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German beer sales rose 0.4% in August on export growth

Domestic volumes fell 1.2%, extending the year’s decline despite stronger shipments to European Union markets and beyond

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Germany’s beer market posted a small gain in August, but the increase came entirely from exports as domestic sales continued to fall, according to figures published Monday by the Deutscher Brauer-Bund, the German Brewers’ Association.

Total beer volume sold in August rose 0.4% from a year earlier to 6.64 million hectoliters, an increase of about 27,000 hectoliters. The improvement was modest and did not reflect stronger demand at home. Sales in the domestic market that are subject to beer tax fell 1.2% to 5.39 million hectoliters, while exports climbed 8.3% to 1.24 million hectoliters.

The export figures show growth both within and outside the European Union. Shipments to other EU countries increased 9.3% to 758,000 hectoliters. Exports to third countries, meaning markets outside the EU, rose 6.7% to 484,000 hectoliters.

The August data offered some relief for brewers after months of weaker overall demand, but the broader trend for the year remained negative. From January through August, total beer sales in Germany fell 1.8% from the same period last year to 52.96 million hectoliters. That was a decline of 953,000 hectoliters over eight months.

The drop was again concentrated in the home market. Domestic sales in the January-to-August period were down 2.7% from a year earlier. Exports moved in the opposite direction, rising 2.5% to 9.96 million hectoliters. That split points to a market in which German brewers are leaning more heavily on foreign demand to offset weaker consumption inside the country.

The figures also covered beer mixes, a category that includes beverages made by blending beer with lemonade, cola, fruit juices and other nonalcoholic ingredients. Sales of those products rose 3.2% in August to 401,000 hectoliters. Even so, the category remained below last year’s level for the first eight months of 2026, with cumulative volume down 3.6%.

The Brewers’ Association said the August increase was only a surface improvement because it was driven fully by foreign markets. The domestic contraction continued even though weather conditions were at least as favorable as they were a year earlier, a point that suggests the weakness in local demand cannot be explained simply by an unfavorable summer month.

The data come from Germany’s beer tax statistics, a standard measure used to track sales volume in the industry, but the series has important limits. It excludes nonalcoholic beer and malt beverages. It includes beer imported from other EU member states, but it does not include imports from countries outside the EU. That means the figures do not represent every product consumed in Germany, but they do provide a closely watched indicator of taxable beer sales and export performance.

August is usually one of the stronger months for brewers because of summer consumption, outdoor events and tourism. This year’s numbers showed that the seasonal support was not enough to stop the domestic decline. The entire year-to-date shortfall of 953,000 hectoliters has come despite export growth, underlining the pressure on brewers that depend mainly on German consumers.

Germany remains one of the world’s best-known beer markets, but brewers have faced a difficult operating environment in recent years as consumption patterns change and costs remain high across production, packaging and distribution. The latest figures do not break down sales by brand, brewery size or region, but they reinforce a pattern that has become increasingly important for the industry: overseas demand is helping stabilize volumes that the home market is no longer sustaining on its own.

For August alone, exports represented roughly one in five hectoliters sold, a share that was higher than a year earlier because of the contrast between foreign growth and domestic decline. Within that, the stronger increase to other EU countries suggests nearby markets remain an important outlet for German brewers, while sales outside the bloc also continued to expand at a solid pace.

The January-to-August total of 52.96 million hectoliters leaves the industry below last year’s pace heading into the final third of the year. While August avoided another monthly decline in the headline figure, the underlying picture remained the same: Germany’s brewers sold less beer at home and depended on exports to keep the overall market from weakening further.