Pre-revision Version

Statistical Release 27 August 2014

UK Port Freight Statistics: 2013

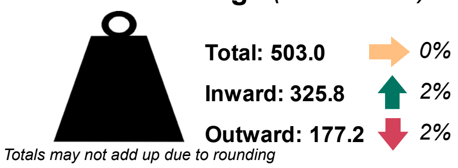
Department for Transport

The key findings for 2013 are:

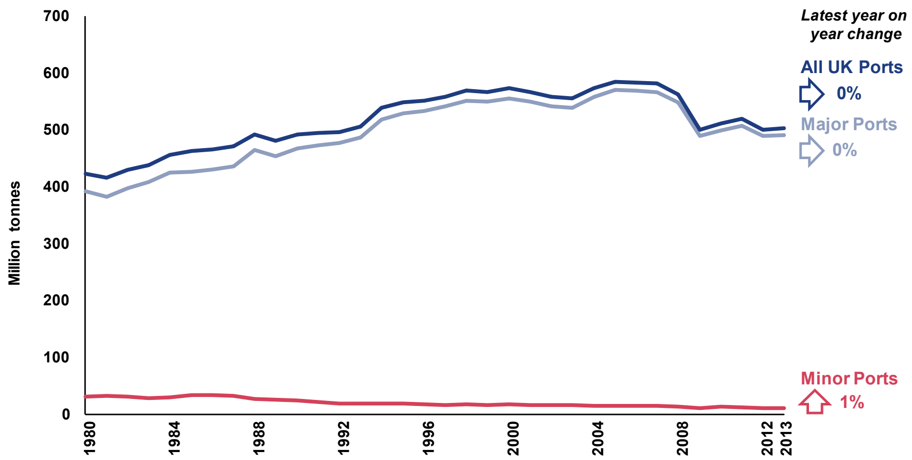
Port Freight Traffic (tonnage)

- **Total traffic** for all UK ports was broadly stable in 2013 **at 503.0 million tonnes,** following a year on year decline in 2012 of 4 per cent.

UK Port Tonnage ***(million tonnes)***



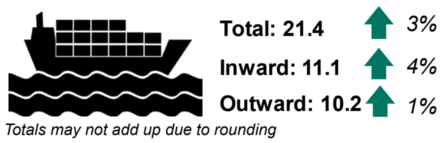
- **Major ports** tonnage was steady with **491.4 million** tonnes being handled, accounting for 98 per cent of total traffic.
- **Minor ports** tonnage increased by 1 per cent when compared to 2012, up to **11.6 million tonnes** following two years of decline.



Unitised Traffic at Major Ports

- **Unitised traffic** handled at UK major ports rose by 3 per cent, with **21.4 million units** coming in and out of the UK. This increase follows two years of decline.

UK Major Port Units ***(million units)***



- The number of **main freight units** handled by UK major ports **rose for the first time since 2010** to **12.0 million units.**

About this release

The importance of shipping and trade to the economy of the UK, an island nation, has resulted in the establishment of a large number of ports around the coast, which are very diverse in terms of size and type of cargo handled.

This statistical release provides information on trends and patterns in the handling of freight traffic at UK sea ports.

In this publication

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Pre-revision Version

1. All UK Ports

1.1 Summary

Between the early 1980s and 2000 the **total amount of freight traffic** steadily increased, rising by 35 per cent over this period. The **2008 recession** resulted in the **largest year on year decline** seen in the last 30 years, falling by 11 per cent between 2008 and 2009.

Total tonnage levels slightly increased in 2010 and 2011 but fell by 4 per cent in 2012. However total freight traffic remains broadly stable with **503.0 million tonnes** being handled **in 2013**.

Definitions

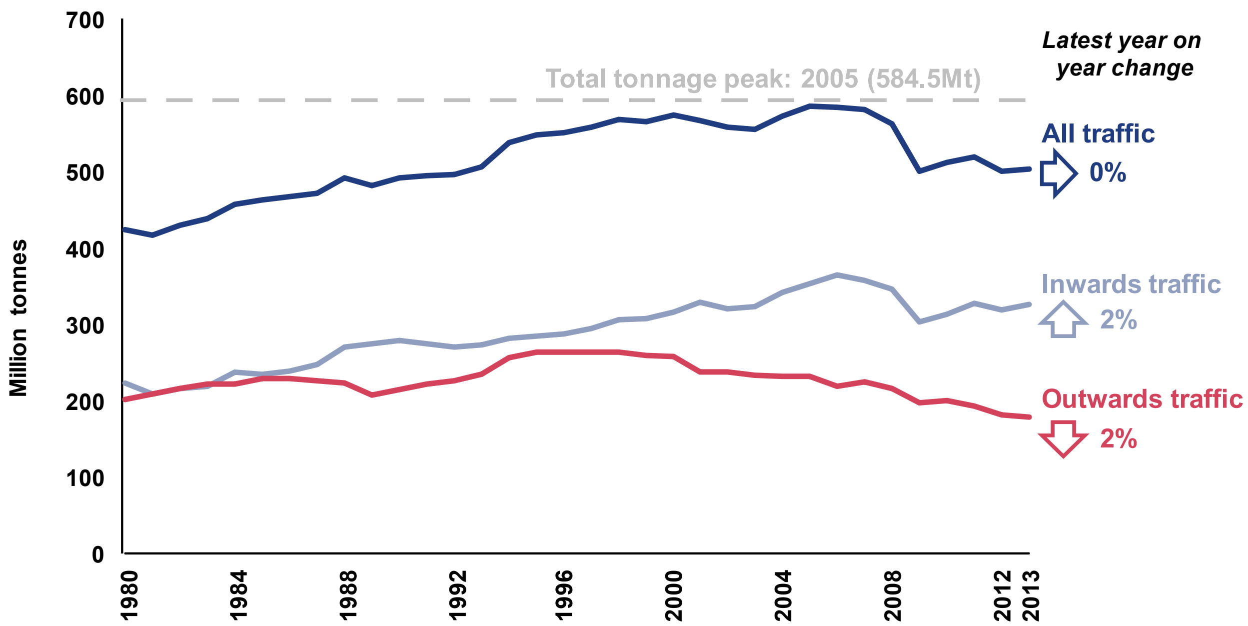
Inwards/Outwards:
Inwards and outwards includes both domestic and international traffic.

Imports/exports:
Only international traffic.

1.2 Inwards/ Outwards Tonnage

Inward traffic increased to **325.8 million tonnes**, 65 per cent of all traffic in 2013. The amount of **outwards freight traffic** grew in the early 1990s, with a 23 per cent increase between 1990 and 1996 and remained stable until 1998. However since 1998 outwards traffic has steadily declined, with the **lowest level** of outward traffic in the **last 30 years** seen in 2013 (177.2 million tonnes).

Chart 1: UK port traffic by direction, 1980 – 2013



1.3 Freight Tonnage by Country

In 2013 there were 111 active commercial ports in the UK.

English ports accounted for **69 per cent of the total tonnage** through UK ports in 2013. There were 28 major and 34 minor active ports in England, handling 347.1 million tonnes.

Scotland was the **second largest contributor** to port freight traffic in 2013, handling 71.6 million tonnes. Scottish ports accounted for 14 per cent of the total tonnage through UK ports (11 major and 17 minor active ports).

In 2013 **Welsh ports** contributed **12 per cent** of the total UK tonnage through UK ports, handling 58.9 million tonnes (7 major and 6 minor active ports).

Ports in **Northern Ireland** handled 25.3 million tonnes in 2013, accounting for **5 per cent** of the total tonnage (5 major and 2 minor active ports).

1.4 Minor ports

Minor ports tonnage increased by 1 per cent, compared to 2012, to **11.6 million tonnes** following two years of decline.

Inward traffic through minor ports increased by 4 per cent to **7.7 million tonnes**. Whilst **outwards traffic** from minor ports decreased by 3 per cent to **3.9 million tonnes**, continuing the steady decline seen since 2011.

1.5 Freight Tonnage by Port

Grimsby & Immingham remains the UK's busiest port in terms of tonnage, handling **12 per cent of the total** tonnage in 2013. Grimsby & Immingham overtook London as the busiest port in 2000 and has remained in this position since then.

Of the top ten ports, Belfast and Tees & Hartlepool had the largest percentage increases in tonnage. This was mainly due to the amount of coal handled in 2013 at these ports, more than doubling the 2012 amount.

Figure 1: Top 10 busiest ports (tonnage) in 2013

Million tonnes

Port	2012	2013	*Percentage change*
Grimsby & Immingham	60.1	62.6	↑ *4%*
London	43.7	43.2	↓ *1%*
Milford Haven	39.8	41.1	↑ *3%*
Tees & Hartlepool	34.0	37.6	↑ *11%*
Southampton	38.1	35.8	↓ *6%*
Liverpool	32.9	31.1	↓ *5%*
Forth	25.3	26.4	↑ *4%*
Felixstowe	26.3	26.2	→ *0%*
Dover	22.9	25.3	↑ *10%*
Belfast	15.2	16.8	↑ *11%*

2. Freight Tonnage by Cargo Type (Major Ports)

There are 51 major ports, which handle **98 per cent** of the overall traffic. A breakdown of cargo, including detailed information on the routes taken, is avaliable for major ports only.

2.1 Cargo Type Summary

In 2013, **major port** tonnage remained steady when compared to levels in 2012, with **491.4 million tonnes** being handled.

Liquid bulk was the largest of the main cargo types, accounting for **40% of all traffic** with its largest contributing subgroup being crude oil.

Dry bulk was the second largest cargo category with 121.4 million tonnes being handled at UK ports, making up **25 per cent of all traffic**.

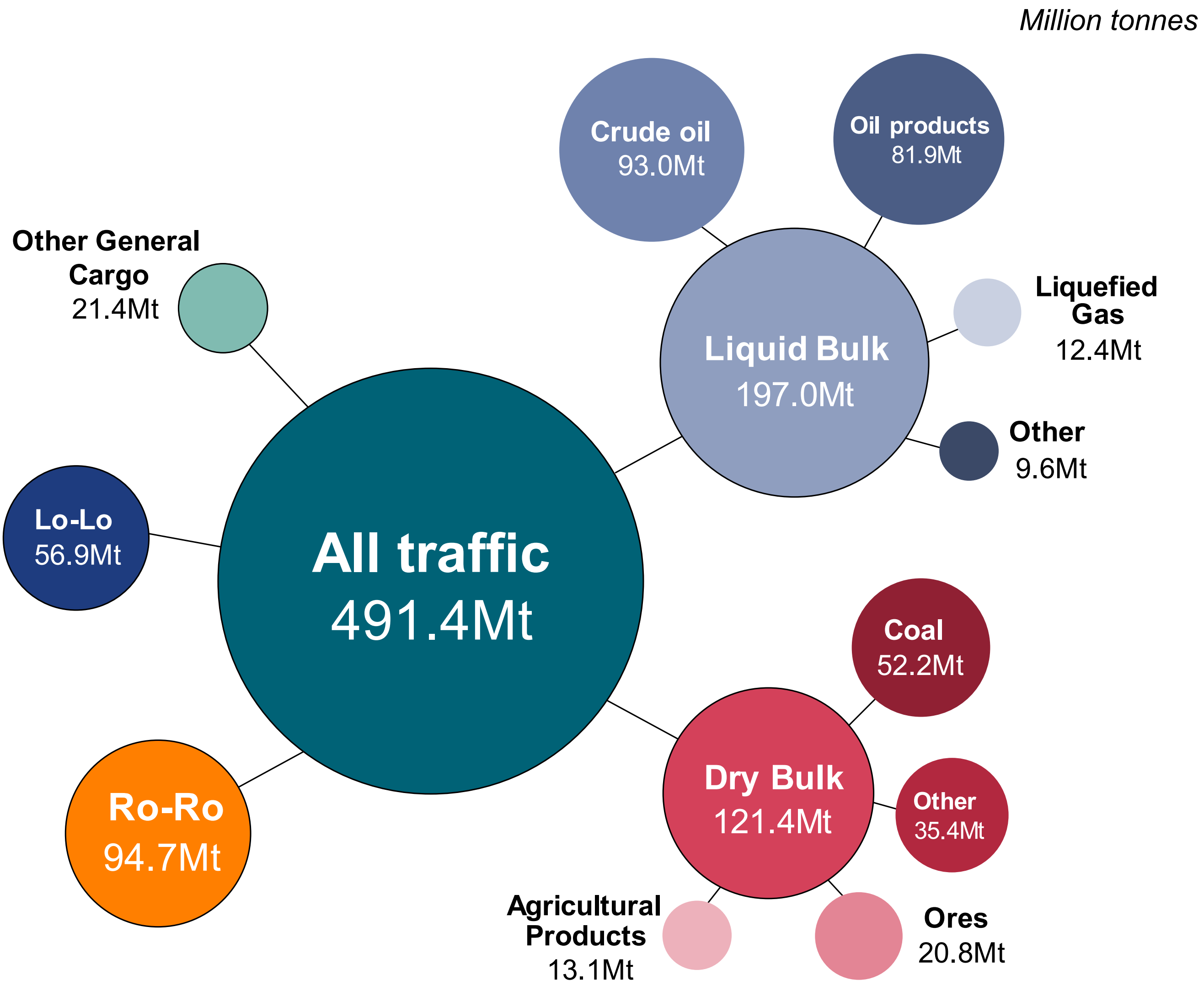
Definitions

Cargo Category:

5 main categories-
liquid bulk, dry bulk, ro-ro traffic, lo-lo traffic and other general cargo.

Cargo is allocated a category in respect to how it is carried on the ship. The main categories are then are spilt into smaller subgroups of what the cargo particularly is eg crude oil.

Chart 2: UK major port traffic by cargo type, 2013



2.2 Cargo Category Trend

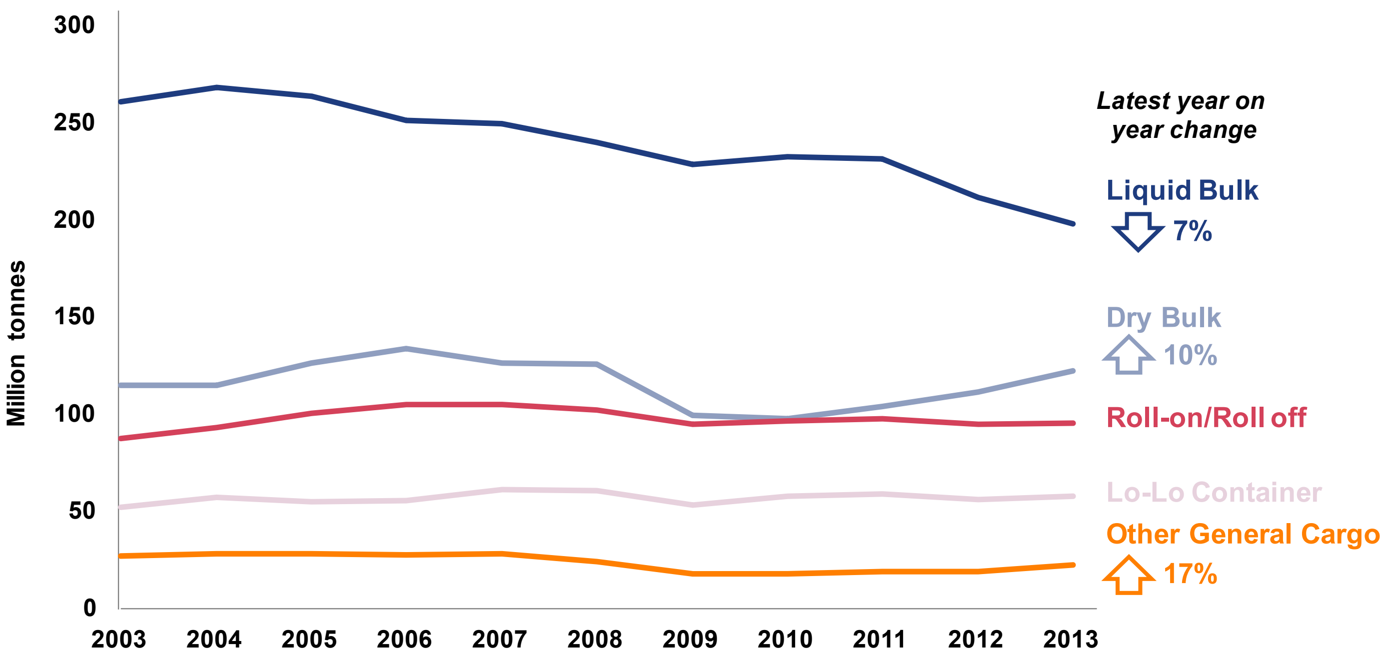
In 2013 freight handled at UK major ports increased by 2.0 million tonnes. This was mainly due to increases seen in dry bulk subcategories.

Liquid bulk fell by 7 per cent with **197.0 million tonnes** being handled at UK ports. Despite this decline it remains the most common cargo category handled. Liquid bulk has been **steadily declining** since 2002 due to large decreases in crude oil imports and exports.

Dry bulk has been **steadily increasing** since 2011. In 2013, dry bulk increased by 10 per cent with **121.4 million tonnes** being handled at UK major ports. This was largely due the increase in coal and ores.

Other general cargo which includes forestry products, iron and steel products and all other cargo reached its **highest level since the economic downturn in 2009**. In 2013 there were 21.4 million tonnes handled compared with 16.9 million tonnes in 2009.

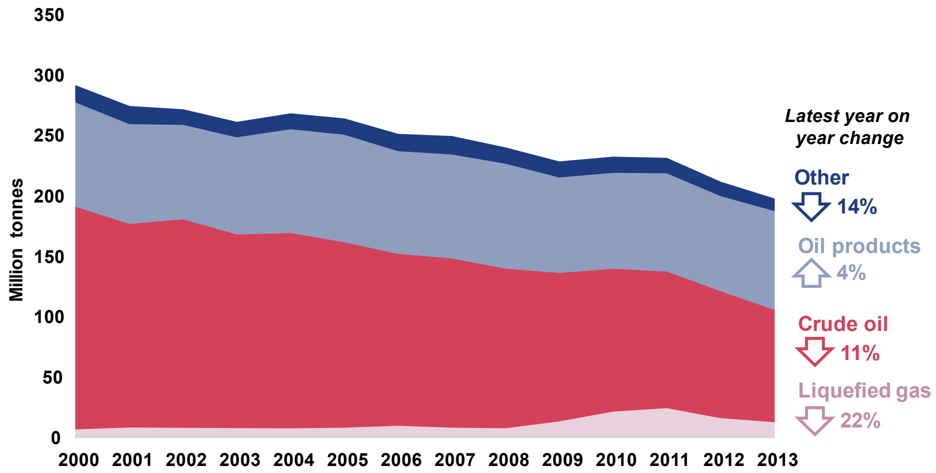
Chart 3: Major port traffic by cargo type (tonnage), 2002 to 2013



2.3 Cargo Subcategories Trend

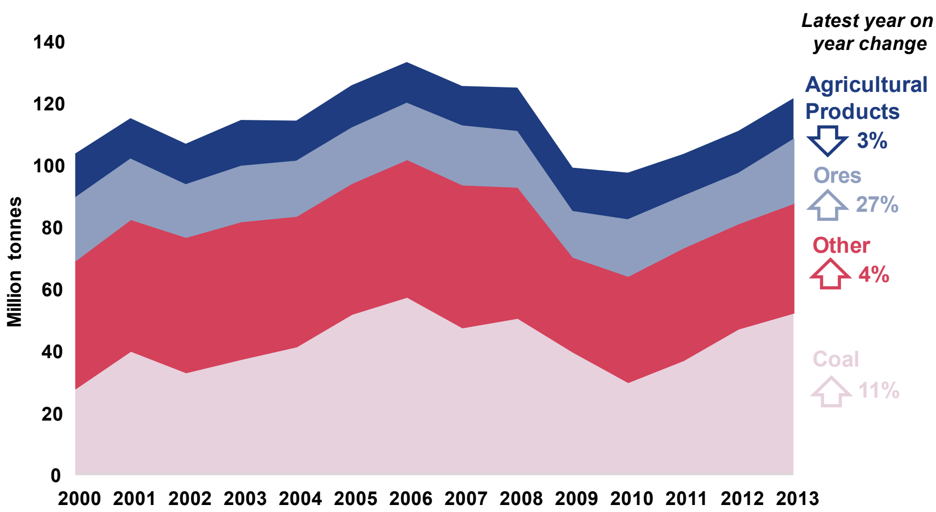
Bulk fuels (crude oil, oil products, liquefied gas and coal) fell by 3 per cent to **239.5 million tonnes** in 2013. Although the amount of coal (dry bulk) handled in 2013 increased by 11 per cent, this was offset by large decreases in crude oil and liquefied gas (liquid bulk) causing the overall bulk fuel total to fall.

Chart 4: Liquid bulk subcategories, 2000 – 2013



Crude oil fell by 12.0 million tonnes to **93.0 million tonnes**, an 11 per cent decrease compared to 2012 and continuing the decline seen since 2000. However **oil products** increased by 4 per cent, with **81.9 million tonnes** being handled at UK ports. This was the largest year on year increase for this commodity seen since 2005.

Chart 5: Dry bulk subcategories, 2000 - 2013



In 2013 there were **20.8 million tonnes** of **ores** handled at UK major ports, the highest amount since 2000. This was a 40 per cent increase compared to the previous low point seen in 2009. **Coal** increased by 11 per cent, with **52.2 million tonnes** being handled at UK major ports. This continued the **recent upward trend** and was a 25 per cent increase when compared to the low point in 2010.

2.4 Cargo Type by Direction

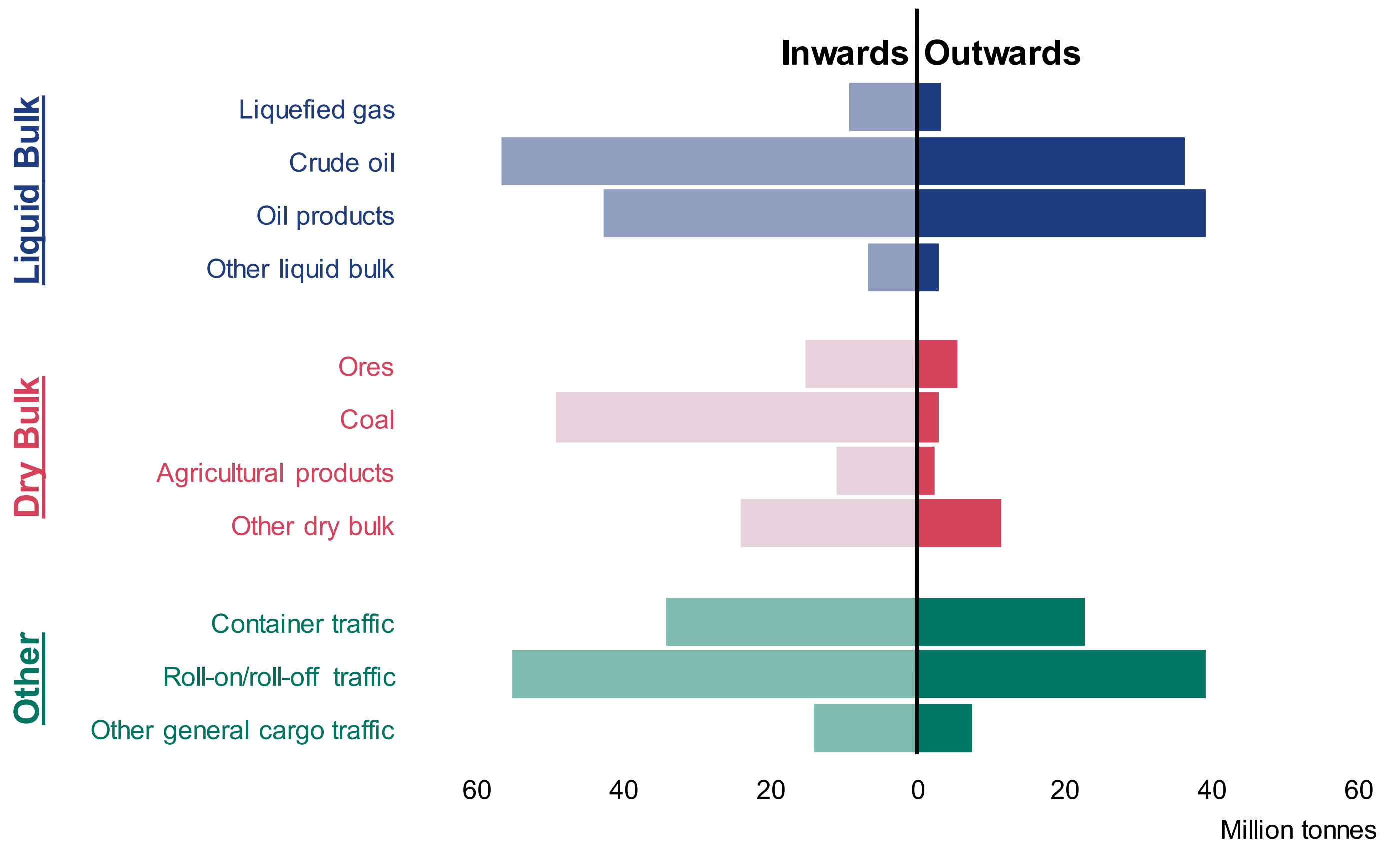
Broadly equal amounts of oil products went in to UK major ports as came out in 2013 - 42.7 million tonnes travelled in to UK ports, compared to 39.2 million tonnes travelling out. This is a trend that has been seen thoughout the last decade.

In contrast far more **coal** entered UK major ports than left them - **95 per cent** (49.4 million tonnes) of the coal handled was **travelling in** to UK major ports.

Transportation of **crude oil out of** UK major ports has seen a **44 per cent decline over the last decade** and, in 2013, outwards crude oil traffic declined for the sixth consecutive year to 36.4 million tonnes.

Liquefied gas travelling out of UK major ports has been steadily **declining since 2003**. In 2013 3.2 million tonnes were handled, the lowest figure seen in the last decade.

Chart 6: Cargo subcategory by direction, 2013



2.5 Port by Cargo Type

Milford Haven overtook Tees & Hartlepool as the busiest port for liquid bulk traffic in 2007 and has remained in this position since, handling **20 per cent of liquid bulk** traffic in 2013. Tees & Hartlepool's dry bulk increased by 68 per cent, with the port handling 11.6 million tonnes in 2013. As a result of this increase it became the second busiest port for dry bulk. It now accounts for 10 per cent of all dry bulk traffic, compared to 6 per cent in 2012, where it was in sixth place.

Figure 2: Busiest ports by main cargo type, 2013

Million tonnes/percentage share of cargo's tonnage

Liquid Bulk

Milford Haven	40.3	20%
Southampton	24.1	12%
Grimsby & Immingham	22.4	11%
Forth	22.1	11%
Tees & Hartlepool	19.2	10%

Dry Bulk

Grimsby & Immingham	23.9	20%
Tees & Hartlepool	11.6	10%
London	11.6	10%
Port Talbot	8.5	7%
Clyde	8.4	7%

Lo-Lo Containers

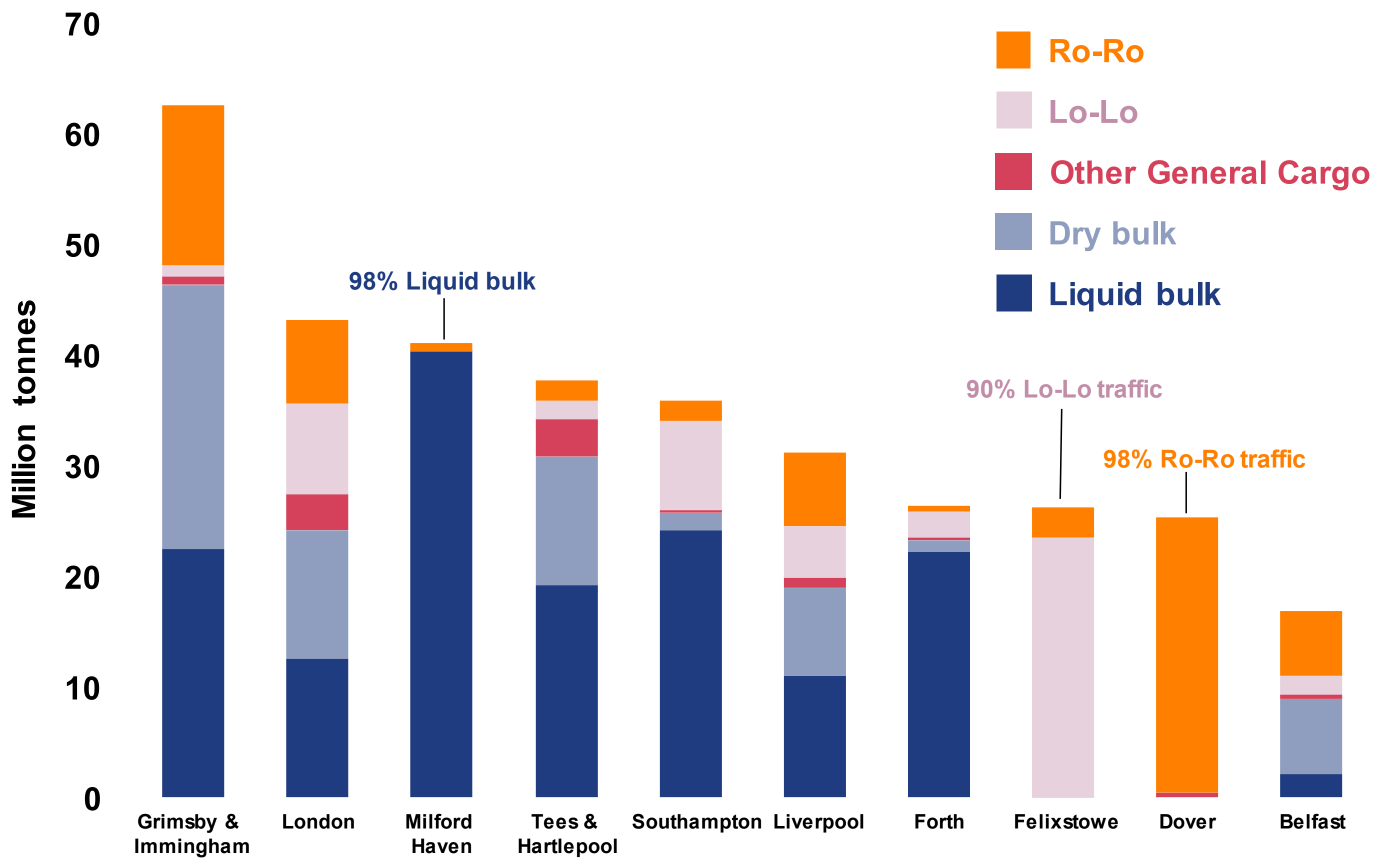
Felixstowe	23.5	41%
London	8.2	14%
Southampton	8.1	14%
Liverpool	4.6	8%
Forth	2.3	4%

Roll-on/ Roll-off

Dover	24.9	26%
Grimsby & Immingham	14.5	15%
London	7.6	8%
Liverpool	6.6	7%
Belfast	5.8	6%

Many of the **UK major ports** are **specialised** in the cargo categories they handle, as seen with Milford Haven, Felixstowe and Dover (see chart 7 below).

Chart 7: Top 10 busiest ports by main cargo categories handled, 2013

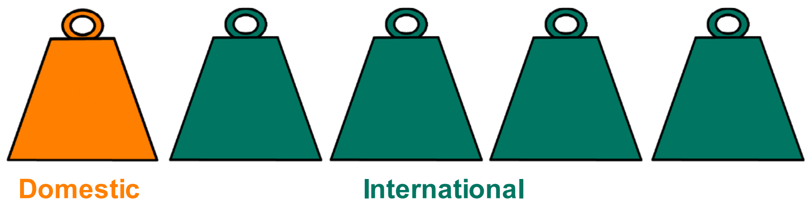


3. Trade Routes

3.1 All UK Ports Summary

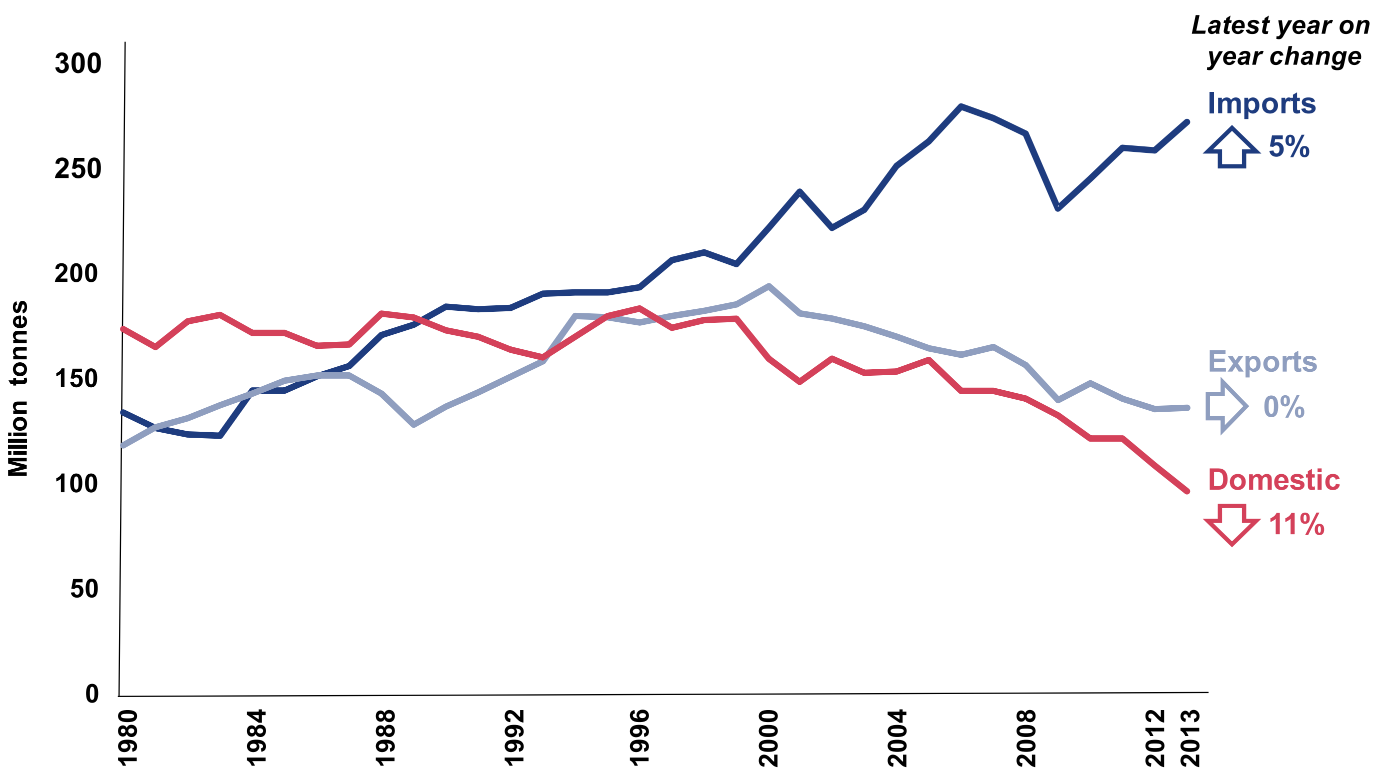
In 2013, **4 out of every 5 tonnes of freight** handled by UK ports was being **imported or exported from international ports** - a total of 407.2 million tonnes. However international traffic is now 7 per cent lower than the peak (439.5 million) in 2006.

Since 1986, the UK has imported more freight by sea than it has exported. This was continued in 2013 when 67 per cent of international traffic was made up of UK imports, an increase of 5 per cent on 2012 and the largest year on year increase seen since 2010.



Domestic traffic (coastwise and one-port) within all UK ports **fell for the eighth consecutive year** in 2013 to **95.8 million tonnes**. This was the lowest domestic tonnage on record and a 37 per cent decline when compared to the amount seen a decade ago.

Chart 8: All UK ports imports, exports and domestic traffic: 2003 – 2013



3.2 UK Major Domestic Traffic

The **proportion of traffic** travelling **domestically has decreased over the last decade**. In 2003, 28 per cent of all UK major port traffic travelled domestically, whereas, in 2013 this fell to 19 per cent.

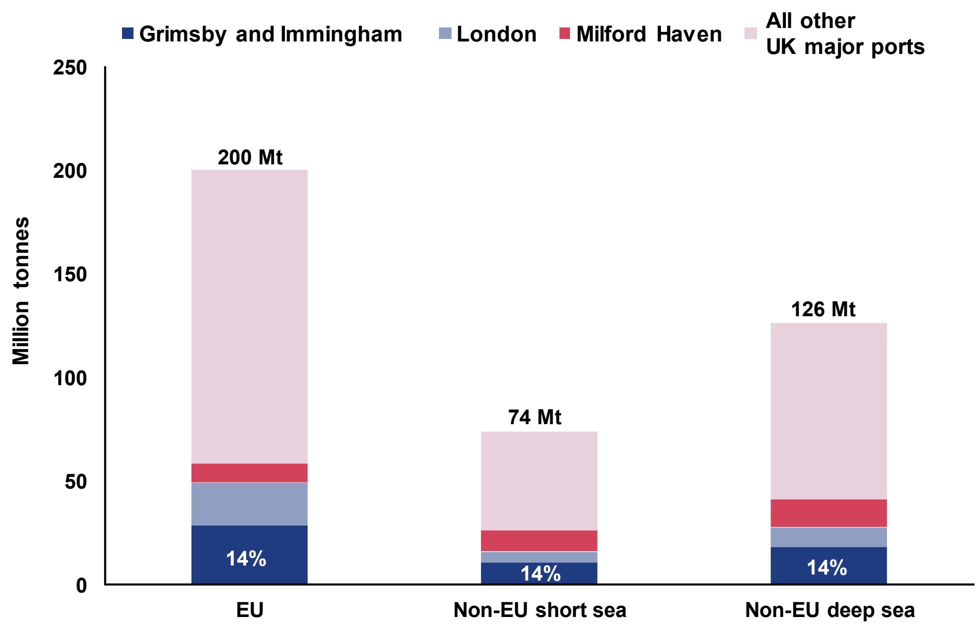
Domestic traffic is split into coastwise and one-port, with **coastwise** accounting for **81% of all domestic traffic**. In 2013 there was **74.4 million tonnes** of traffic transported coastwise between UK major ports . This was a 10 per cent decline compared to 2012 and continues on the downward trend started in 2008.

One-port tonnage decreased by 17 per cent to **17.0 million tonnes**. Despite this decrease there was a 5 fold increase (albeit from a low base) seen in journeys to UK offshore locations such as wind/tidal farms to 285 thousand tonnes, compared to 52 thousand in 2012. This could reflect the growing interest in renewable energy sources.

3.3 UK Major Port International Traffic, by port

This is the first year in the last decade that **Grimsby and Immingham** has **dominated all three types of international routes**.

Chart 9: UK major port international traffic by route, 2013



Definitions

Domestic: Made up of coastwise and one-port traffic (see below).

Coastwise: Traffic travelling within UK waters between ports in the United Kingdom.

One-port: Sand and gravel etc dredged from sea bed and landed at a port for commercial purposes; and traffic to and from UK offshore locations eg oil & gas installations and wind farms.

International freight routes are split into three main categories:

EU: all members of the European union.

Non-EU short sea: includes European countries not in the EU, Mediterranean and North African countries such as Egypt.

Non-EU deep sea: includes all other routes.

3.4 International Traffic by Destination/Route

In 2013, 200.0 million tonnes of traffic travelled between UK major ports and EU countries (50 per cent of major port traffic). Of this, 55.1 million tonnes of freight passed to and from the Netherlands, accounting for 14 per cent of all international traffic. The **Netherlands are the UK's largest trading partner** . This may be in part due to cargo initially travelling to the Netherlands and continuing on to other countries (known as transhipment).

The **UK's four largest trading partners** are the **same** now **as ten years ago**. France was the UK's largest trading partner until 2005 when it was overtaken by the Netherlands.

Figure 3: UK major ports: Top freight destinations 2003 vs 2013

Top destinations, proportion of traffic, 2013	
19%	Domestic
11%	Netherlands
8%	France
6%	USA
5%	Norway
5%	Russia
5%	Belgium
3%	Irish Republic
3%	Germany
2%	Sweden
33%	Other

Top destinations, proportion of traffic, 2003	
27%	Domestic
9%	France
9%	Netherlands
7%	USA
6%	Norway
5%	Belgium
3%	Germany
3%	Irish
3%	South Africa
3%	Australia
25%	Other

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Liquid bulk and dry bulk accounted just under two thirds of international traffic from major ports. **Liquid bulk** made up **38 per cent of the total international traffic** and dry bulk made up **25 per cent**. **Imports of liquid bulk** from Norway amounted to 19.8 million tonnes in 2013, keeping it the **largest trading route** which it has been thoughout the last decade.

The Netherlands was the largest exporting trade route with 16.4 million tonnes of liquid bulk traffic being exported (27 per cent of all liquid bulk exports).

Figure 4: Top 15 busiest trade routes with UK major ports, by cargo category and direction, 2013

Thousand tonnes

Country	Cargo Category	Direction	Tonnage	Compared to 2012
Norway	Liquid Bulk	In	19,831	↓
France	Ro-Ro	In	16,520	↑
Netherlands	Liquid Bulk	Out	16,377	↓
Russia	Dry Bulk	In	14,401	↑
USA	Dry Bulk	In	14,293	↑
France	Ro-Ro	Out	11,179	↑
Netherlands	Ro-Ro	In	10,763	↑
Colombia	Dry Bulk	In	10,633	↑
Russia	Liquid Bulk	In	8,860	↓
Netherlands	Liquid Bulk	In	8,491	↑
USA	Liquid Bulk	Out	8,207	↑
Belgium	Ro-Ro	In	7,546	↓
Brazil	Dry Bulk	In	7,466	↑
Qatar	Liquid Bulk	In	7,083	↓
Algeria	Liquid Bulk	In	6,690	↑

Detailed statistics on freight traffic (tonnage) can be found in the statistical data set, port01.

1. All Unitised Traffic the UK Major Ports

1.1 Summary

Unitised traffic handled at UK major ports in 2013 rose by 3 per cent with **21.4 million units** coming in and out of UK major ports. This was the first increase in unitised traffic since 2010, bringing the unitised freight total to 12 per cent below the peak seen in 2007.

The number of **main freight units** handled by **major ports** rose for the first time since 2010 to 12.0 million units. Main freight accounted for **56 per cent of all unitised traffic**. Throughout the 1990s and up to the peak in 2007, main freight units travelling through UK major ports saw continuous growth, increasing by 87 per cent between 1992 and 2007 to 13.3 million units.However, in 2009 traffic fell to 11.6 million units.

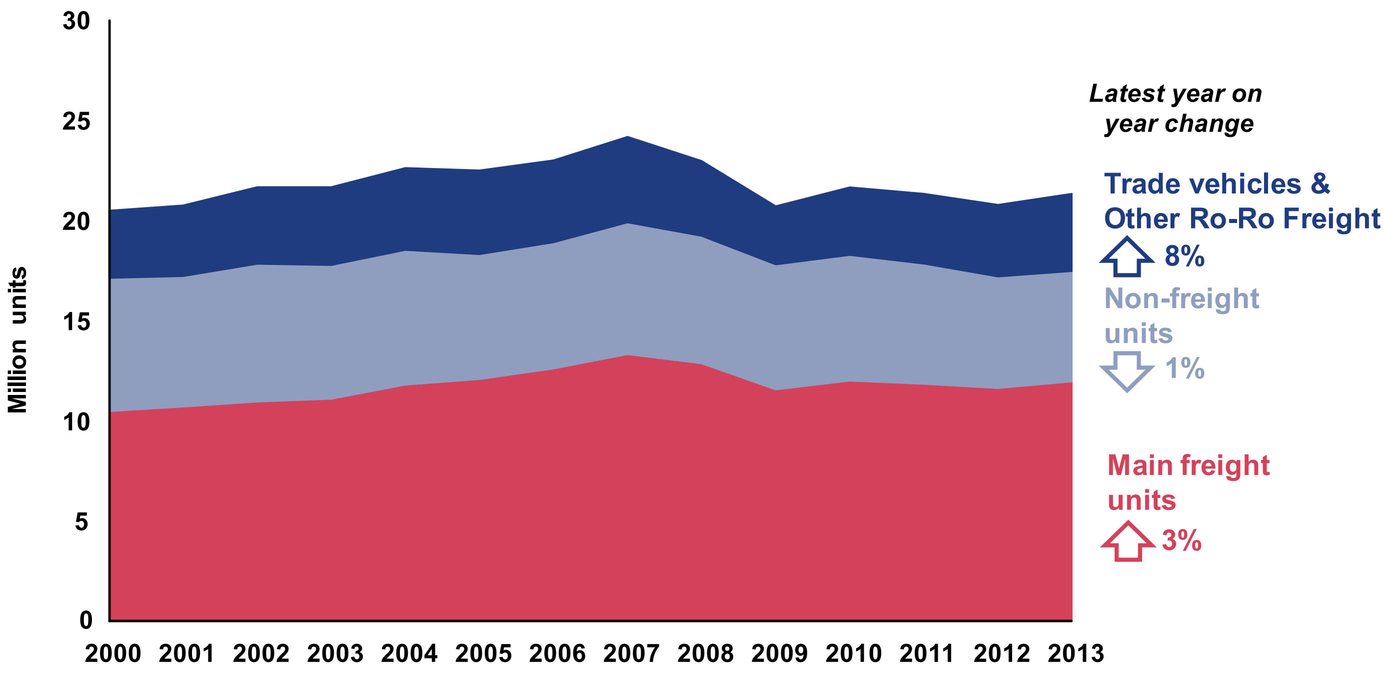
Between 2008 and 2009, the number of t**rade vehicles and other ro-ro freight** declined by 22 per cent, falling to 2.9 million units. However, there has been continued growth since then and in 2013 levels were **34 per cent higher than in 2009** at 3.9 million units.

Definitions

Unitised traffic is traffic that is **lifted (Lo-Lo)** or **rolled (Ro-Ro)** onto a ship inside a container or vehicle from which it is not unpacked. It is measured in terms of the number of units, as well as the weight of the goods they contain.

Unitised traffic can initially be broken down into **freight units** (those units which are used for trade) and **non-freight units** (e.g. passenger cars). Freight units can be further subdivided into **main freight** units (units which contain cargo) and **trade vehicles and other ro-ro freight** (e.g. cars to be sold).

Chart 10: Unitised traffic through UK major ports, freight and non-freight units, 2000 - 2013



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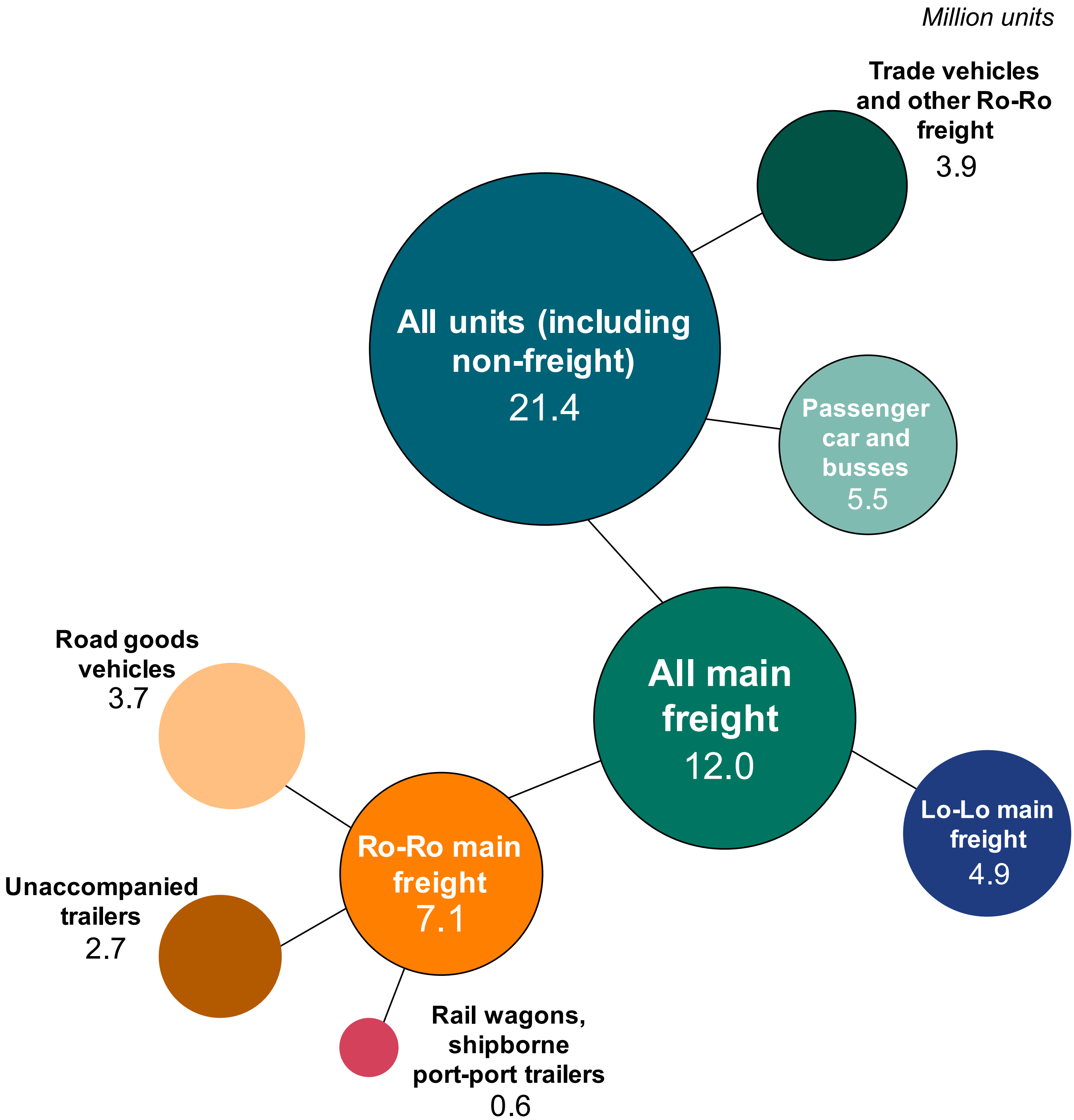
1.2 UK Major Ports Unitised Cargo Summary

A quarter of the units handled by UK major ports in 2013 were **non-freight units** in the form of passenger cars and buses (**5.5 million units**). Of the main freight units **41 per cent were lo-lo containers** and the remaining 7.1 million units were ro-ro main freight.

Chart 11: Breakdown of UK major port's unitised traffic by cargo category, 2013



1.3 Loaded Units

Major ports handled 4.9 million Lo-Lo containers in 2013, (8.2 million TEUs, weighing 56.9 million tonnes). Over **93 per cent of Lo-Lo containers coming into UK ports were loaded compared to 53 per cent leaving** UK major ports.

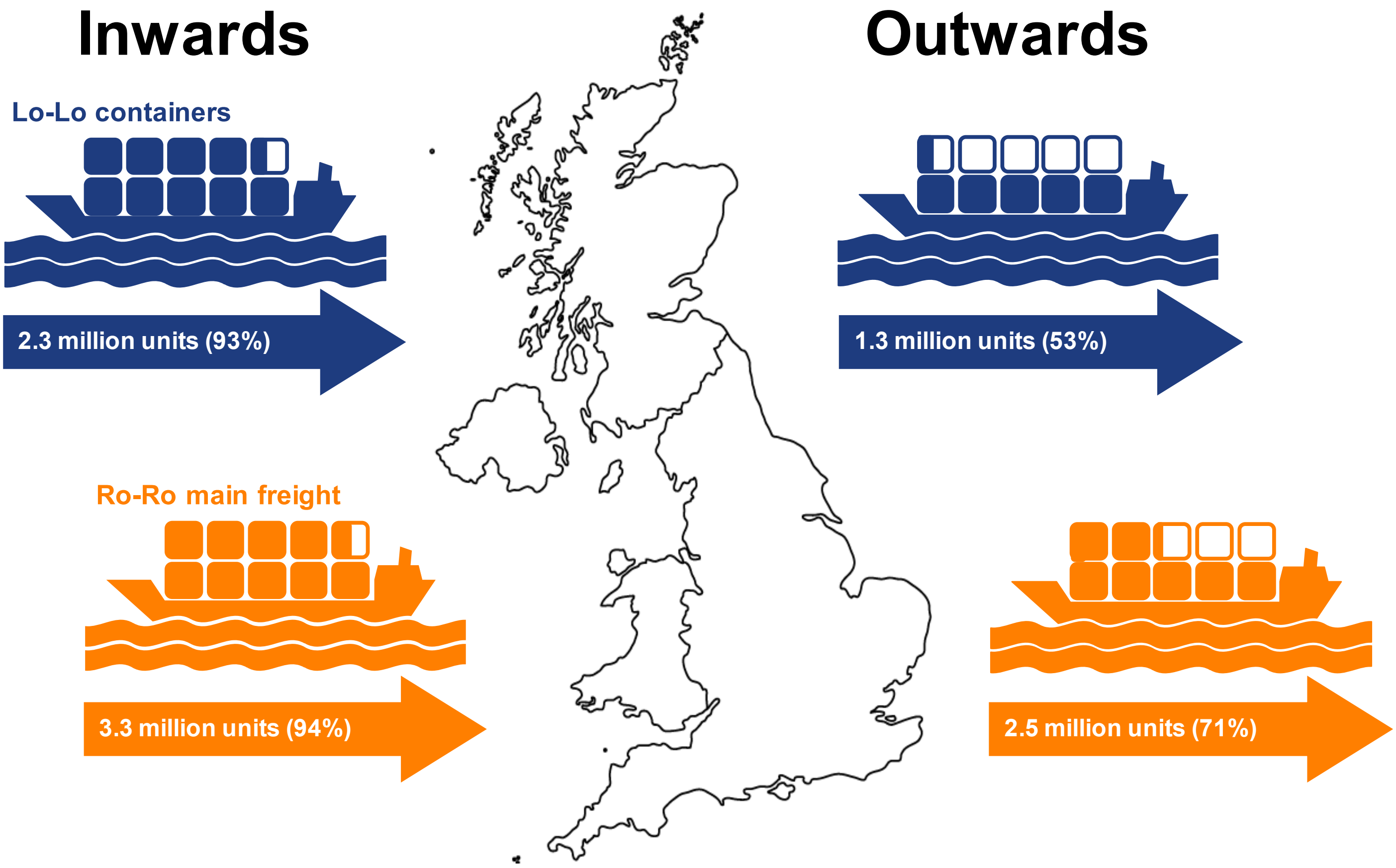
In 2013, 3.3 million Ro-Ro main freight units travelling in to UK major ports were loaded, 94 per cent of all Ro-Ro main freight units. Comparatively, 2.5 million Ro-Ro main freight units travelling out of UK major ports were loaded (71 per cent of the total of outbound units).

Definitions

TEU (twenty-foot equivalent units) is a standardised measure to allow for the different sizes of container boxes.

Size	TEU
20ft	1
40ft	2
>20ft & <40ft	1.5
>40ft	2.25

Figure 5: Percentage of loaded Lo-Lo units and Ro-Ro main freight by direction, 2013



1.4 Unitised Traffic by Main Goods Cargo Type and Major Port

Felixstowe remained the busiest unitised main freight port for the third consecutive year since overtaking Dover in 2010. In 2013, Felixstowe handled 2.2 million units (26.1 million tonnes) of which 92 per cent were lo-lo. Felixstowe handles **2 out of every 5 lo-lo units** handled by major ports.

Dover still handles the largest amount of UK **ro-ro main freight**, with 2.3 million units being handled in 2013 accounting for **33 per cent** of all main freight ro-ro traffic.

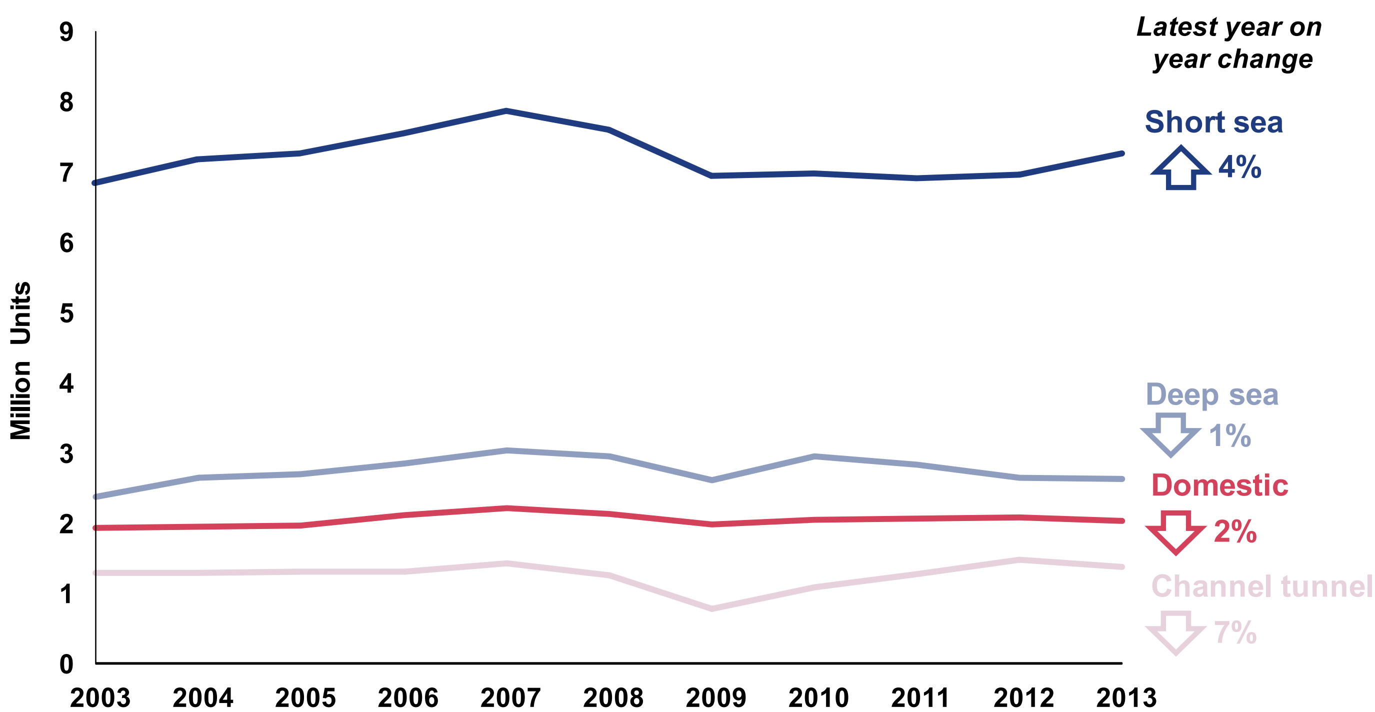
2. Trade Routes

2.1 Summary (All UK Ports)

In 2013, the number of **domestic main freight units** through UK ports **fell** by 2 per cent with **2.0 million units** being handled (17 per cent of the total traffic). Since the previous low point in 2009, the level of freight units handled had been slowly increasing until 2013, when it fell for first time in 4 years. The level of domestic main freight units are now 3 per cent higher than in 2009 and 8 per cent lower than the 2007 peak.

Main freight units travelling between UK ports and **international ports** (deep sea and short sea) **increased** to **9.9 million units** following two years of decline. Even with this increase, main freight units handled at UK ports were 12 per cent lower than the peak in 2007 (11.2 million units).

Chart 12: All UK ports, main freight units by direction, 2003 – 2013



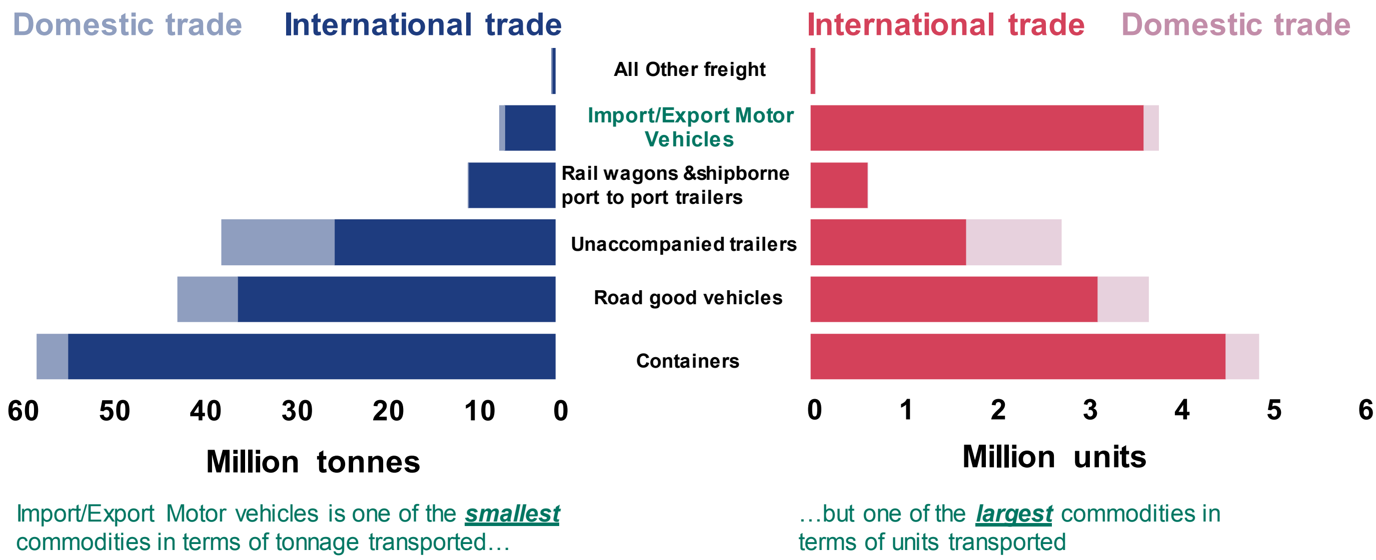
The number of **main freight units** travelling through the **Channel Tunnel** in 2013 was **1.4 million units**, a decrease of 7 per cent compared to the peak in 2012. There were 1.2 million more units travelling to France from the UK by sea than through the Channel Tunnel in 2013.

2.2 Trade Routes by Cargo Category

Over 90 per cent of **lo-lo containers** handled by major ports were travelling to or from an **international destination**. In 2013, **4.5 million lo-lo units** (7.7 TEUs) travelled between UK major ports and international ports, with a total weight of 53.5 million tonnes.

Passenger vehicles accounted for **24 per cent** of all unitised international traffic. Freight units made up the remaining 76 per cent, of which import/export motor vehicles were the largest unit type with 3.6 million units. Despite **import/export motor vehicles** being the second most common commodity they were **among the smallest in terms of tonnage** (5.6 million tonnes). This is in comparison to the 3.1 million units of road goods vehicles travelling to international destinations, with cargo weighing 34.9 million tonnes.

Chart 13: Freight traffic by route and units, 2013



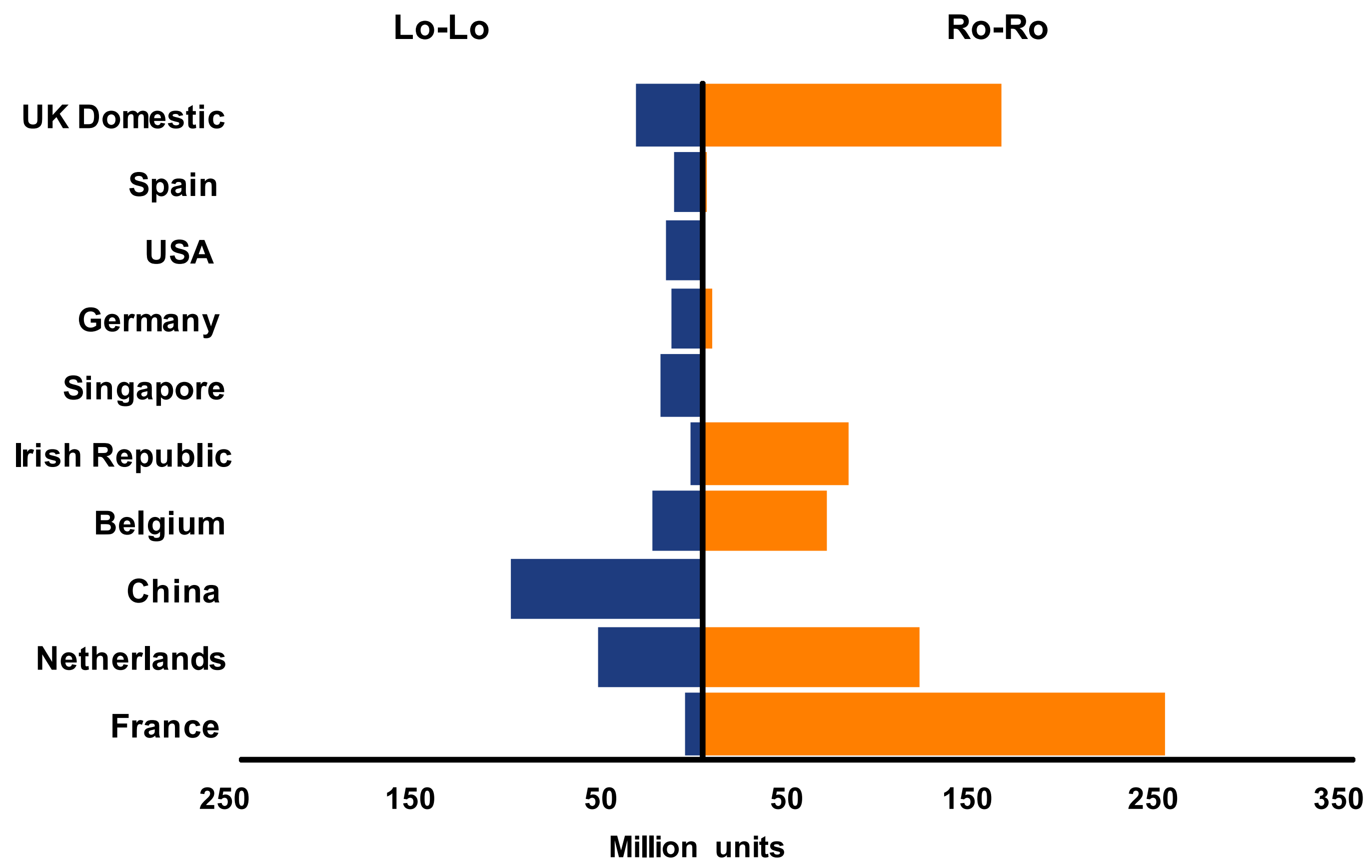
The most common unitised commodity travelling **domestically** was also **passenger vehicles**, of which there were 1.2 million units (36 per cent of domestic traffic). **Freight units** accounted for the remaining **proportion**, of which unaccompanied road good trailers were the most common commodity accounting for 31 per cent of domestic unitised freight traffic and weighing 12.4 million tonnes.

2.3 Trade Destination

Very few trading routes are used for both lo-lo and ro-ro container traffic, as seen in Chart 14. Transporting units through **roll-on/roll-off** was the primary method of transporting units between the **UK major ports and Europe**, with 78 per cent of main freight units being ro-ro units.

Of the traffic travelling on **deep sea journeys, 99.9 per cent were lo-lo containers** with the majority of them travelling between the UK and China (38 per cent of all deep sea main freight traffic).

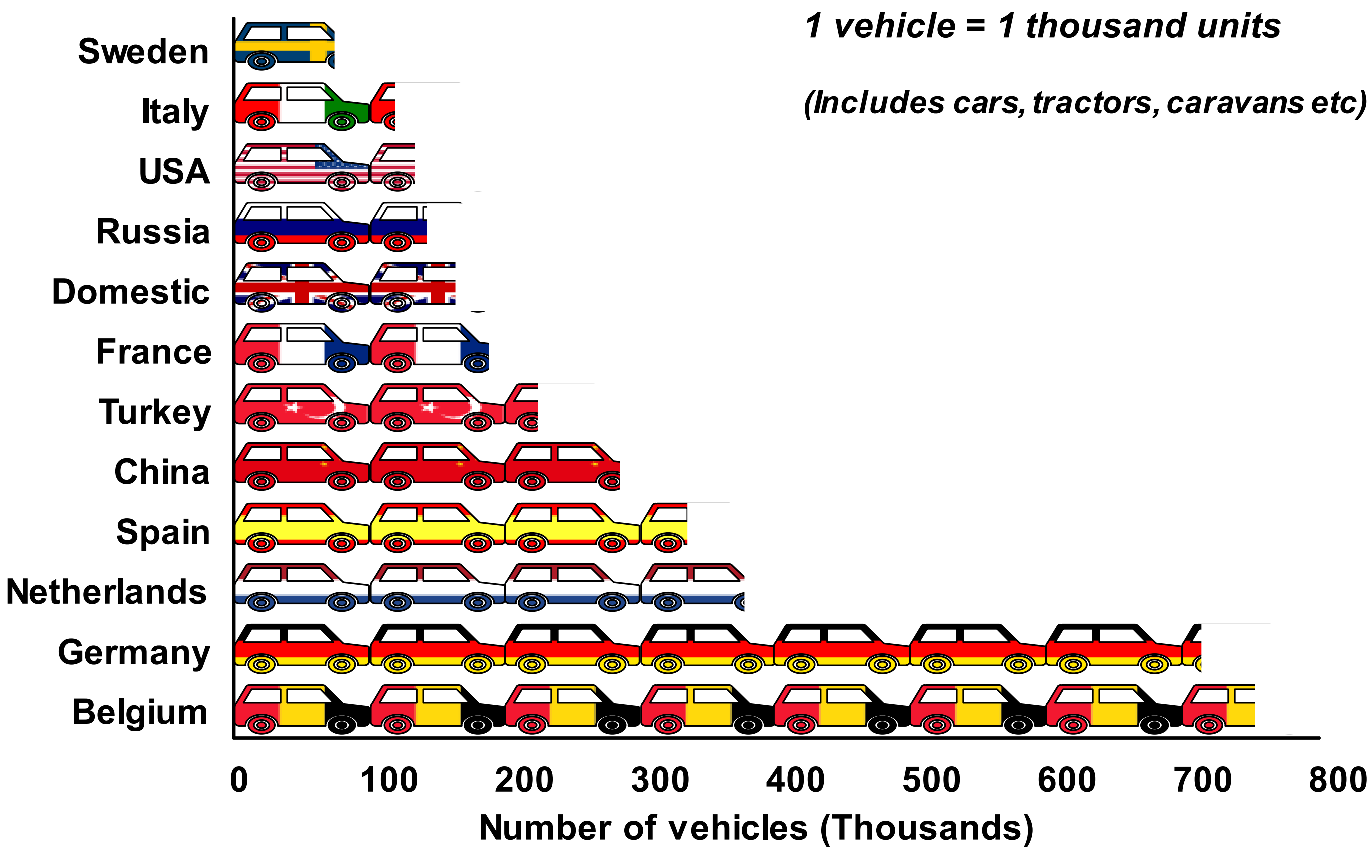
Chart 14: Number of main freight units travelling between UK's top 10 unitised traffic trading partners, 2013



There were 3.8 million **import/export motor vehicles** moved in 2013, an increase of 7 per cent, which continues the **annual growth seen since 2009.** There were more motor vehicles transported into major ports (61 per cent), than there were transported out.

Belgium resumed its place as the busiest trading destination, after being over taken by Germany in 2012, and accounts for 20 per cent of all import/export motor vehicles handled at UK major ports.

Chart 15: Import/export motor vehicle routes, 2013



Detailed statistics (tables) on unitised traffic can be found in the statistical data set, [port02.](port02)

3. 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.
- Final port freight statistics are published 8 months after the year end. At this stage a full reconciliation of port and shipping agent data will have been carried out, and the grossing procedures described in the Technical Note are completed and checked. The detailed results in this release are based on the grossed data and the full range of analyses, including those by route and vessel type are then available.

4. Glossary

- Lo-lo (lift-on lift-off) containers: standard shipping containers that are lifted on or off ships. Containers can also be carried on ro-ro (roll-on roll-off) services, usually on port-to-port trailers, road goods vehicles or unaccompanied trailers, in which case they will be treated as ro-ro traffic.
- Main freight units: all lo-lo containers and those ro-ro units intended mainly for carrying freight - road goods vehicles, unaccompanied trailers, rail wagons, shipborne port to port trailers and shipborne barges.
- Major ports: Ports handling over one million tonnes per year, and a small number of other key ports, together accounting for over 98% of UK port traffic. More detailed statistics are collected from these ports.
- Minor ports: All other ports handling freight traffic. Only total weight of goods loaded and unloaded is collected from these ports.
- Tonnage: The weight of goods transported, including crates and other packaging, but excluding the unloaded weight of any 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 port statistics outputs, freight-carrying roll-on roll-off units are normally reported separately from others, but this detail is not available at the time of publication of the quarterly statistics, in which combined totals are given.

5. Users and uses of the data

These statistics are collected to provide information on trends and patterns in the handling of freight traffic at UK sea ports. Users of the data include central government, the devolved administrations and local government, the maritime industry, transport consultants and academics, and international organisations. Uses, both inside and outside government, include:

- To provide general background to sector trends, and to inform the development and evaluation of policy, and to inform decision making

- In the development or testing of transport and environmental models and forecasts
- In market analysis by transport consultants and businesses.
- To respond to requests for information from Parliament, members of the public and international organisations, including Eurostat's compilation of maritime statistics for the EU

We continuously review the content of these statistics to ensure that they provide the most useful information whilst minimising burdens on data providers. We welcome any feedback on these statistics by email to maritime.stats@dft.gsi.gov.uk.

6. Background notes

- The web tables and charts give further detail of the key results presented in this statistical release. They are available here: Ports statistics.
- Full guidance on the methods used to compile these statistics can be found here: notes
- National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure they meet customer needs. Code of Practice
- Details of Ministers and officials who receive pre-release access to these statistics up to 24 hours before release can be found here: pre-release access list.
- Provisional summary quarterly statistics on freight handled by UK major ports are also updated quarterly. The latest tables can be found here: Quarterly summary.