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## **UK mechanical engineering maintains reasonable start to the year**

### Inquiries and orders improve, confidence levels still suppressed

UK mechanical engineering's reasonable start to 2016 was maintained in March according to the Engineering and Machinery Alliance's (EAMA) Business Monitor.

Martin Walder, EAMA chairman: "Prospecting continues to show promise with positive numbers coming in for UK and particularly for export business. It's also encouraging to see the proportion of exporters reporting enquiry declines shrinking to 13% of all returns this month and averaging 16% for the first Quarter this year compared with 30% a year earlier.

"Orders from UK businesses strengthened in March and even turned positive for the first time since November on exports. In fact the export returns are potentially significant. With 47% of participating exporters reporting gains in export orders and a nine point fall in those reporting declines the Monitor registered a 31 point gain in the monthly balance from minus two to plus 29. In addition the 47% registering gains is the highest monthly share for gainers since February 2011.

"The question now is will this result turn out to be a one month anomaly or alternatively the harbinger of a real change in export performance, which the Monitor has shown to be problematic for half of the last 18 or so months covered.

"With the euro below €1.30 to the Pound Sterling the exchange is approaching neutral territory. This enables UK firms to quote competitively for business in the huge EU single market which contains five of the mechanical engineering sector's ten top markets worldwide (Germany, France, Netherlands, Italy and Ireland).

"Investment activity has picked up significantly and companies are still actively investing in skills as filling job vacancies is still an issue for many companies. Access to investment finance improved again this month, but less reported on working capital funding.

"Although confidence remains suppressed, there was a small uptick in the balance between firms reporting confidence up and those saying it is down over the month. The overall balance is now out of the negative zone seen in the third and fourth quarters last year. Several important trade shows took place in April at the NEC. These included the UK's biggest manufacturing machinery show MACH. We expect these shows will have had an effect on companies' confidence about their future prospects, and that this will show up in future months particularly after the June Referendum."

*(ends - data attached)*

### **Notes to editors:**

1. EAMA's 14 trade associations represent 1,900+ firms: Agricultural Engineers Association, -- British Automation and Robot Association -- British Compressed Air Society -- British Fluid Power Association -- British Paper Machinery Suppliers Association -- British Plastics Federation -- British Turned Part Manufacturers Association -- Gambica -- Gauge and Toolmakers Association -- Manufacturing Technologies Association -- Printing Industry Confederation -- Processing and Packaging Machinery Association -- Solids Handling and Processing Association -- UK Industrial Vision Association
2. There's no December Monitor as the business period for many firms is only a three-week span.
3. The Monitor records the proportion of firms in each category, not the number or size of enquiries, orders etc
4. The Monitor averages between 80-110 returns each month
5. Monitor reports for 2010-2011 are available on the EAMA website: [www.eama.info](http://www.eama.info)

# The Monitor

## 1 Prospects/enquiries

Month	UP		SAME		DOWN		UP/DOWN Difference	
	UK	Export	UK	Export	UK	Export	UK	Export
January 2011	49	43	38	50	13	7	+36	+36
February	50	42	39	49	11	9	+39	+33
March	38	40	47	48	15	12	+23	+28
April	44	35	43	52	13	13	+31	+22
May	31	36	56	46	14	18	+17	+18
June	43	34	41	56	15	10	+28	+24
July	34	28	43	51	23	21	+11	+7
August	22	20	37	36	41	44	-19	-24
September	31	19	43	54	26	27	+5	-8
October	34	21	49	59	17	20	+17	+1
November	29	22	55	64	16	14	+13	+8
January 2012	33	26	49	55	18	19	+15	+7
February	43	33	48	56	9	11	+34	+26
March	42	22	50	68	8	10	+34	+12
April	33	25	46	51	21	24	+12	+1
May	33	24	47	43	20	33	+13	-9
June	25	20	45	54	30	26	-5	-6
July	24	17	52	52	24	31	0	-14
August	29	17	41	43	30	40	-1	-23
September	31	26	45	50	24	24	+7	+2
October	39	23	45	56	16	21	+23	+2
November	31	28	42	48	27	24	+4	+4
January 2013	39	25	43	60	18	15	+21	+10
February	39	38	41	44	20	18	+19	+20
March	27	26	56	61	17	13	+10	+13
April	35	30	46	58	19	12	+16	+18
May	38	26	45	57	16	17	+22	+9
June	29	25	55	67	16	8	+13	+17
July	42	38	44	57	14	5	+28	+33
August	26	9	45	54	29	37	-3	-28
September	53	31	36	54	11	15	+42	+16
October	47	33	41	56	12	11	+35	+21
November	38	28	51	58	11	13	+27	+15
January 2014	51	38	39	53	10	9	+41	+29
February	38	34	53	56	9	10	+29	+24
March	52	38	36	54	12	8	+40	+30
April	46	53	44	39	10	8	+36	+45
May	42	34	41	54	17	12	+25	+22
June	34	24	52	54	14	22	+20	+2
July	35	31	50	50	15	19	+20	+12
August	21	20	50	58	29	22	-8	-2
September	46	37	43	51	11	12	+35	+25
October	37	25	47	46	16	29	+21	-4
November	29	23	53	57	18	20	+9	+3
January 2015	33	28	40	46	27	27	+6	+2
February	32	32	52	48	16	20	+16	+12
<b>March</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>+11</b>	<b>-17</b>
April	24	25	52	52	24	23	0	+2
May	31	28	40	55	29	17	+2	+11
June	39	29	47	60	14	11	+25	+18
July	35	33	44	48	21	19	+14	+14
August	27	15	37	50	36	35	-9	-20
September	36	22	40	56	24	22	+12	0
October	28	29	38	45	34	26	-6	+2
November	36	29	38	41	26	30	+10	-1
January 2016	41	38	47	45	12	17	+29	+21
February	32	33	46	49	22	18	+10	+15
<b>March</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>+7</b>	<b>+14</b>

## 2 Order intake

Month	UP		SAME		DOWN		UP/DOWN Difference	
	UK	Export	UK	Export	UK	Export	UK	Export
January 2011	57	45	22	42	21	13	+36	+32
February	46	47	29	32	25	21	+21	+26
March	41	38	43	43	16	19	+25	+19
April	39	36	35	45	26	19	+13	+17
May	40	35	46	46	14	19	+26	+16
June	38	39	38	46	23	16	+16	+22
July	45	29	26	44	29	27	+16	+2
August	26	24	29	32	45	44	-19	-20
September	49	31	24	40	27	29	+22	+2
October	36	29	32	43	32	28	+4	+1
November	45	30	23	36	32	34	+13	-4
January 2012	42	40	34	44	24	16	+18	+24
February	40	35	35	39	25	26	+15	+9
March	44	35	35	42	21	23	+23	+12
April	24	21	43	43	33	36	-9	-15
May	42	26	37	34	21	40	+21	-14
June	24	24	24	43	52	33	-28	-9
July	30	31	39	38	31	31	-1	0
August	23	10	33	43	44	47	-21	-37
September	31	29	32	29	38	42	-7	-13
October	34	15	47	50	19	35	+15	-20
November	28	35	26	37	47	28	-19	+7
January 2013	44	30	29	38	27	32	+17	-2
February	37	35	23	47	40	18	-3	+17
March	44	37	36	40	20	23	+24	+14
April	45	33	29	38	26	29	+19	+4
May	40	25	32	46	28	29	+12	-4
June	34	35	35	43	31	22	+3	+13
July	38	33	38	43	24	24	+14	+9
August	22	22	32	38	46	40	-24	-18
September	40	28	29	48	31	24	+9	+4
October	48	30	30	45	22	25	+26	+5
November	30	26	46	45	24	28	+6	-2
January 2014	53	40	26	45	21	15	+32	+25
February	33	35	40	37	27	28	+6	+7
March	45	38	33	37	22	25	+23	+13
April	30	39	42	43	28	18	+2	+21
May	42	26	29	49	29	25	+13	+1
June	44	30	36	42	20	28	+24	+2
July	32	32	40	40	28	28	+4	+4
August	25	9	28	46	48	45	-20	-36
September	41	39	35	41	24	20	+17	+19
October	42	30	31	34	27	36	+15	-6
November	27	26	33	40	40	34	-13	-8
January 2015	42	30	21	44	37	26	+5	+4
February	38	35	38	44	24	21	+14	+14
<b>March</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>+12</b>
April	28	32	34	36	38	32	-10	0
May	35	33	32	33	33	34	+2	-1
June	45	35	25	41	30	24	+15	+11
July	43	25	35	51	22	24	+11	+1
August	20	20	28	36	52	44	-32	-24
September	45	33	27	35	28	32	+17	+1
October	36	29	31	44	33	27	+3	+2
November	33	30	40	35	27	35	+6	-5
January 2016	52	32	23	32	25	36	+27	-4
February	31	25	43	48	26	27	+5	-2
<b>March</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>+13</b>	<b>+29</b>

### 3 Jobs in the UK

Month	UP	SAME	DOWN	UP – DOWN
January 2011	27	64	8	+19
February	32	64	4	+28
March	31	61	8	+23
April	50	48	2	+48
May	28	69	3	+25
June	37	60	3	+34
July	28	66	6	+22
August	29	57	14	+15
September	32	58	10	+22
October	24	68	8	+16
November	24	56	20	+4
January 2012	29	63	8	+21
February	18	68	14	+4
March	34	62	4	+30
April	35	61	4	+31
May	20	69	11	+9
June	23	64	13	+10
July	34	61	5	+29
August	31	60	9	+22
September	19	71	10	+9
October	22	62	16	+6
November	25	56	19	+6
January 2013	6	81	13	-7
February	24	66	10	+14
March	14	82	4	+10
April	17	75	8	+9
May	18	75	7	+11
June	17	75	8	+9
July	33	60	7	+26
August	20	70	10	+10
September	16	77	7	+9
October	32	66	2	+30
November	15	85	0	+15
January 2014	27	70	3	+24
February	33	61	6	+27
March	23	68	9	+14
April	18	76	6	+12
May	26	72	2	+24
June	38	57	5	+33
July	44	53	3	+41
August	24	67	9	+15
September	34	63	3	+31
October	12	74	14	-2
November	29	59	12	+17
January 2015	44	52	4	+40
February	15	75	10	+5
<b>March</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>+23</b>
April	28	69	3	+25
May	32	60	8	+24
June	21	72	7	+14
July	22	78	0	+22
August	27	65	8	+19
September	22	68	10	+12
October	15	62	23	-8
November	40	40	20	+20
January 2016	26	65	9	+17
February	22	64	14	+8
<b>March</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>+14</b>

#### 4 Investment Activity

Month	Investment stopped	Plans deferred	Developing projects	Investing in all areas	Investing in staff	Other
January 2011	8	6	29	43	12	2
February	2	5	41	32	9	11
March	7	8	26	33	15	11
April	2	8	26	46	12	6
May	6	8	23	36	19	8
June	7	9	26	48	6	4
July	4	11	26	39	16	4
August	2	12	25	40	19	2
September	5	12	27	36	14	6
October	10	8	31	29	12	10
November	5	14	29	36	2	14
January 2012	3	14	26	42	9	6
February	4	4	32	45	11	4
March	2	14	39	32	7	6
April	8	12	37	31	8	4
May	4	15	36	30	13	2
June	13	14	29	27	14	3
July	9	13	27	39	5	7
August	3	15	41	23	12	6
September	13	4	46	25	4	8
October	5	13	40	24	13	5
November	17	8	31	29	9	6
January 2013	14	17	41	14	10	4
February	6	6	34	23	25	6
March	2	9	42	33	7	7
April	0	11	33	35	11	10
May	0	5	43	34	9	9
June	6	3	37	37	11	6
July	3	7	33	40	13	4
August	10	3	32	45	7	3
September	0	7	50	36	7	0
October	0	6	47	33	6	8
November	0	6	41	44	6	3
January 2014	5	0	37	47	3	8
February	0	14	33	39	6	8
March	6	6	35	41	6	6
April	6	6	18	46	18	6
May	5	5	28	46	16	0
June	7	3	28	47	9	6
July	6	0	38	44	12	0
August	5	0	47	38	5	5
September	9	0	44	38	3	6
October	16	6	31	25	19	3
November	3	6	18	39	27	6
January 2015	17	4	10	59	7	3
February	8	8	13	38	23	10
<b>March</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>
April	0	8	28	42	17	5
May	11	5	26	40	13	5
June	8	5	33	46	5	3
July	0	6	38	50	6	0
August	5	13	31	36	13	2
September	3	16	29	45	7	0
October	6	9	31	28	23	3
November	5	13	15	36	23	8
January 2016	8	4	34	38	8	8
February	8	14	27	24	19	8
<b>March</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>0</b>

**Notes: choice of statements in full:**

- All investment activity stopped
- Investment plans deferred
- Developing projects but not committing to them
- Investing in all areas of the business
- Investing in staff development and training but not capital investment
- Other

## 5 Capital Availability

Month	More Difficult		About the same		Easier		Difficult / easier Balance	
	Working	Investment	Working	Investment	Working	Investment	Working	Investment
January 2011	18	18	74	70	8	12	-10	-8
February	9	12	78	76	13	12	+4	0
March	8	6	84	82	8	12	0	+6
April	9	6	79	80	12	14	+3	+8
May	16	14	81	84	3	2	-13	-12
June	11	14	81	83	8	3	-3	-11
July	6	12	86	83	8	5	+2	-5
August	9	9	87	87	4	4	-5	-5
September	7	14	80	79	13	7	+6	-7
October	10	12	80	83	10	5	0	-7
November	2	5	88	88	10	7	+8	+2
January 2012	21	27	68	70	11	3	-10	-24
February	10	9	90	91	0	0	-10	-9
March	11	10	83	86	6	4	-5	-6
April	17	13	75	85	8	2	-9	-11
May	17	18	78	78	5	4	-12	-14
June	16	16	80	79	4	5	-12	-11
July	11	7	87	87	2	6	-9	-1
August	9	13	87	87	4	0	-5	-13
September	13	9	81	89	6	2	-7	-7
October	13	8	82	92	5	0	-8	-8
November	14	10	82	84	4	6	-10	-4
January 2013	21	18	75	75	4	7	-17	-11
February	11	11	78	81	11	8	0	-3
March	11	16	84	84	5	0	-6	-16
April	17	15	77	83	6	2	-9	-13
May	5	8	90	92	5	0	0	-8
June	8	6	86	83	6	11	-2	+5
July	3	0	90	93	7	7	+4	+7
August	9	13	82	87	9	0	0	-13
September	7	7	90	84	3	7	-4	0
October	5	5	95	92	0	3	-5	-2
November	6	3	91	91	3	6	-3	+3
January 2014	8	3	73	86	19	11	+11	+8
February	11	6	81	88	8	6	-3	0
March	6	6	82	88	12	6	+6	0
April	9	3	76	82	15	15	+6	+12
May	15	15	72	75	13	10	-2	-5
June	3	6	72	72	25	22	+22	+16
July	3	3	78	87	19	10	+16	+7
August	14	0	86	90	0	10	-14	+10
September	6	3	86	89	9	9	+3	+6
October	0	12	88	82	12	6	+12	-6
November	12	9	79	79	9	12	-3	+3
January 2015	7	4	90	86	3	10	-4	+6
February	13	11	79	81	8	8	-5	-3
<b>March</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>-8</b>	<b>-11</b>
April	3	8	86	86	11	5	+8	-3
May	5	5	84	90	11	5	+6	0
June	5	13	92	82	3	3	-2	-8
July	13	13	74	74	13	13	0	0
August	16	14	81	78	3	8	-13	-6
September	10	7	83	83	7	10	-3	+3
October	6	6	83	85	11	9	+5	+3
November	8	13	84	82	8	5	0	-8
January 2016	19	18	81	77	0	5	-19	-13
February	14	12	77	74	9	14	-5	+2
<b>March</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>-3</b>	<b>+11</b>

