

# Mineral Industry Surveys

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## MAGNESIUM IN THE FIRST QUARTER 2019

Magnesium imports for consumption in the first quarter of 2019 were 28% more than imports in the fourth quarter of 2018, and 36% and 26% more than those in the first quarter of 2018 and the first quarter of 2017, respectively. Compared with those in the fourth quarter of 2018, imports of metal, alloys, semifabricated products, and scrap increased by 19%, 9%, 4%, and 43%, respectively. Compared with those in the first quarter of 2018, imports of metal, alloys, semifabricated products, and scrap increased by 10%, 52%, 15%, and 50%, respectively. In the first quarter of 2019, magnesium metal accounted for 24% of the imports, with Israel (68%), Russia (18%), and Canada (7%) being the leading sources (fig. 1). Scrap accounted for 54% of the imports in the first quarter of 2019, with Canada (42%), Mexico (16%), and China (12%) as the leading sources (table 1).

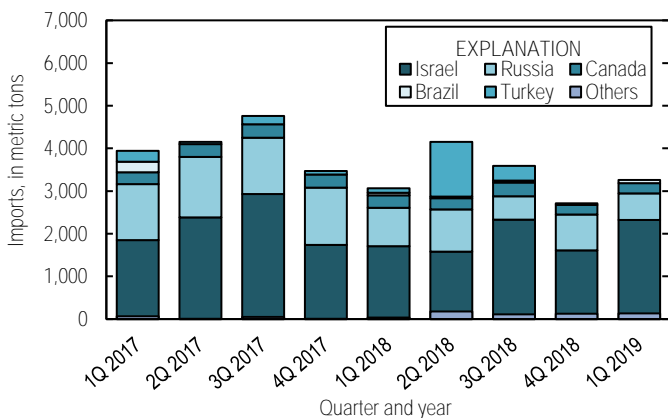


Figure 1. Quarterly imports of magnesium metal from the first quarter of 2017 through the first quarter of 2019. Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

U.S. magnesium exports in the first quarter of 2019 were 31% less than exports in the fourth quarter of 2018, the same as those in the first quarter of 2018, but 41% less than those in the first quarter of 2017. Canada (64%) and Mexico (24%) were the principal destinations. Exports of metal, alloys, semifabricated products, and scrap decreased by 14%, 36%, 5%, and 41%,

respectively, compared with exports in the fourth quarter of 2018. Compared with those in the first quarter of 2018, metal and semifabricated product exports decreased by 49% and 4%, respectively, but exports of alloys increased by 19%, and scrap exports increased slightly (table 1).

The U.S. spot Western average price for magnesium increased by 3% in the first quarter of 2019. The average U.S. spot dealer price for imported magnesium increased by 18% during the first quarter of 2019. Outside of the United States, average magnesium prices in China increased by 3%, and in Europe, the price increased by 5%, during the quarter (table 2).

## Update

On May 2, the U.S. International Trade Commission issued a preliminary determination that Dead Sea Magnesium Ltd. received countervailable subsidies for magnesium produced in Israel at the rate of 7.48%. US Magnesium LLC filed a complaint alleging dumping and subsidies of magnesium from Israel during the period of January 1, 2017, to December 31, 2017. (See Magnesium in the Third Quarter of 2018.) The final determination on countervailing and antidumping duties was expected in September (McBeth, 2018; U.S. Department of Commerce, International Trade Administration, 2019).

In May, production restarted at the primary magnesium plant in Eskisehir, Turkey. The 15,000-t/yr smelter previously owned by Esan Eczacıbaşı Endüstriyel Hammaddeler San. ve Tic. A.Ş. shut down in May 2018 but was now operated by Kar Maden San. ve Tic. A.Ş. A ramp-up schedule was not available (McBeth, 2018; 2019).

## References Cited

- McBeth, Karen, 2018, Dead Sea tells ITC US Magnesium's injury was not from its imports: *Platts Metals Daily*, v. 7, no. 225, November 14, p. 1, 6–7.
- McBeth, Karen, 2019, European magnesium reflects Chinese dip; US prices stable: *Platts Metals Daily*, v. 8, no. 102, May 24, p. 1, 12–13.
- U.S. Department of Commerce, International Trade Administration, 2019, Magnesium from Israel—Preliminary affirmative countervailing duty determination, and alignment of final determination with final antidumping duty determination: *Federal Register*, v. 84, no. 89, May 8, p. 20092–20093.

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TABLE 1  
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION AND EXPORTS OF MAGNESIUM<sup>1</sup>

(Metric tons)

	2019				
	2018	January	February	March	January– March
<b>Imports for consumption:</b>					
Metal	14,000	1,320	807	1,270	3,400
Waste and scrap	22,200	2,320	2,540	2,650	7,510
Alloys (magnesium content)	7,210	457	859	886	2,200
Sheet, tubing, ribbons, wire, powder, and other (magnesium content)	3,220	196	297	282	775
Total	46,600	4,290	4,510	5,080	13,900
<b>Exports:</b>					
Metal	1,490	103	82	88	273
Waste and scrap	784	42	65	75	182
Alloys (gross weight)	8,060	587	683	465	1,730
Sheet, tubing, ribbons, wire, powder, and other (gross weight)	1,950	129	171	125	424
Total	12,300	861	1,000	753	2,610

<sup>1</sup>Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 2  
MAGNESIUM PRICES, FIRST QUARTER 2019

		Beginning of quarter	End of quarter
U.S. spot dealer import	dollars per pound	1.85–1.95	2.20–2.30
U.S. spot Western	do.	2.20–2.30	2.30–2.35
China	dollars per metric ton	2,500–2,550	2,550–2,650
European free market	do.	2,500–2,650	2,650–2,750
do. Ditto.			

Source: Platts Metals Week.