

UK Port Freight Statistics: July-September (Quarter 3)



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for Transport



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UK Major Ports

Quarter 3 2013 Main Findings

Quarterly Trend

Comparing quarter 3 2013 (July-September) with quarter 3 2012:

- Total **UK major port freight traffic** (tonnage) **dropped** by 1 per cent to **123 million tonnes**, from 125 million tonnes in quarter 3 2012.
- Total **unitised traffic** increased for the second consecutive quarter, **rising by 2 per cent** to 6.2 million units handled at UK major ports.
- **Unitised traffic travelling in** to UK major ports **rose** for the second quarter to 3.2 million units, a **3 per cent increase** compared with 2012. Unitised traffic **travelling out** of UK major ports **remained stable** at 2.9 million units.

Rolling Annual Total

Comparing the 12 month period ending September 2013 with the 12 month period ending September 2012:

- **Total major port freight traffic** continued the downward trend seen throughout 2012 and 2013. Tonnage **fell by 3 per cent** to 484 million tonnes.
- **Total unitised traffic remained stable** at 20.9 million units in comparison to the previous four quarters.

About this release

This Statistical Release summarises the latest provisional quarterly statistics on freight handled by **major** UK sea ports. Provisional annual statistics for all ports are published June and detailed final annual statistics are published in September. The quarterly series is finalised alongside the final annual statistics for 2013.

This statistical release uses quarter on quarter comparisons to eliminate seasonal impact.

Major Port Freight Traffic (Tonnage)

Summary

Despite the slowing decline in the previous two quarters, the **rolling annual total** for all freight traffic **declined by 3 per cent** to 484 million tonnes. This was in part caused by the 8 per cent quarterly fall seen in October - December 2012 (quarter 4 2012).

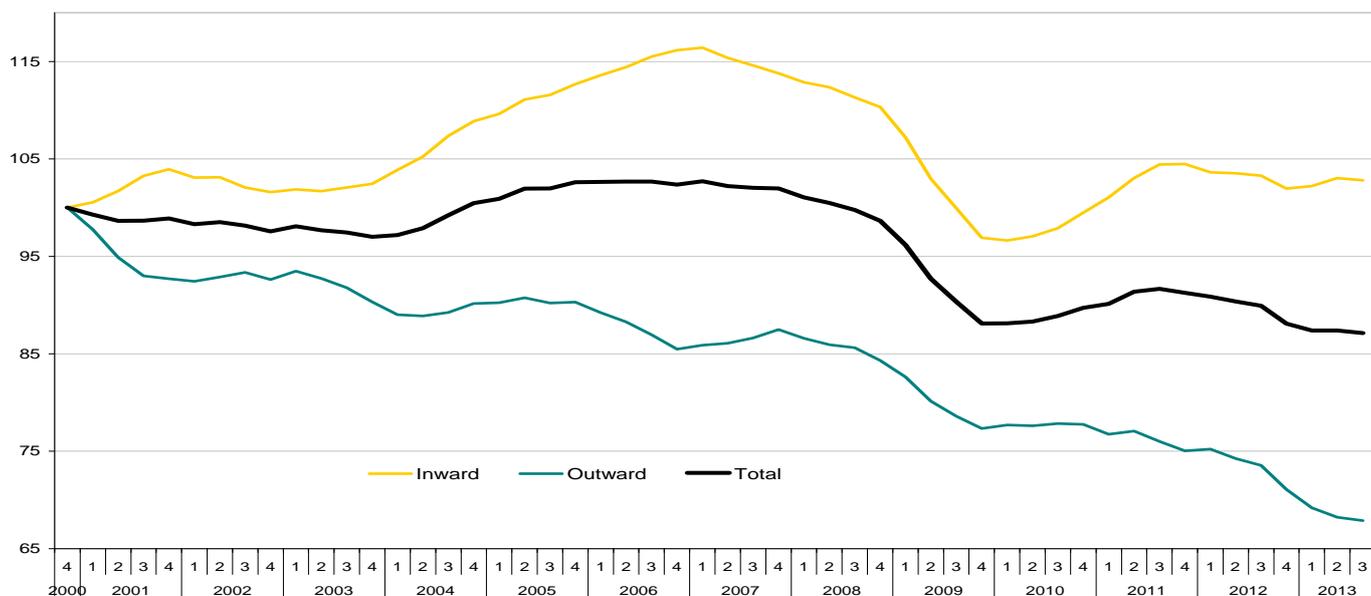
Quarterly Trend: Comparing quarter 3 2013 (July – September) with quarter 3 2012

- **Total tonnage** dropped by 1 per cent to **123 million tonnes**.
- Traffic travelling **into UK major ports decreased** by 1 per cent to 80 million tonnes. This is the first quarter on quarter decrease seen in inward traffic in 2013.
- Traffic travelling **out of UK major ports** fell to **43 million tonnes** (a 2 per cent decline).

Annual (Rolling) Trend: quarter 3 2013 through to quarter 4 2012

- **The rolling total** for major port freight traffic continued the downward trend seen throughout 2012 and 2013. Tonnage **fell by 3 per cent** to 484 million tonnes.
- **Despite the quarter on quarter fall** in tonnage travelling into UK major ports, **the rolling annual total remained stable** at 315 million tonnes.
- **Outward** freight traffic **continued the decline** seen throughout 2012 and 2013. As a result the **rolling annual total was 8 per cent lower** than the previous four quarters at 169 million tonnes.

Chart 1: Major port traffic indices, tonnage: rolling four quarter totals to quarter 3 2013 (2000=100)



Detailed statistics (tables) on “Quarterly Tonnage Port Freight Statistics’ can be found in the web tables [PORT0501 & PORT0504-PORT0506](#)

Major Port Freight Traffic (Units)

Summary

- The **rolling annual total of units** handled at UK major ports **remained stable** at 20.9 million units. This was despite the increase in freight traffic seen in the past two quarters.

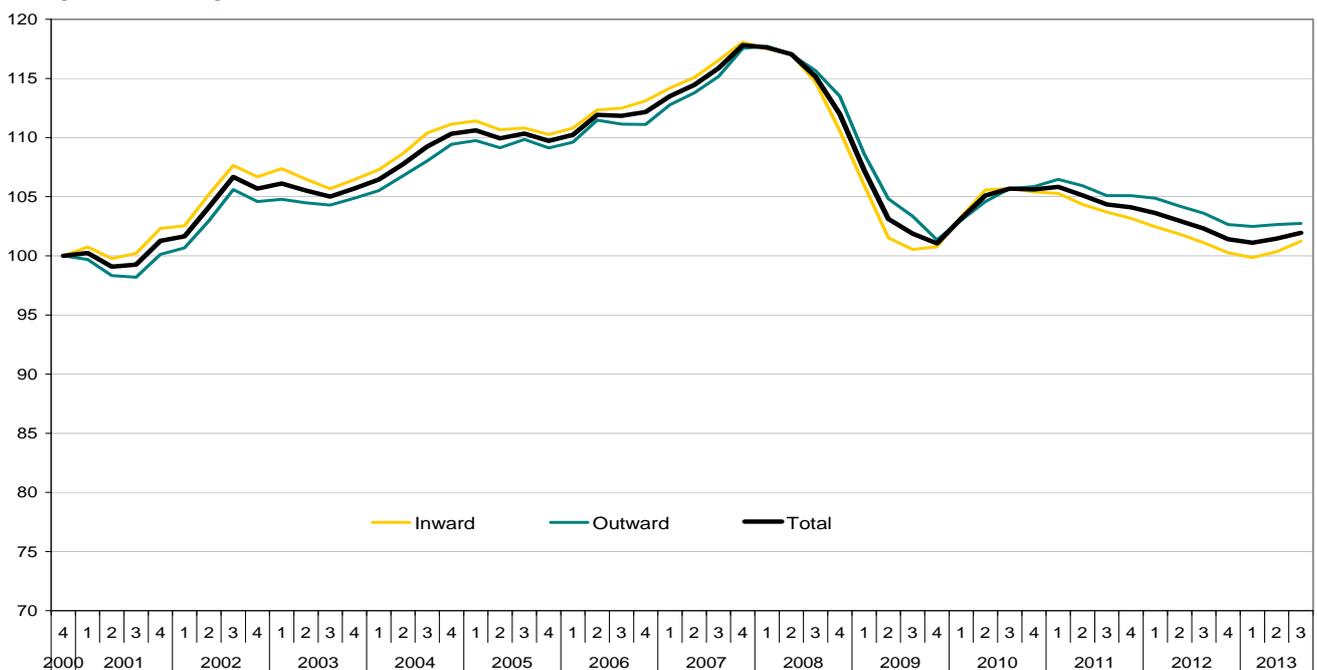
Comparing quarter 3 2013 (July – September) with quarter 3 2012

- **Total unitised traffic increased** by 2 per cent to 6.2 million units, continuing the upward trend seen in quarter 2.
- **Unitised traffic travelling** into UK major ports rose for the second quarter to 3.2 million units, a **3 per cent increase**.
- **Outwards unitised traffic remained stable** at 2.9 million units.

Annual (Rolling) Trend: quarter 3 2013 through to quarter 4 2012

- **Total unitised traffic remained stable** at 20.9 million units in comparison to the previous four quarters.
- **Inwards unitised traffic** remained stable at 10.8 million units despite the increase in the previous two quarters.
- **Outward unitised traffic declined** by 1 per cent to 10.1 million units. This was caused by the fall in units in quarter 4 2012 and quarter 1 2013.

Chart 2: Major Port traffic indices, units - rolling four quarters totals to quarter 3 2013 (2000=100)



Detailed statistics (tables) on “Quarterly Unitised Port Freight Statistics’ can be found in the web tables [PORT0502 & PORT0507-PORT0509](#)

Strengths and weaknesses of the data

- The port freight statistics relate to traffic to and from ports in the United Kingdom, unless otherwise stated, and do not cover ports in the Isle of Man or the Channel Islands.
- The provisional quarterly port data relate to all cargoes loaded or unloaded by ship at major ports in the UK, including both international and domestic traffic.
- These statistics are based on data provided by major ports. Data are available for total weight of goods and number of units inwards and outwards for each responding port. These figures may be subject to revision if subsequent checks against data provided by agents, or data provided by ports at the year end, highlight anomalies. More in depth commentary will be provided with the release of the final port statistics.
- Typically a very small number of ports do not provide data in time for publication, in which case the national trend is estimated based on the trend for those ports which have provided data for the latest quarter. **The provisional figures for freight traffic at each major UK port in quarter 3 2013 are based on 100 per cent of expected traffic as all ports had made complete returns for this quarter at the time of publication.**

Glossary

- **Major ports:** Ports handling over one million tonnes per year, and a small number of other key ports, together accounting for 98% of UK port traffic in 2012.
- **Tonnage:** The weight of goods transported, including crates and other packaging, but excluding the unloaded weight of shipping containers, road goods vehicles, trailers and other items of transport equipment where these are used.
- **Units:** Includes all roll-on/roll-off (ro-ro) units whether carrying freight or not (road goods vehicles, unaccompanied trailers, shipborne port-to-port trailers, passenger vehicles, trade vehicles, and other ro-ro units), as well as lift-on lift-off (lo-lo) containers. In most published port statistics freight carrying roll-on/roll-off units are reported separately, however, this detail is not available at the time of the quarterly statistics publication, in which combined totals are given.

Background notes

- The web tables and charts give further detail of the key results presented in this statistical release. They are available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport/series/ports-statistics>
- Full guidance on the methods used to compile these statistics can be found on the ports series page here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport/series/ports-statistics>

- National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice for Official Statistics. Port Freight Statistics were assessed by the UK Statistics Authority against the Code of Practice and were confirmed as National Statistics in February 2013.
- Details of Ministers and officials who receive pre-release access to these statistics up to 24 hours before release can be found on the ports series page here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport/series/ports-statistics>
- The next update in this series will be published in December 2013. It will contain provisional quarterly figures for the third quarter of 2013.
- Annual statistics on freight handled by UK sea ports are updated twice a year; provisional in June and detailed final figures in September. The final 2012 figures can be found here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/port-freight-statistics-2012-final-figures>