

# The fall in rail freight transport performance slowed down towards the end of 2009

## Rail freight transport in Europe

The total performance of rail freight transport in the EU-27 was estimated at 366 billion tonne-kilometres in 2009, representing a reduction of more than 17% compared to 2008. This fall reflects the impact of the economic crisis on rail freight transport, which had registered sustained growth over recent years until the second quarter of 2008. Transit transport was particularly affected (-27% between 2008 and 2009), while the decline was less marked for national (-15%) and international (-20%) transport.

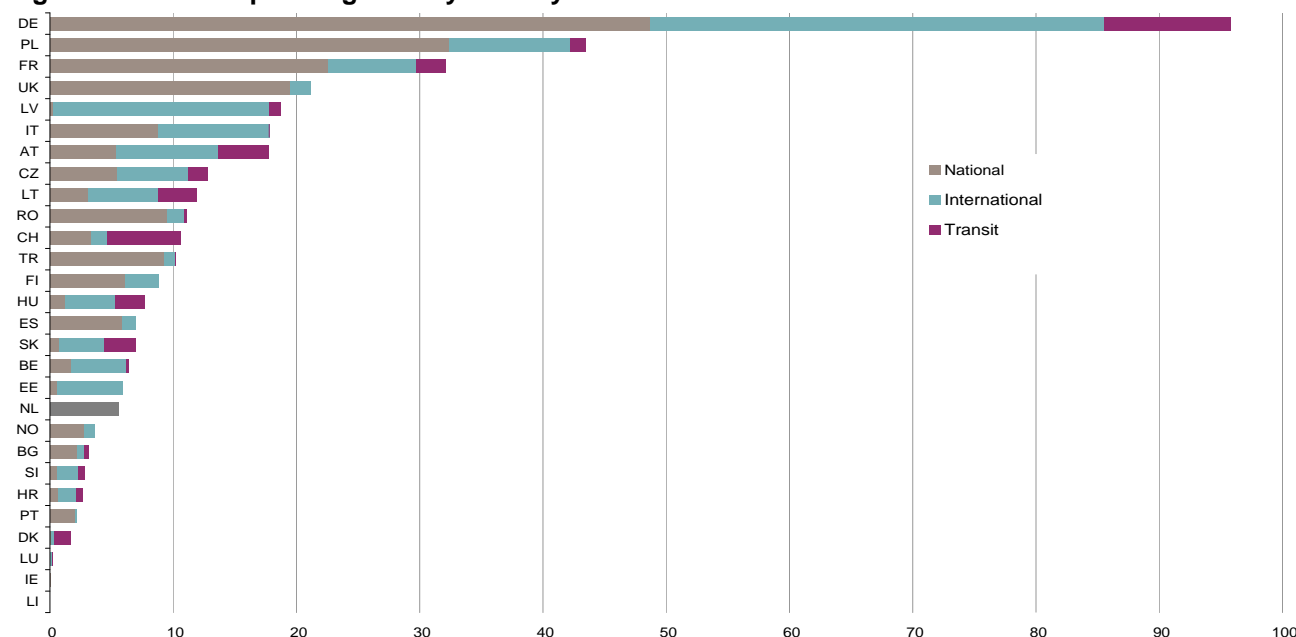
As a result of the crisis, the drop in transport performance between 2008 and 2009 was visible in all Member States: the only exception was Estonia, maintaining its 2009 transport performance at the same level as 2008 (+0.1%). Looking at the development by quarter, the situation is significantly better for the last quarter of 2009 (-4% compared to the same quarter in 2008) than for the first two quarters of the year (-25% each compared to the

corresponding quarters in 2008). The recovery is confirmed by the preliminary figures available for the first and second quarters of 2010, with increases of +8% and +14% respectively compared to the corresponding quarters in 2009.

In absolute terms, Germany registered the largest decrease (-19.8 billion tonne-kilometres between 2008 and 2009). Nevertheless, this country still recorded by far the highest rail transport performance in Europe, with 96 billion tonne-kilometres in 2009. Two other countries reported absolute decreases of more than 8 billion tonne-kilometres over the same period, namely Poland (-8.6) and France (-8.4).

The share of international transport observed in the various countries is strongly linked to their geographical position within Europe. For the EU-27 as a whole, the share of international transport was around 38% in 2009, remaining quite stable over recent years.

Figure 1: Rail transport of goods by country in 2009 - in billion tkm



NL: The share between national, international and transit transport is not available because of the confidentiality clause. EL, SE: Data not available.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: [rail\\_go\\_typeall](#))

## Only two countries recorded an increase in freight transport in 2009

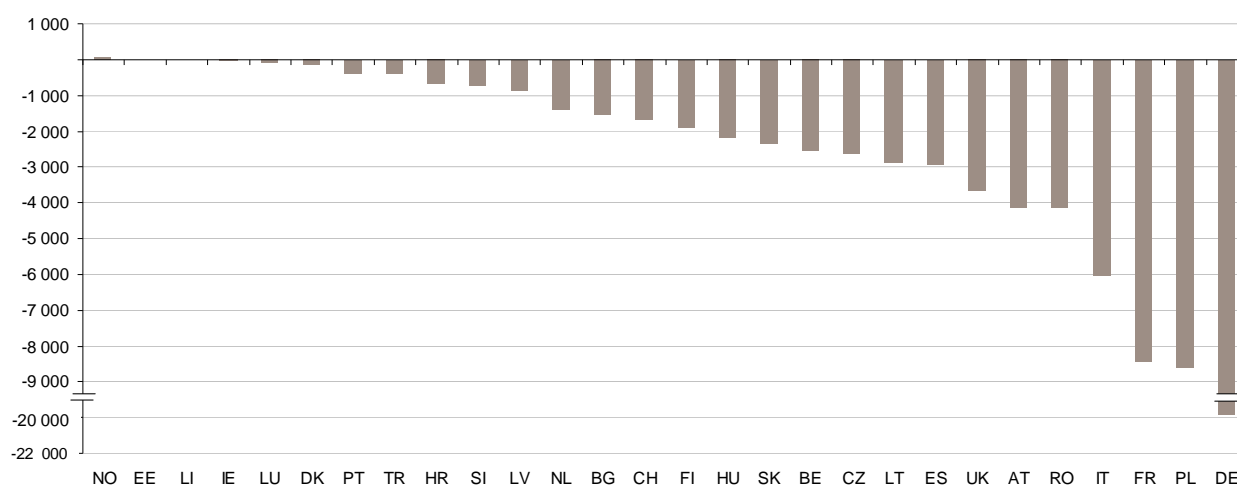
Out of the 27 reporting countries for which data are available, only Estonia and Norway recorded a positive growth, although moderate, in freight transport performance between 2008 and 2009 (+0.1% and +1.2% respectively). All the other reporting countries recorded losses in freight transport performance over the same period. Despite this general decreasing trend, the pattern applying at national level shows substantial differences among countries.

Germany recorded by far the highest absolute drop among the participating countries, with a loss of 19.8

billion tonne-kilometres. Poland, France and Italy were the only other countries where the transport performance declined by more than 5 billion tonne-kilometres, with falls of 8.6, 8.4 and 6.0 billion tonne-kilometres respectively.

Relative to the total volume, the greatest decrease among the Member States was registered by Bulgaria (-33.0%). Nine other Member States saw their transport performance decreasing by more than 20% from 2008 to 2009.

**Figure 2: The development of rail transport: change between 2008 and 2009 - in million tkm**



EL, SE: 2009 data not available

Source: Eurostat (online data code: [rail\\_go\\_typeall](#))

Focusing on the share of international transport, the geographical location of the countries plays a key role. Countries registering the highest share of international transport are located in key corridors within the European market. In the Baltic States of Latvia and Estonia, situated at the border between Europe and Russia, international transport accounted for 94% and 90% respectively of the total transport in 2009.

The Netherlands, Luxembourg and Belgium, also strategically situated in the heart of the European market, registered shares of 77%, 78% and 70% respectively. The key import harbours of Rotterdam and Antwerp, with important sea/rail transfers of goods dispatched within the European Union, strongly influence these figures.

In contrast, countries located on the coastal boundaries of the European Union record a low share of international transport. The lowest shares are observed in Portugal (8%) and in the United Kingdom (8%). Turkey also recorded a low

percentage (8%) which may be linked as well to its peripheral position.

Assessing the effects of the economic crisis, it is interesting to closely examine the evolution of quarterly figures (Table 2). While the effect of the crisis at EU level remained noticeable over the course of 2009, the decline was more pronounced for the first semester of the year. Each of the first two quarters of 2009 shows a drop of 25% of the freight transport performance compared to the corresponding quarter of 2008. This declining trend is less marked for the second half of the year: the decrease recorded for the third quarter was 18%; in contrast, it was only 4% for the last quarter of 2009.

There are clear disparities in the evolution of the freight transport performance at country level. While Latvia was the only country registering an increase over the first semester of the year (+1% between 2008 and 2009), a fall of 45% was recorded in Slovakia. Three other countries also reported drops of more than 40%, namely Luxembourg (-44%), Ireland (-41%) and Greece (-41%).

**Table 1: Evolution of total freight transport by rail - change 2008-2009 - in million tkm and in %**

	2008			2009			Change (Mio tkm)			Change (%)
	Detailed reporting	Simplified reporting	Total	Detailed reporting	Simplified reporting	Total	Detailed reporting	Simplified reporting	Total	Total
EU-25	c	c	423 085	:	:	351 000	:	:	-72 085	-17.0
EU-27	c	c	443 015	:	:	366 000	:	:	-77 015	-17.4
Belgium	8 469	458	8 927	5 947	427	6 374	-2 522	- 31	-2 553	-28.6
Bulgaria	4 671	22	4 693	3 073	71	3 145	-1 598	49	-1 549	-33.0
Czech Republic	15 437	-	15 437	12 791	-	12 791	-2 646	-	-2 646	-17.1
Denmark	1 863	3	1 866	1 697	3	1 700	- 166	-	- 166	-8.9
Germany	115 652	-	115 652	95 834	-	95 834	-19 817	-	-19 817	-17.1
Estonia	5 943	-	5 943	5 947	-	5 947	4	-	4	0.1
Ireland	103	-	103	79	-	79	- 24	-	- 24	-23.2
Greece	786	-	786	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Spain	9 737	738	10 475	6 973	575	7 547	-2 764	- 163	-2 928	-27.9
France	c	c	40 549	31 572	558	32 130	c	c	-8 419	-20.8
Italy	19 918	3 914	23 831	16 232	1 559	17 791	-3 686	-2 354	-6 040	-25.3
Cyprus	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Latvia	19 581	-	19 581	18 725	-	18 725	- 856	-	- 856	-4.4
Lithuania	14 748	-	14 748	11 888	-	11 888	-2 860	-	-2 860	-19.4
Luxembourg	-	279	279	-	200	200	-	- 78	- 78	-28.1
Hungary	8 897	977	9 874	6 699	973	7 673	-2 198	- 4	-2 202	-22.3
Malta	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Netherlands	6 000	983	6 984	5 017	561	5 578	- 984	- 422	-1 406	-16.4
Austria	18 189	3 726	21 915	14 709	3 058	17 767	-3 480	- 668	-4 148	-18.9
Poland	48 715	3 329	52 043	40 840	2 605	43 445	-7 875	- 723	-8 598	-16.5
Portugal	2 549	-	2 549	2 174	-	2 174	- 375	-	- 375	-14.7
Romania	14 152	1 084	15 236	9 832	1 256	11 088	-4 320	172	-4 148	-27.2
Slovenia	3 520	-	3 520	2 668	149	2 817	- 852	149	- 703	-20.0
Slovakia	9 139	160	9 299	6 931	33	6 964	-2 207	- 127	-2 335	-25.1
Finland	10 777	-	10 777	8 872	-	8 872	-1 904	-	-1 904	-17.7
Sweden	23 116	-	23 116	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
United Kingdom	24 831	-	24 831	21 168	-	21 168	-3 663	-	-3 663	-14.8
Croatia	3 312	-	3 312	2 641	-	2 641	- 671	-	- 671	-20.3
Turkey	10 552	-	10 552	10 163	-	10 163	- 389	-	- 389	-3.7
Liechtenstein	-	17	17	-	10	10	-	- 6	- 6	-37.0
Norway	3 329	292	3 621	3 128	539	3 666	- 201	246	45	1.2
Switzerland	11 483	782	12 265	9 495	1 070	10 565	-1 988	288	-1 700	-13.9

Estimates in italics. FR: data from detailed reporting are confidential (see methodological notes).

Source: Eurostat (online data code: [rail\\_go\\_typeall](#))

On the other hand, 8 Member States saw their transport performance increasing during the last quarter of 2009 compared to the same quarter of 2008. The strongest rises were registered for countries with small absolute freight transport performance, namely Luxembourg (+24%) and

Ireland (+19%). Focusing on countries recording the highest freight transport performance, the picture looks different: among the top 8 countries, Poland and Sweden were the only ones registering increases (+8% and 10% respectively) between the last quarter of 2008 and the same quarter in 2009.

**Table 2: Quarterly evolution of total freight transport by railways - in million tkm**

	2008				2009				2010	
	1st quarter	2nd quarter	3rd quarter	4th quarter	1st quarter	2nd quarter	3rd quarter	4th quarter	1st quarter	2nd quarter
EU-25	104 379	105 806	102 344	93 561	78 410	79 842	84 097	90 048	:	:
EU-27	c	c	c	c	81 569	82 787	87 462	93 483	:	:
Belgium	2 202	2 191	2 260	1 716	1 431	1 275	1 480	1 611	1 485	1 517
Bulgaria	c	c	c	c	830	747	705	791	690	786
Czech Republic	4 028	3 839	3 917	3 654	3 054	2 844	3 237	3 656	3 173	3 347
Denmark	477	507	456	427	390	407	427	475	501	570
Germany	29 532	30 197	29 273	26 967	23 123	23 006	23 693	25 830	25 099	27 396
Estonia	1 702	1 327	1 354	1 618	1 519	1 407	1 490	1 530	1 725	1 518
Ireland	25	34	21	22	16	19	18	27	22	21
Greece	212	224	177	173	129	127	140	142	:	:
Spain	2 707	2 522	2 476	2 032	1 783	1 641	1 674	1 875	1 864	1 985
France	11 140	10 575	9 972	8 749	7 519	8 020	8 271	8 319	7 768	7 802
Italy	5 223	5 489	4 800	4 406	3 645	3 460	3 090	3 374	4 050	4 105
Cyprus	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Latvia	5 112	4 658	4 443	5 368	4 914	4 973	4 371	4 467	4 861	4 274
Lithuania	3 994	3 756	3 602	3 396	2 759	2 734	3 081	3 314	3 397	3 107
Luxembourg	71	85	77	48	42	45	54	59	74	89
Hungary	2 019	2 364	2 348	2 167	1 411	1 581	1 744	1 964	1 628	1 982
Malta	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Netherlands	1 534	1 554	1 500	1 340	1 342	1 129	1 148	1 367	1 404	1 375
Austria	4 265	4 865	4 601	4 459	3 284	3 649	3 738	4 038	3 659	4 333
Poland	11 807	12 925	13 098	10 885	8 435	9 203	11 487	11 714	9 724	11 655
Portugal	662	678	670	541	496	495	514	491	460	480
Romania	3 700	3 627	3 666	3 159	2 330	2 199	2 660	2 643	1 723	2 252
Slovenia	869	887	889	875	659	656	616	736	749	845
Slovakia	2 428	2 474	2 311	2 067	1 243	1 461	1 872	1 999	1 809	2 015
Finland	2 763	2 816	2 791	2 407	1 942	2 023	2 261	2 647	2 139	2 536
Sweden	6 113	6 186	5 703	5 114	4 357	4 706	4 672	5 637	5 296	5 813
United Kingdom	5 496	5 655	5 607	5 132	4 916	4 979	5 018	4 776	4 840	4 692
Croatia	766	837	846	863	607	623	664	747	565	630
Turkey	2 269	2 832	2 989	2 462	2 087	2 616	2 678	2 782	2 569	2 788
Liechtenstein	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Norway	812	875	849	824	725	709	780	868	733	734
Switzerland	2 931	3 045	2 818	2 688	2 292	2 383	2 348	2 473	2 864	2 880

FR: data include both simplified and detailed reporting (see methodological notes).

Source: Eurostat (online data code: [rail\\_go\\_quartal](#))

## METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

### Data availability

The figures presented in this publication have been extracted from the Eurostat rail transport database on the 6<sup>th</sup> October 2010. They include data on national, international and transit transport of the Member States, collected according to the current [Regulation n°91/2003](#) (that has replaced the [Council Directive 80/1177/EEC](#) since 2003).

The following table presents some characteristics of data availability:

### Country Characteristics of data availability

IE	Irish rail ceased international freight traffic in 2004
FR	Because of the confidentiality clause put on the data collected under detailed reporting until 2008, annual data (Table 1) cannot be split into detailed and simplified reporting, and quarterly data (Table 2) include all railway undertakings (under detailed and simplified reporting).
CY, MT	No railway transport.

### Methodology

The various elements present data collected under the detailed and simplified reporting systems. Simplified reporting is an alternative to normal detailed reporting for undertakings for which the annual total performance of freight transport is less than 500 million tonne-kilometres.

Railway lines in Liechtenstein are operated by ÖBB (Austria) and statistics are reported by Austrian authorities under simplified reporting.

Quarterly figures are only collected under detailed reporting.

For CZ, DE, EE, IE, EL, LV, LT, PT, SI (2008), FI, SE and UK, the detailed reporting covers all undertakings, so quarterly aggregates and annual data are comparable.

Graph 1, Graph 2 and Table 1 combine both simplified and detailed reporting statistics while Table 2 is based on detailed reporting only (quarterly data). Moreover, detailed reporting in

Figure 1, Figure 2 and Table 1 is based on annual figures while it is based on quarterly figures in Table 2.

### Definitions of various kinds of rail transport

#### Total rail transport

Total rail transport (in tonne-kilometres) was calculated as a sum of national, international and transit transport, where international transport is the sum of international loaded and unloaded in the reporting country.

#### National rail transport

Rail transport where the goods are both loaded and unloaded within the same reporting Member State, irrespective of the route followed by the railway vehicle.

#### International rail transport

Rail transport where the goods are either loaded or unloaded, but not both, in the reporting Member State, with a distinction between goods loaded and goods unloaded.

#### Rail transit

Rail transport where the goods pass through the reporting Member State without being loaded, unloaded or transshipped.

#### Tonne-kilometre

Unit of measure of freight transport which represents the transport of one tonne of goods (including packaging and tare weights of intermodal transport units) by rail over a distance of one kilometre. Only the distance on the national territory of the reporting country is taken into account for national, international and transit transport.

### Symbols

: not available

- not applicable

0 actual zero or very negligible transport

c confidential

This publication was prepared with the assistance of Mathieu Erzar.

## Further information

Eurostat Website: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>

Data on "Transport statistics"

<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/transport/data/database>

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Manuscript completed on: 09.03.2011

Data extracted on: 03.12.2010

ISSN 1977-0316

Catalogue number: KS-SF-11-011-EN-N

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