

Indicator (definition)	Volume of freight transport relative to GDP: Volume of inland freight transport (road, rail and inland waterways) measured in tonne-km relative to Gross Domestic Product (GDP)
Eurostat Unit	Transport Statistics
Other Commission DGs	DG Energy and Transport; DG Environment
European Statistical System Working Group (WG)	WG on road freight transport statistics, WG on rail transport statistics and WG on inland waterways statistics
Date	December 2010

1. Overall assessment of accuracy and comparability (Description of quality grades under the following link: http://circa.europa.eu/Public/irc/dsis/structind/library?l=/general_information/quality_profiles/annex_enpdf/EN_1.0_&a=d)

A B C Indicator to be Developed

Data is collected from reliable sources applying high standards with regard to the methodology. Slight shortcomings with regard to accuracy are well documented and explained.

No detailed analysis was carried out to assess the impact of the break in series appearing due to entry into force of new legislation in 1999 and 2003. Effects of these changes are not assessed and documented.

2. Objective and relevance of the indicator:

The indicator expresses the ratio between transport performance in tonne-kilometres and GDP (chain-linked volumes, at 2000 exchange rates), indexing on reference year 2000.

Main policy objective is to “bring about a significant decoupling of transport growth from GDP growth” (EC in Gothenburg, June 2001).

An operational objective of the renewed EU sustainable development strategy is ‘decoupling economic growth and the demand for transport with the aim of reducing environmental impacts’.

The volume of freight transport to GDP ratio measures the decoupling of freight transport growth from real GDP growth. Rising volumes of traffic can damage the environment and economic growth through rising levels of congestion, noise and pollution.

The Europe 2020 strategy, also takes into account transport initiatives in relation with sustainability and growth such as “ensure that transport and logistics networks enable industry throughout the Union to have effective access to the Single Market and the international market beyond.” It also proposes to modernise and decarbonise the transport sector thereby contributing to increased competitiveness.

Restriction of the indicator’s relevance and other characteristics which may lead to restrictions in using it in monitoring and reporting

Statistics on air and sea transport are not included mainly due to conceptual difficulties in dealing with these modes in a manner consistent with the inland modes.

Transport by pipelines is not included in the calculation of this indicator.

To allow for further analysis of the impact of transport on the environment (as regards e.g. emissions and particles) and to measure progress with regard to decoupling, the indicator may be supplemented by indicators per mode on vehicle-km.

3. Data availability: details

(t_1 : earliest reference year available; t_2 : latest reference year available in December 2010)

	Member States	Candidate and Acceding Countries	US and Japan	EEA-EFTA
t_1	1995: BE, BG, CZ, DK, DE, EE, IE, ES, FR, IT, CY, LV, LT, LU, HU, NL, AT, PL, PT, SI, SK, FI, UK 1999: RO 2000: EL, MT	1995: TR 2000: HR, MK	-	1995: IS, NO

t ₂	2000: EL, MT 2008: BE, BG, CZ, DK, DE, EE, IE, ES, FR, IT, CY, LV, LT, LU, HU, NL, AT, PL, PT, RO, SI, SK, FI, SE, UK	2000: HR 2007: TR, MK	-	2006: IS 2008: NO
----------------	--	--------------------------	---	----------------------

Comments (including information on time series):

Data for Croatia are available but due to substantial changes in the methodology in 2001, the index cannot be calculated.

4. Overall accuracy

High



Overall accuracy can be considered as high. The statistics on rail and inland waterways transport cover all the transport on the national territory. Road transport data refer to the activities of the vehicles registered in the reporting country.

Inland freight transport includes transport by road, rail and inland waterways:

- Rail and inland waterways transport are based on movements on national territory ('territoriality principle'), regardless of the nationality of the vehicle or vessel.

- Road transport is based on all movements of vehicles registered in the reporting country.

Transport performance (tonne-kilometres) should be reported by the countries according to the "territoriality principle". This means that only transport performance that takes place on the territory of the country should be included. Accuracy is slightly restricted as

- in rail freight transport statistics, some small train companies data are missing for some countries after market liberalisation (after 2003 all operators are covered by the new Regulation).

- in inland waterways freight transport statistics, some countries that have substantial but only national inland waterway transport are not covered by the Directive, thus do not report.

- in road freight transport statistics, some countries apply a threshold (for vehicles with a load capacity of less than 3.5 tonnes). To improve the accuracy, it is monitored by the WG on road freight transport statistics and a regulation on precision standards was adopted in 2004.

Restricted

(sources, errors, methodology, etc.)



5. Comparability across countries

High



Concepts are fully harmonised for all modes through European legislation. For road freight transport data, Eurostat compiles aggregates on the basis of microdata received from the countries and it improves the comparability at the EU level.

Detailed transport data, collected according to the legal acts or on voluntary basis are available by country per modes of transport. Data are accompanied by methodological description.

Changes in the methodology for transport data collections are described in the footnotes.

Restricted



6. Comparability over time

High



Restricted



Comparability restricted due to some breaks that occurred when the new regulations on road freight transport statistics (1999) and on rail transport statistics (2003) were implemented. In order, countries to harmonise their surveys with the EU legislation, there are also breaks appearing in 2004. Effects of these changes are not assessed and documented.

7. Development perspective for improving the quality of this indicator (including as far as possible an indication of the burden on Member States and respondents.)

Comparability over time should be assessed and documented.

Air and sea transport should be included.

Within the project on modal split indicators, Eurostat makes efforts to improve consistency of the transport modes' datasets and looks for solutions for some methodological problems due to the conceptual difficulties.

8. Contribution to the coherence of the set/potential to qualify for an integrated policy analysis

The indicator should be related to environment and energy indicators.

Relevant European legislation:

Communication from the Commission on freight transport logistics in Europe, the key to sustainable mobility (2006/336)

Road: Regulation (EC) 1172/98 on statistical returns in respect of the carriage of goods by road.

Commission Regulation (EC) No 642/2004 of 6 April 2004 on precision requirements for data collected in accordance with Council Regulation (EC) No 1172/98 on statistical returns in respect of the carriage of goods by road.

Rail: Directive 80/1177/EEC on statistical returns in respect of carriage of goods by rail, as part of regional statistics, replaced by the Regulation (EC) 91/2003 on rail transport statistics in 2003.

Commission Regulation (EC) No 1192/2003 of 3 July 2003 amending Regulation (EC) No 91/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council on rail transport statistics

Inland waterways: Directive 80/1119/EEC on statistical returns in respect of carriage of goods by inland waterways, replaced by European Parliament and Council regulation (1365/2006) on statistics of goods transport by inland waterways