

Is China Rewriting the Global Fastener Export Map?

Where Does Taiwan Stand in the Global Supply Chain?

› China's Fastener Exports Continue to Expand, Reshaping the Global Market

China's fastener exports have continued to grow in recent years, while Taiwan's fastener industry faces mounting pressure from declining export volumes, intensifying price competition, and international buyers' efforts to diversify their supply sources. **Competition between the fastener industries on both sides of the Taiwan Strait is no longer confined to head-to-head battles in traditional markets such as the U.S. and Europe. It is increasingly extending into Southeast Asia, Central and South America, and other emerging markets.** Where are China's additional fastener exports going? Is China replacing Taiwan in markets where Taiwanese suppliers once held a strong position? And are countries such as Vietnam, Thailand, and Malaysia major end markets for Chinese fasteners, manufacturing and processing bases, or transit hubs helping Chinese products reach third-country markets?

According to China Customs data, the value of China's Fastener exports increased from US$9.139 billion in 2023 to US$10.043 billion in 2025, a gain of 9.9%. Looking at fastener export statistics compiled by the Taiwan Industrial Fasteners Institute (TIFI) for the first three quarters of 2026, China exported 4.3332 million tons, up 3.1% year on year, while Taiwan exported 859,100 tons, down 10.1%. **This divergence highlights a clear split in export performance between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait. The statistics suggest that China's market expansion is not driven solely by a recovery in global demand. In some countries, Chinese supply has increased while Taiwan's performance has weakened.** More notably, this competition has spread into Southeast Asia and Central and South America—markets that were previously less likely to be seen as the main battlegrounds between the two sides.

› Where Is China's Fastener Export Growth Concentrated?

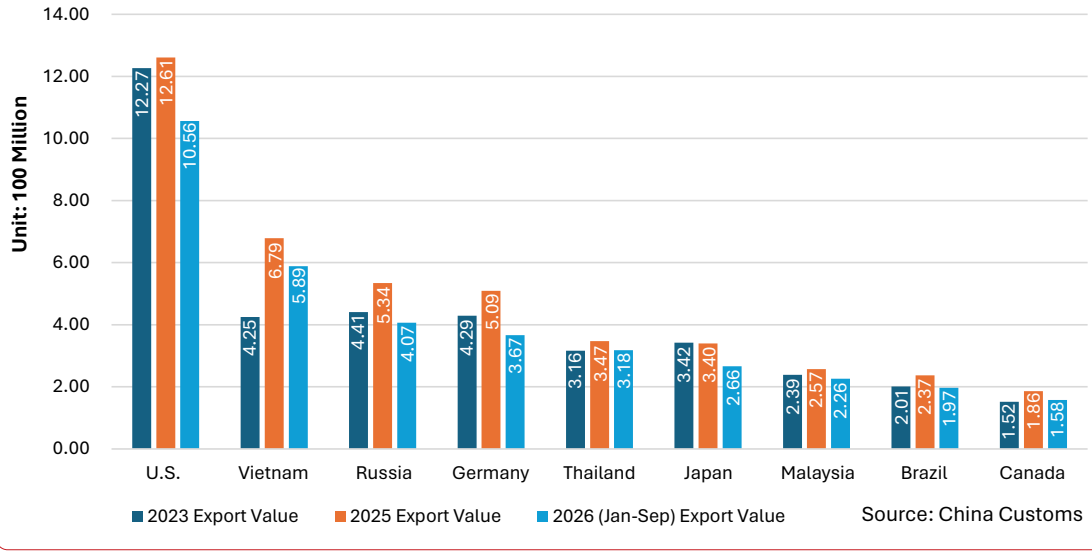
The value of China's fastener exports rose from US$9.139 billion in 2023 to US$9.564 billion in 2024, before reaching US$10.043 billion in 2025. The increase over the 2 years was US$904 million, representing cumulative growth of 9.9%. In the first 9 months of 2026, China's exports grew 8.3% year on year to US$8.18 billion. Taiwan, by comparison, recorded a 5.2% decline over the same period, with exports totaling US$3.03 billion. A breakdown by destination shows that this growth was unevenly distributed (**Table 1** and **Figure 1**). **Vietnam stands out in particular: China's fastener exports to Vietnam increased from US$425 million in 2023 to US$679 million in 2025, up 59.8%,** or approximately US$254 million. Other markets worth watching are shown in **Table 1**:

Table 1. Changes in China's Major Fastener Export Destinations (2023 vs. 2025); Unit: US$100 Million

Export Destination	2023 Export Value	2025 Export Value	Change, 2023–2025	Export Value, Jan–Sep 2026	Change, Jan–Sep 2026 YoY
U.S.	12.27	12.61	2.8%	10.56	9.2%
Vietnam	**4.25**	**6.79**	**59.8%**	**5.89**	**19.3%**
Russia	4.41	5.34	21.0%	4.07	-2.2%
Germany	4.29	5.09	18.7%	3.67	-5.5%
Thailand	3.16	3.47	9.9%	3.18	25.2%
Japan	3.42	3.40	-0.4%	2.66	2.9%
Malaysia	2.39	2.57	7.8%	2.26	21.5%
Brazil	2.01	2.37	17.6%	1.97	8.6%
Canada	1.52	1.86	22.2%	1.58	12.0%

Beyond Vietnam, Germany, and Brazil, China's exports to Central Asian markets such as Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan also increased significantly. Between 2023 and 2025, China's export value to Kyrgyzstan rose 112.3%, while exports to Kazakhstan increased 101.9%. This indicates that **China's fastener export footprint is no longer concentrated solely in traditional markets such as the U.S., Europe, and Japan; it is also expanding into Central Asia and other emerging markets.**

Figure 1. China's Major Fastener Export Destinations (2023 vs. 2025)



The U.S. nevertheless remained China's largest single fastener export market in both 2025 and the first 3 quarters of 2026, with exports valued at US$1.261 billion and US$1.056 billion, respectively. This underscores the **continued importance of the U.S. market to Chinese fastener suppliers, despite the various trade restrictions imposed by the U.S. on Chinese products.** To determine whether China is actually gaining market share, it is necessary to examine each country's total import volume alongside the volume imported from China.

› China is Gaining Market Share Even Without a Corresponding Increase in Demand: A Shared Warning Sign from the U.S., Germany, and Brazil

China's export value alone is not enough to determine whether it is replacing other suppliers. Each market's total fastener import volume must be compared with the volume imported from China. **Import data from the U.S., Germany, and Brazil reveal a notable common pattern: the increase in the weight of fasteners imported from China has significantly outpaced changes in overall market imports.**

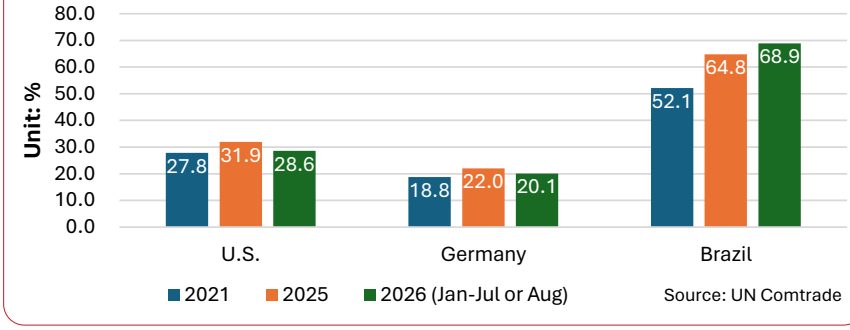
» U.S.: Total Imports Decline, but China's Share of Supply Rises

From 2021 to 2025, U.S. fastener imports by weight fell 3.7%, from 1.7467 million tons to 1.6818 million tons. Over the same period, imports from China rose 10.1%, from 486,400 tons to 535,700 tons. China's share of the U.S. fastener import market by weight consequently increased from 27.8% in 2021 to 31.9% in 2025, up 4.1 percentage points (**Figure 2**).

The picture changed in 2026. According to data for January–July, total U.S. fastener imports amounted to approximately 862,200 tons, down 15.2% from 1.0168 million tons in the same period of 2025. Imports from China fell from 323,400 tons to 246,300 tons, down 23.8%. China's share of U.S. imports by weight also decreased from 31.9% in the first 7 months of 2025 to 28.6% in the same period of 2026, down about 3.2 percentage points (**Figure 2**).

This shows that although China steadily expanded its share of the U.S. market between 2021 and 2025, its fastener exports to the U.S. fell more sharply than the overall U.S. import market during the first 7 months of 2026. Supply sources in the U.S. market are being reshuffled, and Chinese suppliers are also beginning to face new competitive pressure.

Figure 2. China's Share of Fastener Imports in the U.S., Germany, and Brazil



» Germany: Imports Remain Below 2021 Levels, but Chinese Supply Had Reached a Higher Level

From 2021 to 2025, Germany's total fastener imports by weight declined 5.6%, from 1.0111 million tons to 954,000 tons. However, imports from China increased 10.8%, from 189,700 tons to 210,200 tons. China's share of the German

import market by weight rose from 18.8% to 22.0% (**Figure 2**). The increase was particularly pronounced between 2023 and 2025, when imports from China grew 34.7%, from 156,000 tons to 210,200 tons.

The latest figures for 2026, however, point to a weakening of China's supply momentum in Germany. From January to August 2026, Germany's total fastener imports reached approximately 608,700 tons, up 6.6% from 571,200 tons in the same period of 2025. Imports from China, by contrast, fell 14.7%, from 143,600 tons to 122,600 tons. China's share of the German import market by weight declined from approximately 25.1% in the first 8 months of 2025 to 20.1% in the same period of 2026, down about 5.0 percentage points (**Figure 2**). This indicates that although overall import demand in Germany recovered during the first 8 months of 2026, Chinese suppliers did not benefit from the rebound. Instead, both import volume and market share declined. Whether China can maintain the gains it made in Germany over the past few years remains to be seen.

» Brazil: China's Market Share Has Approached Two-Thirds

From 2021 to 2025, Brazil's total fastener imports by weight increased 26.9%, from 190,300 tons to 241,600 tons. Imports from China grew 57.9% over the same period, from 99,200 tons to 156,600 tons. China's share of Brazil's fastener import market by weight rose from 52.1% to 64.8% (**Figure 2**), up 12.7 percentage points over 4 years. In other words, in 2025, approximately 65 kilograms out of every 100 kilograms of steel fasteners imported by Brazil came from China. This reflects more than an increase in market demand; it also indicates that Chinese suppliers have gained a stronger competitive position in Brazil. Compared with the U.S. and Germany, Brazil's supply base is more heavily concentrated in China.

Data for January–August 2026 show that Brazil imported 174,500 tons of fasteners, up approximately 5.7% from 165,100 tons in the same period of 2025, indicating that the Brazilian fastener import market continued to grow. A further breakdown by source country shows that imports from China reached approximately 120,300 tons, accounting for about 68.9% of Brazil's total fastener imports (**Figure 2**)—nearly 7 out of every 10 tons. China therefore remained Brazil's largest fastener supplier, with a market share by weight clearly above 60%.

In value terms, however, Brazil imported approximately US$253 million worth of fasteners from China, accounting for about 30.5% of its total import value—far below China's share by weight. This reflects the fact that, alongside large volumes of Chinese fasteners, Brazil continues to source products across different price points and market segments from Italy, Japan, the U.S., Germany, and other countries. In other words, Brazil's market is not only expanding; China also retains a strong position in standard fasteners, while higher-priced products remain open to competition from a diverse range of international suppliers.

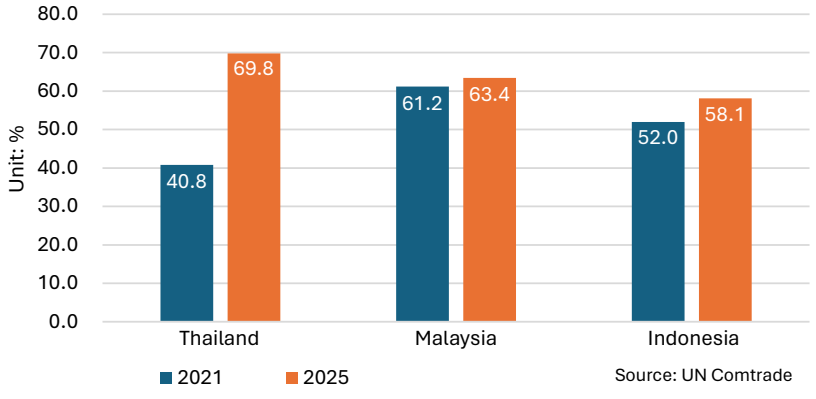
These 3 cases share a common message: **China's expansion in fastener markets no longer depends entirely on growth in global demand. By increasing supply, Chinese producers have gained larger import-market shares in several countries.** This is the real warning sign for Taiwanese suppliers. When market demand does not increase at the same pace but Chinese supply continues to expand, other supplying countries inevitably face greater competitive pressure.

› Southeast Asia is More Than an Export Market for China: It is a Key Node in the Global Fastener Supply Chain

While the U.S., Germany, and Brazil illustrate how Chinese fasteners are gaining market share in end markets, Southeast Asia presents a more complex supply-chain picture. Thailand is a case in point. From 2021 to 2025, Thailand's total fastener imports by weight increased 36.8%, from 179,200 tons to 245,100 tons. Imports from China, however, surged 134%, from 73,200 tons to 171,200 tons. China's share of Thailand's fastener import market by weight rose from 40.8% to 69.8%, up 29 percentage points (**Figure 3**). This indicates that Thailand's fastener supply structure is becoming increasingly concentrated in China. More notably, Thailand is not only an import market but also a fastener-exporting country. Between 2021 and 2025, its total fastener exports by weight increased 13.5%, from 151,300 tons to 171,700 tons. Exports to the U.S. also rose from 34,800 tons to 39,500 tons. This indicates that Thailand has a certain level of manufacturing and export capacity, although the increase in its fastener imports from China far exceeded the growth in its overall exports.

Malaysia has shown a similar pattern. From 2021 to 2025, its total fastener imports by weight increased from 106,800 tons to 233,300 tons. Imports from China rose from 65,300 tons to 147,900 tons, up about 126%. Over the same period, Malaysia's total fastener exports increased about 31%, from 96,400 tons to 126,300 tons. Its fastener exports to the U.S. also rose from 10,700 tons in 2021 to 17,000 tons in 2025. This indicates that Malaysia has a certain manufacturing, processing, and export base, although the growth in imports has been far greater than the growth in exports.

Figure 3. Dependence on Chinese Fastener Supplies in Southeast Asia



$$\text{China's fastener supply dependence (\%)} = \frac{\text{Fastener import value from China}}{\text{Total fastener import value}} \times 100\%$$

Vietnam is another particularly important country in China's export strategy. China's fastener exports to Vietnam increased from US$425 million in 2023 to US$679 million in 2025, a rise of nearly 60%. China has long been one of Vietnam's most important fastener import sources. In 2023, Vietnam imported approximately US$363 million worth of fasteners from China. In the same year, Vietnam exported about US$107 million worth of fasteners to the U.S., US$93.74 million to Germany, and US$72.39 million to Japan. These figures show that Vietnam is deeply integrated into the international fastener supply chain: it imports substantial quantities of fasteners while also exporting products to Europe, the U.S., and Asian markets. However, the latest available Vietnamese data in this analysis only extend through 2023, and complete import-weight data for 2024 and 2025 are not yet available. It is therefore not possible to determine directly how much of the increase in China's exports to Vietnam was converted into Vietnamese exports to third countries. Indonesia, meanwhile, also relies on China for more than half of its fastener imports (**Figure 3**).

These figures show that **Thailand and Malaysia have become important markets in China's fastener supply chain. For Taiwanese suppliers, these countries are not only potential end markets worth developing; they may also serve as intermediate nodes through which Chinese products enter other markets.**

› Are Third Countries Becoming New Gateways for Chinese Fasteners into the U.S. and European Markets?

The restructuring of international supply chains in recent years has made the role of third countries in global trade increasingly complex. Chinese products may be exported directly, or they may first enter a third country before being processed, assembled, or re-exported to another market. In Southeast Asia, 3 supply-chain models can be distinguished: local production; processing and export after importing Chinese raw materials or semi-finished products; and re-export without substantial processing. A comparison of fastener import and export data for major Southeast Asian countries from 2021 to 2025 reveals notable links between increased supplies of Chinese fasteners and growth in third-country exports to the United States. In Thailand, for example, fastener imports from China increased 100%, from US$226 million in 2021 to US$451 million in 2025. Over the same period, Thailand's exports to the U.S. increased 18.9%, while exports to the 27 EU member states and the UK rose 5.1%. Malaysia showed a different pattern: imports from China increased 38%, and exports to the U.S. surged 101.1%, while exports to Europe fell 24.2%. This indicates that some Southeast Asian countries expanded their exports to the U.S. alongside increased supplies from China, but the trend was not consistent across all export markets.

In terms of local manufacturing capacity, Thailand has mature automotive, electronics, home-appliance, and machinery supply chains, while Malaysia also has a sizeable fastener manufacturing base. Export growth in these 2 countries may therefore reflect a combination of local production, processing of imported materials, and supply-chain reconfiguration; it cannot automatically be classified as re-exporting finished Chinese products. Singapore and Indonesia have also increased their exports to the U.S., but their export scale, trends in exports to Europe, and industrial structures differ. The latest 2026 figures show that U.S. fastener imports from Malaysia and Indonesia increased 33.8% and 41.2%, respectively, in January–July. Meanwhile, EU imports from Thailand and Indonesia fell 18.3% and 24.9%, respectively, in January–August. Overall, Southeast Asia is developing into a more diversified network of fastener supply hubs, with Thailand and Malaysia warranting particular attention. However, current trade statistics show only import and export values and trade flows; they cannot establish whether the same Chinese fasteners were processed or re-exported through a third country before entering the U.S. or European markets. Further analysis of local manufacturing capacity, factory investment, the extent of product processing, and origin documentation is needed to distinguish genuine supply-chain relocation from simple trade rerouting.

Brazil offers another useful comparison. In 2025, Brazil imported approximately 156,600 tons of fasteners from China, while its total fastener exports for the year amounted to only about 23,700 tons—equivalent to 9.8% of its import volume. Its main export destinations were Argentina, Paraguay, and the United States. In terms of overall volume, Brazil currently appears to be an important end market for Chinese fasteners rather than a major re-export hub.

Trade statistics can provide clues about potential re-export risks, but they cannot on their own prove illegal origin laundering. Under the U.S. Customs and Border Protection principle of substantial transformation, the assessment must consider whether manufacturing or processing in the third country gives the product a new name, character, or use. The EU also determines non-preferential origin based on the last substantial and economically justified processing or manufacturing operation. Minimal operations such as relabeling or repackaging are not sufficient to confer a new origin.

› How Wide is the Price Gap Between Taiwanese and Chinese Fasteners? The First Three Quarters of 2026 Show a Clear Difference

Price competition is another issue that Taiwan's fastener industry cannot avoid, alongside changes in market destinations. According to TIFI's comparison of fastener exports from China and Taiwan for January–September 2026, China exported 4.3332 million tons of fasteners, up 3.1% year on year, while Taiwan exported 859,100 tons, down 10.1%. In value terms, China's exports reached US$8.648 billion, up 6.7%, while Taiwan's totaled US$3.154 billion, down 5.8%. China's export volume was about 5 times Taiwan's, but its export value was only about 2.7 times as high, largely reflecting significant differences in product mix and average unit prices (**Table 2** and **Figure 4**). In the first 3 quarters of 2026, China's average fastener export price was US$1.996 per kilogram, compared with US$3.672 per kilogram for Taiwan. Taiwan's average export price was therefore approximately 84% higher. This price gap was not driven by a single product category; similar differences appeared across multiple fastener products.

These price differences indicate that **Taiwanese fasteners generally command higher average export prices in international markets. However, they also mean that Taiwanese suppliers face greater competitive pressure in standard-product and price-sensitive markets.** The gap is also evident in the U.S. market. In the first 3 quarters of 2026, China exported approximately 512,200 tons of fasteners to the U.S., compared with about 385,200 tons from Taiwan. China's

average export price was US$2.14 per kilogram, while Taiwan's was US$3.46, approximately 61.6% higher. A similar pattern appeared in the EU-plus-UK market: China's average price was US$2.29 per kilogram, compared with US$3.42 for Taiwan, a gap of about 49.6%. Overall, there is a clear price distinction between Taiwanese and Chinese fasteners. For highly standardized products purchased by price-sensitive buyers, this difference may directly affect sourcing decisions and prompt some traders to change their established purchasing channels.

› China and Taiwan's Fastener Exports Diverged in the First 3 Quarters of 2026: Which Markets are Putting Greater Pressure on Taiwan?

According to TIFI statistics, China's export volume increased 3.1% year on year in January–September 2026, while Taiwan's fell 10.1%. A closer look at major export markets reveals an even clearer divergence between the two sides (**Figure 5**).

» U.S.: Taiwan's Decline Is Steeper Than China's

In the first 3 quarters of 2026, China's fastener export volume to the U.S. fell 3.8% year on year, while Taiwan's declined 11.9%. Both sides recorded decreases, but Taiwan's decline was approximately 3 times as steep. In value terms, China's exports to the U.S. increased 7.6%, while Taiwan's fell 8.6%. This indicates that although China exported a lower volume, its average export price increased, whereas Taiwan faced pressure on both volume and value.

» Europe: Exports from Both Sides Decline, with a Larger Drop for Taiwan

China's fastener export volume to the EU and the UK fell 7.1% year on year, while Taiwan's declined 11.2%. Both sides faced challenges from European demand and purchasing conditions, but Taiwan's export decline was greater.

» ASEAN and Asia: China Expands While Taiwan Stagnates

The most notable development was in the market comprising ASEAN, Japan, South Korea, and India. In the first 3 quarters of 2026, China's fastener exports to these markets reached 1.109 million tons, up 12.5% year on year. Taiwan exported approximately 79,000 tons, down 0.7%. China's export volume increased by about 123,100 tons, while Taiwan's exports to these markets showed virtually no growth. This indicates that China's expanding supply in regional Asian markets has become a competitive pressure that Taiwan cannot afford to overlook.

This shows that **pressure on Taiwan's exports is not limited to traditional markets such as the U.S. and Europe. Even in Asian markets where China's exports are growing rapidly, Taiwan has not benefited in the same way.** As China continues to expand its exports globally while Taiwan's export volume declines across many markets, Taiwanese suppliers need to reassess their competitive position in each market.

Table 2. Average Global Export Prices of Major Fastener Products from China and Taiwan, January–September 2026 (US$/Kg)

Fastener Product	China	Taiwan	Taiwan Premium over China
Wood Screws	1.62	2.67	64.8%
Self-Tapping Screws	1.69	3.15	86.4%
Other Screws And Bolts	2.12	3.56	67.6%
Nuts	2.30	4.10	78.0%
Nails	1.21	1.50	24.3%

Figure 4. Average Export Prices of Major Fastener Products from China and Taiwan, First 3 Quarters of 2026

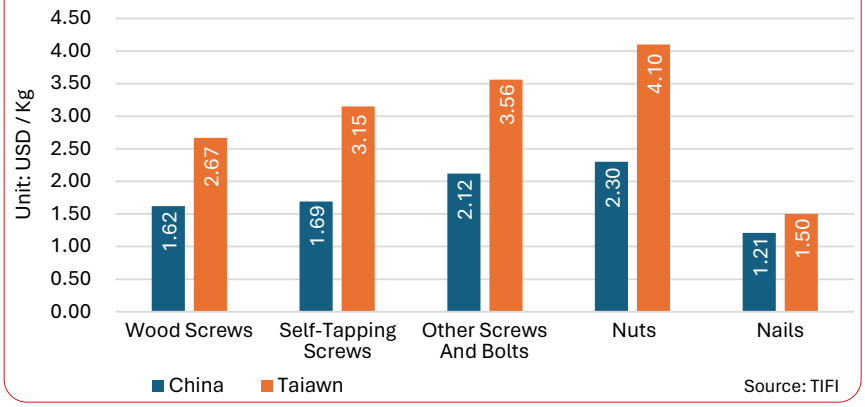
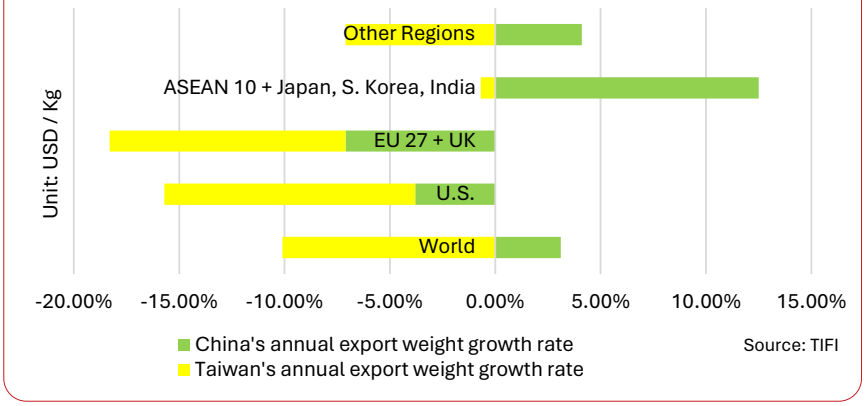


Figure 5. YoY Change in Fastener Export Volume from China and Taiwan, First 3 Quarters of 2026



› Is Taiwan's Export Decline Driven by Weak Global Demand or Direct Replacement by China?

The data suggest that both factors are at work, although their impact varies by market. China has gained a larger share of the U.S. market despite the absence of significant growth in overall demand, and Germany has shown a similar pattern. Brazil has been an even more prominent target for China's expansion. **Taiwan's export decline in recent years therefore cannot be attributed entirely to weak global demand. In markets such as the U.S., Germany, and Brazil, the growth in Chinese supply has clearly outpaced Taiwan, indicating that the substitution of supply sources has become a competitive issue worth watching. At the same time, Taiwan's exports have also been affected by global economic conditions, customer inventory adjustments, and changes in end-market demand. In Europe in particular, exports from both China and Taiwan have declined by weight, so the trend cannot simply be interpreted as China replacing Taiwan.**

In response to the continued decline in Taiwan's fastener exports, Fastener World interviewed several Taiwanese industry players. They indicated that part of the decline does not reflect the disappearance of end-customer orders. Rather, some traders and manufacturers have shifted orders that were previously shipped from Taiwan to suppliers in China and Southeast Asia in order to remain price-competitive. This order-shifting trend has now begun to ease, leading some industry players to expect Taiwan's export volume to gradually stabilize. The real concern for Taiwanese suppliers is that, when Chinese products have a clear price advantage and their export markets continue to expand, Taiwan's existing customer relationships and supply-chain position may gradually weaken as buyers adjust their sourcing strategies over the long term.

› China is Expanding More Than Its Export Volume: Taiwan Must Defend Its Position in the Global Supply Chain

The competitive gap between the fastener industries on the two sides of the Taiwan Strait is no longer just a matter of price. It is also reflected in changes in global supply volumes and market shares. However, not every increase in China's exports represents lost orders for Taiwan, and rising imports by third countries should not automatically be interpreted as origin laundering. **The most important tasks for Taiwanese fastener suppliers are to identify which markets show signs of China replacing Taiwan, which products are gradually losing competitiveness because of price gaps, and how to rebuild irreplaceable advantages through higher value-added products, engineering expertise, consistent quality, and supply-chain services.** The global fastener market is being reshaped. The real question facing Taiwan is not simply how much China's exports have increased, but what Taiwan can offer to remain on global buyers' approved supplier lists as they reconsider their sourcing options. ■

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