	6	4	6
June	25	34	22	9	9	1
July	22	30	35	6	4	3
August	30	19	26	11	5	9
September	12	22	30	20	12	4
October	25	17	29	8	17	4
November	10	27	30	3	25	5
January 2010	11	13	32	17	22	5
February	13	19	26	13	19	10
March	3	18	32	13	22	12

Note:

- * over 100% due to rounding
- choice of statements in full:
 1. All investment activity stopped
 2. Investment plans deferred
 3. Developing projects but not committing to them
 4. Investing in staff development and training but capital investment
 5. Investing in all areas of the business
 6. Other

5 Capital availability	More Difficult		About the same		Easier	
	Working	Investment	Working	Investment	Working	Investment
January 2009	48	58	52	42	0	0
February	39	40	61	60	0	0
March	37	41	61	59	2	0
April	41	36	59	64	0	0
May	22	24	76	76	2	0
June	25	33	75	66	0	1
July	22	23	78	77	0	0
August	33	30	63	68	4	2
September	14	21	79	76	7	3
October	25	21	69	75	6	4
November	18	25	80	73	2	2
January 2010	14	23	80	74	6	3
February	9	8	88	89	3	3
March	12	10	82	90	6	0