



RLA Chemical Market Insights – Friday, 12 June 2026

Chinese Styrene Exports Rise on the Back of Middle East Tensions

Disruptions from the ongoing Middle East conflict have recently reshaped chemical trade flows. China has become an increasingly important supplier of major commodity chemicals and polymers to buyers in the Indian subcontinent and ASEAN.

From January to April 2026, China exported around 393,370 tonnes of styrene, with key destinations including South Korea, India, Turkey, Taiwan, and Japan. Meanwhile, styrenic polymer margins across Asia remain under significant pressure, mainly because of persistent oversupply and uncertain downstream consumer demand.

Middle East-related supply disruptions have enabled Chinese polymer exporters to broaden their customer reach, especially in Asia Pacific, with buyers placing emphasis on securing product availability. Although, this has supported China's transition from opportunity-driven exports toward a more established and structural export role, planned capacity expansions in importing markets could curb future import requirements and heighten competition for product exports, giving rise to overcapacity.

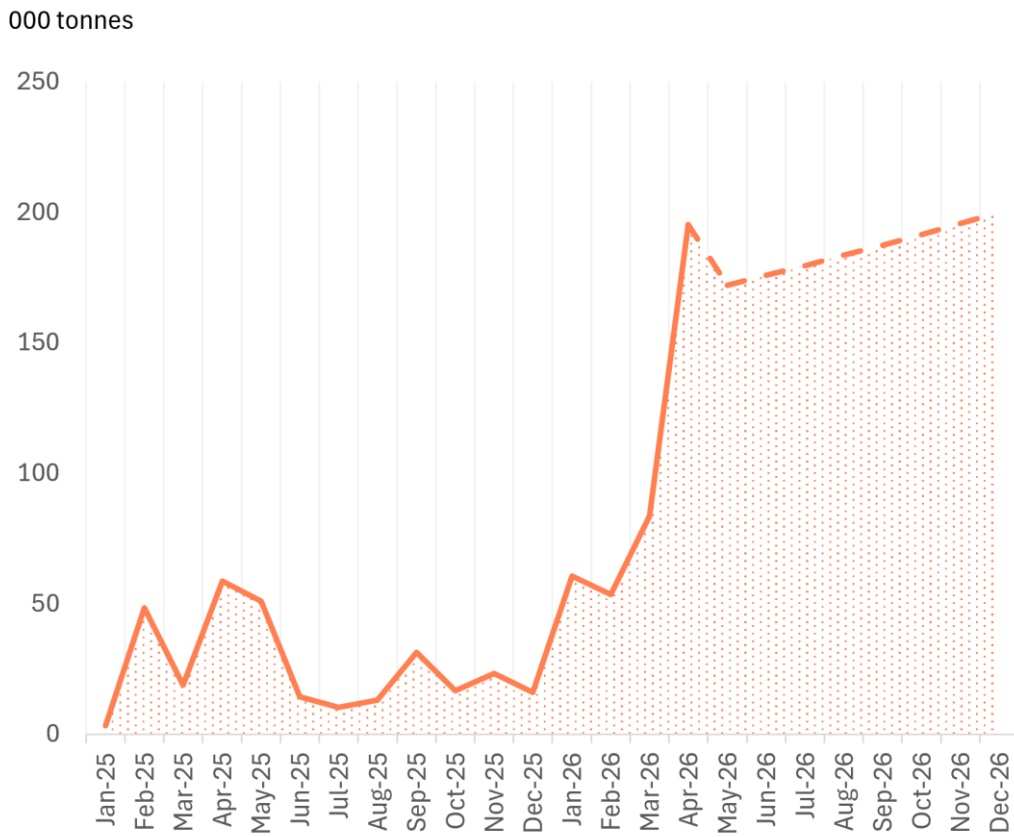
For styrenic polymers, cost volatility remains a key concern. Landed prices of polymers such as ABS, EPS, SBR, SAN depends on major feedstocks like styrene, acrylonitrile, and butadiene which are closely tied to benzene, propylene, ethylene, and crude-linked value chains, all of which have been affected by recent supply-sourcing disruptions.

With margins already under pressure, any increase in energy costs further can quickly negatively impact plant operating rates. Although, producers with integrated assets are in a stronger position to manage this volatility. Upstream refinery and cracker integration gives a greater feedstock flexibility, allows better product slate optimization, and provides the option to divert volumes toward alternative derivatives or feedstock sales when margins decline.

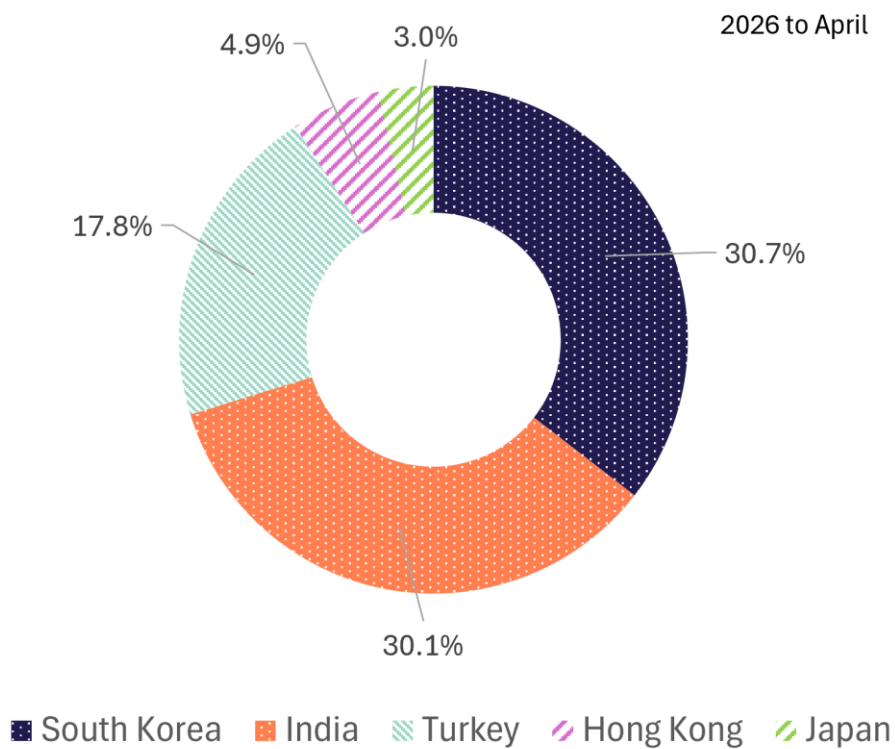
Refer to the chart for Chinese styrene exports along with its destinations in the next page.



China - Styrene Exports



China - Styrene Exports





SHORT TERM OUTLOOK – OIL TANKER MARKET

A monthly report covering the next four months including trends in oil supply, demand and trade, tanker demand and supply, spot, and time charter rates for MRs up to VLCCs, comparisons with FFAs plus the latest news on developments impacting the oil and tanker sectors.

MEDIUM TERM OUTLOOK – OIL TANKER MARKET

Concise analyses of topical issues, consistent market data series and views on future trends in tanker charter rates. The report covers Oil Prices; Economic Developments; Oil Demand and Supply; Trade; Tanker Demand, Supply and Rates. Sent to clients around January, April, July and October each year

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CHEMICAL CARRIER WORLD SERVICE

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