

Swiss watch exports tick ahead in April

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After tepid March growth, time for a sigh of relief for the industry as exports of Swiss watches tick up in April, aided by a six-year high in sales to Hong Kong

Exports of Swiss watches ticked ahead nearly 14 percent in April, trade figures showed Tuesday, aided by strong demand from prime market Hong Kong.

"After a relatively calm March, growth moved ahead strongly in April," the Federation of the Swiss Watch Industry said, noting exports for the first four months of the year rose 11 percent on the same period of 2017 to 6.7 billion Swiss francs (5.8 billion euros, \$6.75 billion).

March growth had been tepid at 4.8 percent, down on January's 12.6 and February's 12.9.

April's recovery of 13.8 percent saw exports hit 1.76 billion francs, driven by a healthy 43.4 percent rise in sales—a six-year high—to Hong Kong, a lucrative Asian market hub.

Other key markets also saw large rises, with exports to China and the United States clocking up increases of 11 percent and 12.8 percent respectively.

Europe was a mixed picture with German sales up 12.8 percent but sliding 14.7 percent in Britain, continuing a recent trend as the United Kingdom wrestles with Brexit.

The global picture has been healthier since a difficult period across 2015 and 2016 saw the sector take a hit after China introduced anti-counterfeiting measures, helping knock back sales of luxury goods.

That fallow period began with 2014 sit-in street protests in Hong Kong, dubbed the Umbrella Revolution, which saw a tailoff in visitor numbers from the mainland to the territory where many Chinese do much of their luxury shopping.

Terror attacks in Europe also had an effect on the European [market](#) in hitting tourism.

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