

## Goods transport by rail declining by the end of 2008

### Rail freight transport in Europe

The total performance of rail freight transport in the EU-27 was 447 billion tonne-kilometres in 2008, representing a reduction of 1.3% compared to 2007. This decline reflects the impact of the economic crisis during the last quarter of 2008 on rail freight transport, which had registered sustained growth over the previous years.

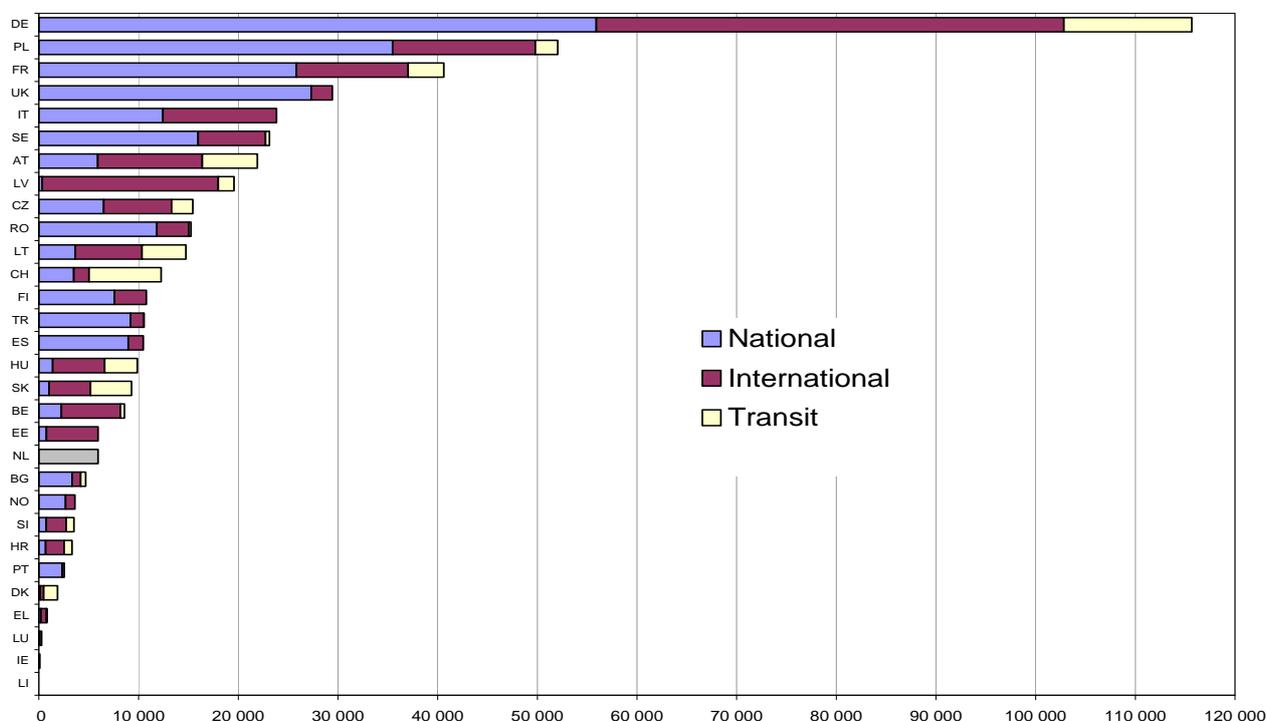
The drop in transport performance between 2007 and 2008 as a result of the crisis was visible in the majority of the Member States. In most of them, the crisis either slowed down or reversed the positive trend of the previous years. Only a few countries recorded a growth in transport performance in 2008. In absolute terms, the main growth was registered in the United Kingdom, Latvia and Germany. For Germany, this however

represents a clear slowing down of the strong growth of the previous years. On the other hand, Estonia recorded the largest absolute decrease (-2.5 billion tonne-kilometres).

The share of international transport observed in the various countries is strongly linked to the geographical position within Europe. For the EU-27 as a whole, this share has remained quite stable at around 38% since 2003.

Coal and lignite, crude petroleum and natural gas were the most transported products, representing one fifth of the total volume of goods transported by rail in the Member States in 2008 (for details please refer to the Eurostat dissemination table [rail\\_go\\_grpgood](#)).

**Graph 1: Rail transport of goods by country in 2008 - in million tkm**



NL: figures based on 2008 quarterly data, because of confidentiality clause put on annual figures.

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

## Few countries experienced increases in freight transport in 2008

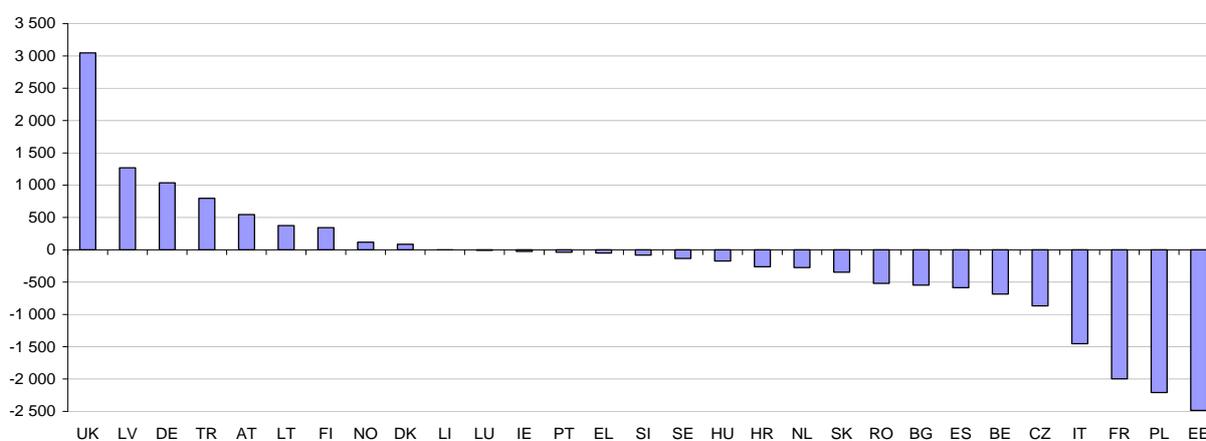
The absolute change between 2007 and 2008 at country level shows substantial differences. Of the 29 participating countries for which data are available, only nine recorded growth in freight transport performance.

The United Kingdom recorded the highest absolute growth among the participating countries (3.0 billion tonne-kilometres). Out of the six countries with the highest amount of goods transported (namely Germany, Poland, France, Italy, Sweden and the United Kingdom), Germany was the only other country to record growth (both in terms of tonnes-kilometres and tonnes

transported, +1.0 billion tonne-kilometres and +10 million tonnes). Estonia (-2.5 billion tonne-kilometres) and Poland (-2.2) were the only countries recording falls of more than two billion tonne-kilometres.

Considering this absolute development in relation to the total volume of freight transported, the greatest growth was registered by the United Kingdom (+11.5%), followed by Latvia (+6.9%), and Denmark (+4.9%). At the other end of the scale were Estonia (-29.5%) and Ireland (-19.9%).

**Graph 2: The development of rail transport: change between 2007 and 2008 - in million tkm**



FR: 2008 data estimated using quarterly data (including detailed and simplified reporting); CH: 2007 data not available (see methodological notes)  
Source: Eurostat ([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 accounts for 90% and 87% respectively of the total transport.

The Netherlands, Luxembourg and Belgium, also strategically situated in the heart of the European market, register shares of 81% (2007 data), 77% and 69% 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 share is observed in the United Kingdom (7%): this is clearly linked to its insular position, naturally limiting exchanges by rail with neighbouring countries. Portugal and Turkey also recorded low

percentages (9% and 12% respectively) which maybe linked to their peripheral position.

In order to assess the effects of the economic crisis, it is interesting to closely examine the evolution of quarterly figures (Table 2). The effect of the crisis at EU level became perceptible in the course of the third quarter of 2008, for which the first decline was observed compared to the same quarter of the previous year.

There is a clear disparity in the 2007/2008 evolutions for the first three quarters of the year and for the last quarter of the year. taking the first three quarters altogether, 17 countries recorded growth between 2007 and 2008, with the highest in Turkey (+12.9%) and Denmark (+12.3%). At EU level, the total freight transport performance was at the same level in 2007 and in 2008 (+0.1%).

The picture looks quite different for the last quarter of the year. Only two countries recorded growth in the last quarter of 2008 compared to the same quarter in 2007 (although Latvia registered impressive growth of almost 11%).

**Table 1: Evolution of total freight transport by rail - change 2007-2008 - in million tkm and in %**

	2007			2008			Change (Mio tkm)			Change (%)
	Detailed reporting	Simplified reporting	Total	Detailed reporting	Simplified reporting	Total	Detailed reporting	Simplified reporting	Total	Total
Belgium	9 171	87	9 258	8 469	103	8 572	-702	16	-686	-7,4
Bulgaria	c	c	5 241	c	c	4 693	:	:	-548	:
Czech Republic	16 304	-	16 304	15 437	-	15 437	-867	-	-867	-5,3
Denmark	1 776	3	1 779	1 863	3	1 866	87	0	87	4,9
Germany	114 615	-	114 615	115 652	-	115 652	1 037	-	1 037	0,9
Estonia	8 430	-	8 430	5 943	-	5 943	-2 487	-	-2 487	-29,5
Ireland	129	-	129	103	-	103	-26	-	-26	-19,9
Greece	835	-	835	786	-	786	-49	-	-49	-5,9
Spain	10 498	566	11 064	9 739	738	10 477	-758	171	-587	-5,3
France	c	c	42 623	c	c	40 627	:	:	-1 996	-4,7
Italy	21 197	4 088	25 285	19 918	3 914	23 831	-1 279	-174	-1 453	-5,7
Cyprus	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Latvia	18 313	-	18 313	19 581	-	19 581	1 268	-	1 268	6,9
Lithuania	14 373	-	14 373	14 748	-	14 748	375	-	375	2,6
Luxembourg	-	287	287	-	279	279	-	-8	-8	-2,8
Hungary	9 388	660	10 048	8 897	977	9 874	-492	318	-174	-1,7
Malta	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Netherlands	6 275	941	7 216	6 000	983	6 984	-275	42	-233	-4,4
Austria	18 417	2 954	21 371	18 189	3 726	21 915	-228	772	544	2,5
Poland	51 801	2 453	54 253	48 715	3 329	52 043	-3 086	876	-2 210	-4,1
Portugal	2 586	-	2 586	2 549	-	2 549	-38	-	-38	-1,5
Romania	14 332	1 425	15 757	14 152	1 084	15 236	-180	-341	-521	-3,3
Slovenia	3 603	-	3 603	3 520	-	3 520	-83	-	-83	-2,3
Slovakia	9 515	132	9 647	9 139	160	9 299	-376	29	-348	-3,6
Finland	10 434	-	10 434	10 777	-	10 777	342	-	342	3,3
Sweden	23 250	-	23 250	23 116	-	23 116	-134	-	-134	-0,6
United Kingdom	26 384	-	26 384	29 430	-	29 430	3 046	-	3 046	11,5
EU-25	:	:	432 086	:	:	427 408	:	:	-4 677	-1,1
EU-27	:	:	453 084	:	:	447 338	:	:	-5 746	-1,3
Croatia	3 574	-	3 574	3 312	-	3 312	-262	-	-262	-7,3
Turkey	9 755	-	9 755	10 552	-	10 552	798	-	798	8,2
Liechtenstein	-	18	18	-	17	17	-	-1	-1	-8,0
Norway	3 347	155	3 502	3 329	292	3 621	-18	137	119	3,4
Switzerland	:	:	:	-	783	783	:	:	:	:

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

Source: Eurostat ([rail\\_go\\_ttypeall](#))

All the remaining countries registered falls for the same period, with 2-digit losses for 14 countries.

The greatest declines were observed in Luxembourg (-30%), Greece (-26%) and Belgium (-24%).

At EU level, the 2007/2008 evolution for the last quarter of the year was -9%. In absolute terms, this decrease was equivalent to the annual transport performance of Hungary.

The quarterly figures available indicate that a general and drastic decrease took place for freight transport performance in 2009, with most countries registering 2-digit losses compared to 2008. Based on countries available, the general decrease between 2008 and 2009 at EU level was -24% for each of the two first quarters of the year and -18% for the third quarter.

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

	2007				2008				2009		
	1st quarter	2nd quarter	3rd quarter	4th quarter	1st quarter	2nd quarter	3rd quarter	4th quarter	1st quarter	2nd quarter	3rd quarter
Belgium	1 847	2 246	2 445	2 256	2 202	2 191	2 260	1 716	1 315	1 275	1 394
Bulgaria	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	830	747	705
Czech Republic	4 012	4 108	4 042	4 142	4 028	3 839	3 917	3 654	3 004	2 794	3 189
Denmark	436	463	436	442	494	529	476	451	421	407	415
Germany	28 703	28 882	28 823	28 207	29 532	30 197	29 273	26 967	23 123	23 006	:
Estonia	2 970	2 217	1 545	1 693	1 702	1 327	1 354	1 618	1 519	1 407	1 490
Ireland	35	37	32	26	25	34	21	22	16	19	:
Greece	203	207	191	235	212	224	177	173	129	127	140
Spain	2 777	2 614	2 517	2 569	2 817	2 719	2 494	2 114	1 875	1 641	1 674
France	10 862	11 206	10 812	9 732	11 194	10 613	10 025	8 798	7 538	8 176	:
Italy	5 576	5 547	4 982	5 091	5 223	5 489	4 800	4 406	:	:	3 091
Cyprus	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Latvia	4 341	4 656	4 461	4 855	5 112	4 658	4 443	5 368	4 914	4 973	4 371
Lithuania	3 372	3 680	3 611	3 710	3 994	3 756	3 602	3 396	2 759	2 734	:
Luxembourg	79	76	64	68	71	85	77	48	42	45	:
Hungary	2 225	2 407	2 332	2 424	2 019	2 364	2 348	2 167	1 410	1 581	1 744
Malta	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Netherlands	1 489	1 544	1 516	1 583	1 534	1 554	1 500	1 340	1 342	1 129	1 148
Austria	4 526	4 718	4 454	4 719	4 265	4 865	4 601	4 459	3 284	3 649	3 738
Poland	12 347	13 040	13 448	12 966	11 807	12 925	13 098	10 885	8 142	8 928	11 221
Portugal	621	688	626	652	662	678	670	541	496	495	535
Romania	3 525	3 554	3 631	3 621	3 700	3 627	3 666	3 159	2 330	2 199	2 660
Slovenia	918	913	865	908	869	887	889	875	659	656	616
Slovakia	2 362	2 388	2 380	2 413	2 428	2 474	2 311	2 067	1 243	1 461	1 872
Finland	2 683	2 583	2 585	2 582	2 763	2 816	2 791	2 407	1 942	2 023	2 261
Sweden	5 812	5 897	5 488	6 053	6 113	6 186	5 703	5 114	4 582	4 950	4 914
United Kingdom	5 598	5 711	5 448	5 456	5 496	5 642	5 603	5 132	4 916	:	:
EU-25	103 793	105 827	103 103	102 782	104 561	106 050	102 432	93 715	:	:	:
EU-27	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Croatia	850	905	935	884	766	837	846	863	601	693	641
Turkey	2 324	2 259	2 586	2 586	2 269	2 832	2 989	2 462	2 087	2 616	2 678
Liechtenstein	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Norway	824	834	793	893	812	875	849	824	725	709	780
Switzerland	:	:	:	:	2 931	3 045	2 818	2 688	2 495	2 465	2 429

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

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

## METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

### Data availability

The figures presented in this publication have been extracted from the Eurostat rail transport database on the 15<sup>th</sup> February 2010. They include the statistics of the 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

BG	Only total transport data are not confidential.
IE	Irish rail ceased international freight traffic in 2004
CY, MT	No railway transport.
FI	Underestimated figures for international transport because of a different definition of transit used which includes goods transhipped in the seaports from/to railways wagons to/from ships as transit.
CH	Rail transport data are available since 2008 reference year.
FR	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), because of the confidentiality clause put on the data collected under detailed reporting.

### 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, FI, SE and UK, the

detailed reporting covers all undertakings, so quarterly aggregates and annual data are comparable.

Graph 1, 2 and Table 2 are based on detailed reporting, while Table 1 combines both simplified and detailed reporting statistics. Moreover, detailed reporting in 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 transhipped.

#### 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 both 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 and Cédric Messina.

## Further information

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

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Manuscript completed on: 28.04.2010

Data extracted on: 19.02.2010

ISSN 1977-0316

Catalogue number: KS-SF-10-019-EN-N

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