Back to a More Homogenous Price Range

Scrap Metal Market Report – March 2026

Editorial Deadline: 19.03.2026

General Developments

According to a study conducted by the German Economic Institute (IW), in which more than 1,000 companies participated, around 80% of German companies report an increase in workload to meet their legal reporting and documentation obligations in the last three years. 70% of the companies consider administrative procedures to be too slow, 60% of the participating companies complain about the non-utilisation of existing discretionary allowances. One in two companies lacks the capacity to process applications or expresses doubts concerning the technical expertise and understanding in the administration thereof.. IW bureaucracy expert Klaus-Heiner Röhl complains: **"Instead of regulating in ever greater detail,** Entrepreneurs see the most important approach to reducing bureaucracy is less extensive EU requirements, about 90% share this opinion **regulatory bodies must place more trust in companies and grant administrative staff more decision-making leeway."**

Scrap Market

Scrap dealers report that operations are starting to get back to normal after the winter months. Material inflow volume increased slightly again during March, although it is still below previous years. Increased inflow led to a higher material throughput and, thus, to a better cost distribution. In general, the Middle East conflict is influencing energy markets, driving up prices and increasing cost pressure, particularly in energy-intensive industries such as steel production, transport and logistics. Within a short period, domestic transport costs have risen rapidly, literally turning existing cost calculations upside down. These increased costs cannot be passed on in such a short time, but remain with the scrap dealers, enormously increasing additional cost pressure.

The very varying purchasing methods of steel producers during February resulted in very diverse regional procurement markets, accompanied by a strong east-west price gradient. This market situation had already led many market participants during February to believe that March would also see varying price movements in order to bring the market back into equilibrium.

The average price movement for scrap was generally unchanged during March, albeit very varying regional price adjustments had to be made in order to turn the market patchwork quilt created in February back into a more evenly priced market.

Regional Developments

In the **north** of Germany, one consumer made a downward adjustment of €5-10 per tonne to its offered prices, based on the higher price level caused by the east-west gradient last month. Another consumer left scrap prices unchanged. Scrap buyers in the **east** behaved in a more differentiated manner. One steel mill left scrap prices at an unchanged level, whilst another made slight corrections. One consumer in the **west** bought scrap with price increases between €5-10 per tonne. For industrial scrap, price increases were at the lower end of the range, for turnings and demolition scrap at the upper end. In the **southwest**, one consumer had good inventory levels, thus, scrap purchases were concluded at unchanged prices; albeit, at the beginning of the month, slight price reductions of up to €5 per tonne were still under discussion. Along the **Saar** river, one large consumer purchased at unchanged price levels. Another consumer purchased smaller quantities, purchasing obsolete scrap at unchanged prices and sheet metal scrap with a price reduction of €10 per tonne. In the **south**, one buyer had to contend with a technical defect; a lightning strike led to technical problems in the rolling mill. Scrap prices here were at an unchanged level during March.

Neighbouring Foreign Markets

In **France**, scrap prices remained unchanged compared to February. The **Luxembourg** scrap market proved stronger than in neighbouring countries. Higher demand and low prices in previous months led to significant price corrections during March. Price increases were orientated on January levels and ranged from €10-25 per tonne. Sheet metal scrap, which was not in such high demand in previous months, was again in greater demand. On the whole, demand appears to be normalising again. **Austrian** consumer scrap prices remained unchanged compared to February. In **Italy**, scrap prices generally remained unchanged, albeit in some cases scrap prices even dipped slightly. Increased freight and logistics costs created an unfavourable price/cost ratio for domestic scrap dealers.
On average, **Polish** scrap prices remained unchanged. However, there were some slight price corrections; E5 grade turnings price increases were slightly higher, ranging from €7-8 per tonne, whilst E3 grade obsolete scrap prices were slightly lower, with price reductions between €3-4 per tonne.
In the **Czech Republic**, March scrap prices remained unchanged, compared to February.

Global Scrap Market

In the last week of February, Turkish steel mills withdrew from the import market. Initially, no new deep-sea sales were reported. Market participants stated, that US prices for HMS 1/2 (80:20) of US-$ 380 per tonne CFR Turkey were simply not viable given the significantly increased freight costs to Turkey of US-$50 per tonne.

The Middle East escalation is unsettling international scrap trading. Disruption in the flow of shipping and the subsequent almost complete closure of the Strait of Hormuz are affecting export flows from the Gulf region. International scrap traders were hesitant to make firm offers. Increased oil prices, increased insurance premiums and generally unclear freight costs resulted in a fragmented market appearance.

Market participants highlighted the particular threat to Turkey. The country is bordered on three sides by hostilities: Russia against Ukraine on the Black Sea, Syria to the south, and now the Iran/USA conflict to the south east. Turkish steel exporters are expected to take advantage of the European sales market as European domestic demand and selling prices are on the rise.

Experts expect increased energy prices to increase production costs worldwide. High production costs for Turkish steel mills could lead to higher demand from rolling mills for imported billets; a trend that market participants were already observing. It remained difficult to close deals. Nevertheless, Turkish scrap importers are still showing interest in deep-sea freight volumes for April loading.

Compared to February, the US domestic market stabilized during March, with steel mill demand at a relatively high level. Traders expected larger domestic purchasing volumes at higher margins than for export. In the US, exporters from the US east coast lowered their prices for HMS 1/2 (80:20) deliveries in reaction to increased freight and logistics costs.

Foundry Market

The Middle East conflict is hitting the foundry industry hard; rising energy prices are leading to increasing cost pressure on foundries. In addition to a difficult order situation, reduced volumes, and an impending transformation, there are now also the sharply increased energy costs to contend with. The economic environment is becoming increasingly hostile for this consumer industry.

Outlook

To some extent, processes and operations in the scrap trade appear to be gradually getting back to normal. Higher material inflow led to a better distribution of costs and a more positive mood, although logistics and transport costs are weighing heavily on the scrap metal industry. Unforeseeable and rapidly rising costs that, due to their unpredictability, cannot be passed on in such a short time period. The widening Middle East conflict is primarily affecting the industry through immensely increased energy costs. It is severely affecting all energy-intensive industries as well as the transport and logistics sectors. It is hoped that energy prices will normalise as quickly as they have risen. However, distrust remains, as experience has shown that what has once risen takes longer to return to its starting level. Hopefully, the slightly positive signals on the market can be absorbed, bundled, and translated into action so that normal day-to-day business can resume: collecting, processing, and returning materials to the existing cycle. **Circular economy is our metier, that is what we stand for.**