



Department for Transport

Road goods vehicles travelling to mainland Europe: October to December 2015 (quarter 4)

About this release

This statistical release summarises results from the survey of road goods vehicles travelling to mainland Europe from Great Britain. It includes all the main ferry routes between Great Britain, mainland Europe and the Channel Tunnel.

Ferry routes between Great Britain and Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland are not included.

These statistics are used within the UK, the Department for Transport, regional bodies, academics and transport consultants to obtain a better understanding of the complexities of freight transport and of trends, in order to advise on policy options. The haulage industry itself has a particular interest in data on the activity of overseas registered vehicles within the UK.

These statistics are updated on a quarterly basis.

Next Update: May 2016

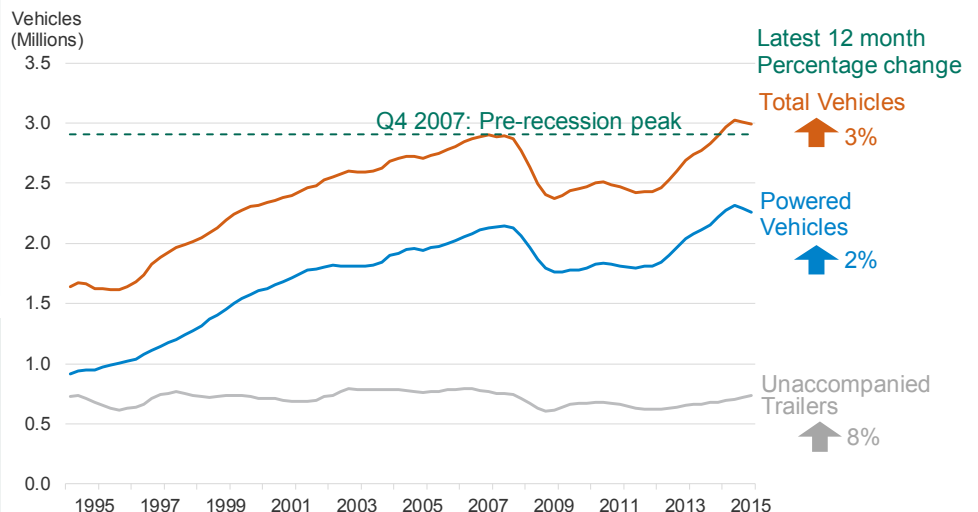
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There was a 3 per cent increase in the number of road goods vehicles travelling from Great Britain to mainland Europe in 2015 compared to the previous year

- Road goods vehicles increased by 95 thousand to **3.0 million**, taking the total to 3 per cent higher than in 2007 – the pre-recession peak.
- Of the total road goods vehicles, 2.3 million were **powered vehicles** and 0.7 million were **unaccompanied trailers**. In 2015, powered vehicles increased by 2 per cent and unaccompanied trailers increased by 8 per cent.

Road goods vehicles travelling from Great Britain (GB) to mainland Europe, 2015



Quarter 4 total (October - Decemer 2015)

In quarter 4 (October – December) 2015, 738 thousand goods vehicles travelled from Great Britain to mainland Europe: 553 thousand **powered vehicles** and 185 thousand **unaccompanied trailers**.

## Road goods vehicles travelling to mainland Europe

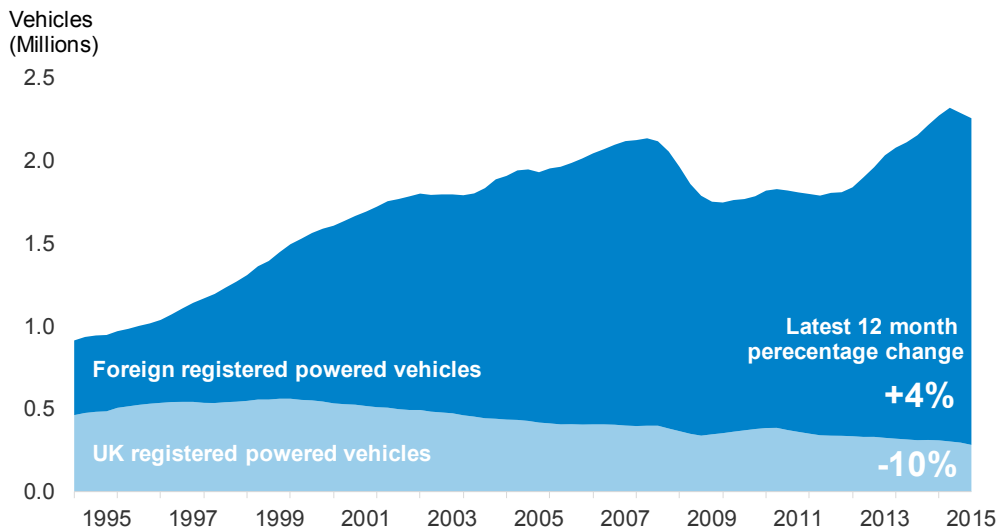
There were just under 3.0 million goods vehicles travelling from Great Britain to mainland Europe during 2015 (2.3 million **powered vehicles** and 0.7 million **unaccompanied trailers**), 3 per cent higher than in 2014. The increase was largely driven by the number of operators using the Dover to Calais route, part of the Dover Strait Port Group. Compared with 2014, an additional 10 thousand goods vehicles travelled via the Dover Straits Port Group during 2015.

Since the 12 month period ending June 2012, the number of road goods vehicles has been consistently increasing and the latest 12 month period saw figures exceed the 2007 pre-recession peak (2.9 million).

The number of goods vehicles travelling from Great Britain to mainland Europe has increased by 84 per cent in the last 20 years.

In 2015, powered vehicles rose by 2 per cent to 2.3 million, this was largely due to an increase in the number of **foreign registered** powered vehicles which rose by 4 per cent to just under 2.0 million, continuing the gradual upward trend seen since 2009. **UK registered** powered vehicles were down 10 per cent to 0.3 million. This is 18 per cent lower than in 2009.

### UK registered and foreign registered powered vehicles travelling from Great Britain to mainland Europe, 2015



### Quarter 4 total (October - December 2015)

During quarter 4 2015, 738 thousand goods vehicles travelled from Great Britain to mainland Europe (553 thousand **powered vehicles** and 185 thousand **unaccompanied trailers**). The volume of road goods vehicles travelling from Great Britain to mainland Europe in quarter 4 2015 was 2 per cent lower than the record high observed in quarter 4 2014.

### What are powered vehicles and unaccompanied trailers?



#### Powered vehicles

comprise rigid vehicles, lorries with semi-trailers (articulated units) and lorries with drawbar trailers (some vehicles under 3.5 tonnes gross vehicles weight are also included).



#### Unaccompanied trailers

comprise trailers and semi-trailers not accompanied on the ferry by a powered unit.

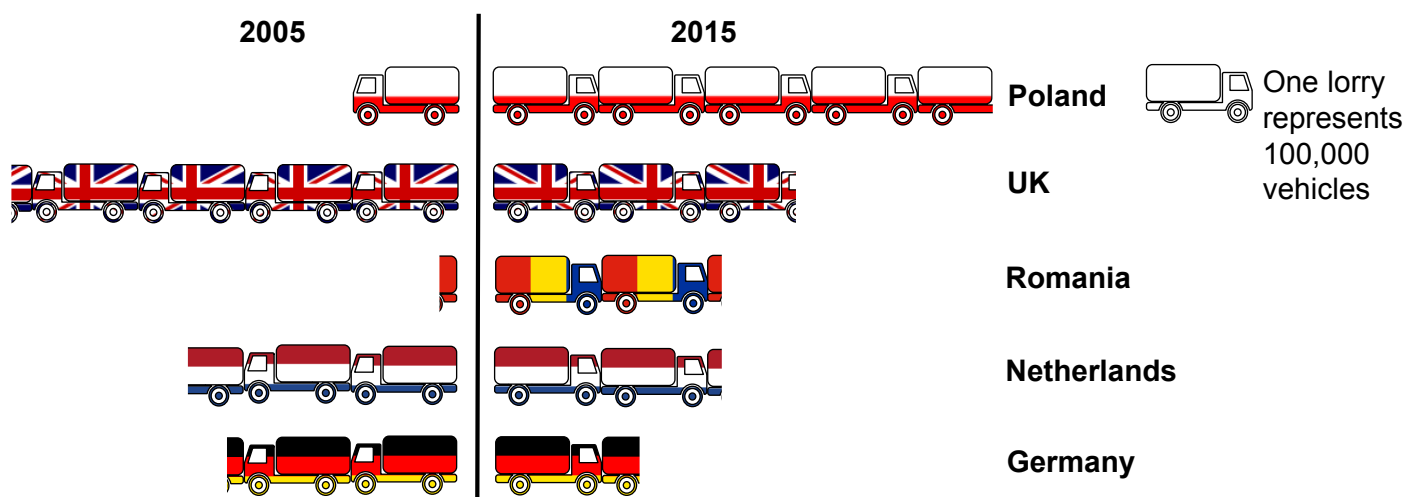
Over the last 20 years large increases in the number of foreign registered vehicles travelling to Europe have seen the UK's percentage share drop to 13 per cent of the total from a peak of 52 per cent in 1996.

## Country of vehicle registration

Over the last twenty years there has been over a four fold increase in the number of **foreign registered** powered vehicles travelling from Great Britain to mainland Europe (from 0.5 million in 1995 to 2.0 million in 2015).

The proportion of vehicles registered to countries such as the **UK, Netherlands, Germany and France** have fallen as the number of countries have increased their share since joining the EU. When **Poland** joined the EU in 2004, it accounted for 3 per cent of the total number of powered goods vehicles. By 2015 this had risen to 21 per cent, a larger share of powered goods vehicles travelling from Great Britain to mainland Europe, than any other country. Other countries which joined the EU since 2004 now account for 29 per cent of the total number of powered goods vehicles.

### Top 5 powered goods vehicles travelling from Great Britain to mainland Europe in 2015, percentage share by country of registration, compared to 2005

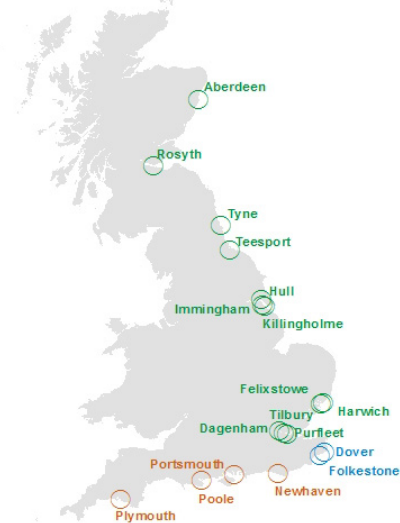


### Quarter 4 total (October - December 2015)

During the final quarter of 2015, 64 thousand powered vehicles travelling from Great Britain to mainland Europe were **UK registered** (12 per cent of the total). This was a decrease of 37 per cent compared to ten years earlier (102 thousand). **Foreign Registered** vehicles had a total of 489 thousand powered vehicles travelling from Great Britain to mainland Europe in quarter 4 2015, accounting for 88 per cent of all powered vehicles, this was a slight decrease of 3 per cent since quarter 4 2014.

## Goods vehicles travelling to mainland Europe by port group, 2015

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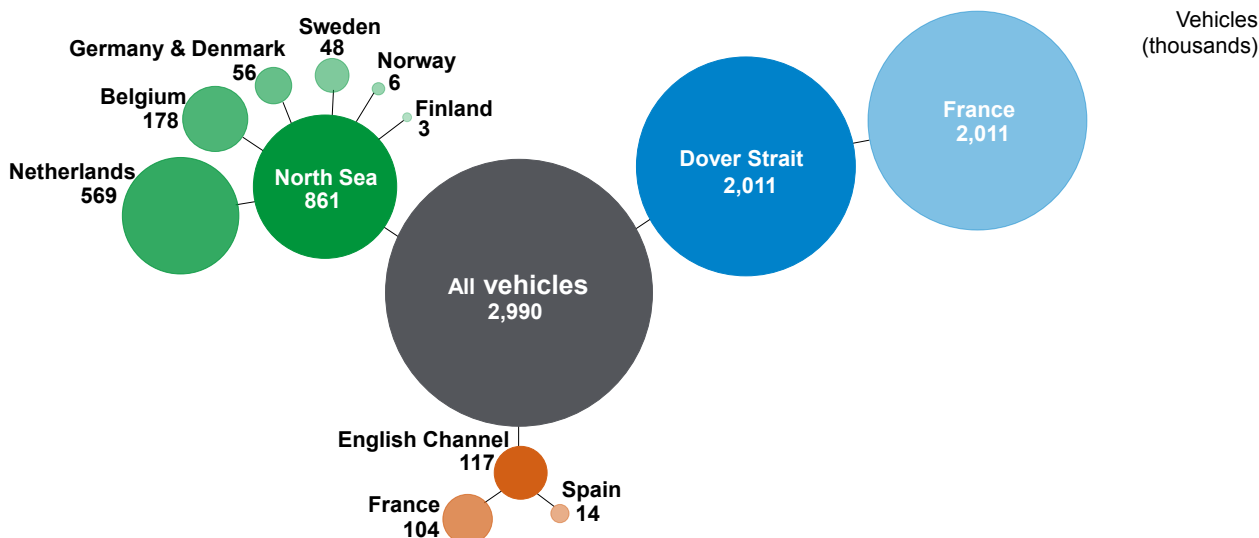
| Port Group      | All goods vehicles<br>(Total: 3.0 Million) | Powered vehicles<br>(2.3 Million) | Unaccompanied trailers<br>(0.7 Million) |
|-----------------|--|-----------------------------------|---|
| North Sea       | 29%  | 8%                                | 94%                                     |
| Dover Straits   | 67%  | 88%                               | 3%                                      |
| English Channel | 4%   | 4%                                | 3%                                      |

- The proportions of goods vehicles travelling from each Great Britain port group to mainland Europe have remained broadly unchanged over the past decade.
- Of the 3.0 million goods vehicles that travelled from Great Britain to mainland Europe in 2015, 0.9 million goods vehicles used the **North Sea Port Group** (29 per cent), 2.0 million used the **Dover Strait Port Group** (67 per cent) and 0.1 million used the **English Channel Port Group** (4 per cent).
- The majority of powered vehicles travelled from the **Dover Strait Port Group**: 2.0 million powered vehicles (88 per cent).
- There were 9 out of 10 unaccompanied trailers which travelled from the **North Sea Port Group**: 0.7 million (94 per cent).

### Quarter 4 total (October - December 2015)

- In quarter 4 2015, 487 thousand goods vehicles travelled from the **Dover Strait Port Group**, of which 482 thousand (99 per cent) were powered vehicles.
- There were 216 thousand goods vehicles that travelled from the **North Sea Port Group**, of which 172 thousand (80 per cent) were unaccompanied trailers.
- There were 35 thousand goods vehicles that travelled from the **English Channel Port Group**, the majority of which (28 thousand, or 80 per cent) were powered vehicles.

### Goods vehicles travelling to mainland Europe by port group and country of disembarkation, 2015



- Of all of the goods vehicles travelling from Great Britain to mainland Europe, 71 per cent disembarked in **France**. Sixty-seven per cent of those goods vehicles which disembarked in **France** travelled from the **Dover Strait Port Group**, and 3 per cent from the **English Channel Port Group**. **France** is the only country of disembarkation for the **Channel Tunnel**. Ninety-two per cent of all powered road goods vehicles disembarked in **France** (2.1 million).
- Of the total goods vehicles which travelled from the **North Sea Port Group**, 66 per cent disembarked in the **Netherlands**. Fifty-seven per cent of unaccompanied trailers disembarked in the **Netherlands** (0.4 million).
- Of the small number of goods vehicles using the **English Channel Port Group**, 88 per cent disembarked in **France** and 12 per cent in **Spain**.

### Quarter 4 total (October - December 2015)

- In quarter 4 2015, 507 thousand powered vehicles disembarked in **France** (92 per cent of the total). This was a 7 per cent decrease compared to quarter 4 2014 (544 thousand powered vehicles) and the first quarter 4 decrease since quarter 4 2011. This is the second consecutive quarter of negative growth in 2015.
- There is currently insufficient information to assess whether this decrease is a new trend or a fluctuation associated with issues at Calais which disrupted vehicles travelling to / from Calais, as well as the closure of MyFerryLink operator (an English Channel company operating on the route between Dover and Calais) in 2015.
- In contrast, the number of powered vehicles disembarking in the **Netherlands** increased by 15 per cent compared to the same period a year earlier. This represents an increase from 34 thousand in the fourth quarter of 2014, to 39 thousand. The volume of powered vehicles disembarking in other countries (most notably **Belgium**, **Spain** and **Denmark**) also increased by 18 per cent to 8 thousand.

## Background notes

- The web tables for RoRo statistics can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/road-freight-domestic-and-international-statistics>

- Full guidance on the methods used in the publication of these releases, the quality of the data, and the revisions published in 2007 can be found in the Technical Note at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/road-freight-domestic-and-international-statistics-guidance>

- National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice. They undergo formal statutory assessments to ensure they meet customer needs:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html>

- Details of ministers and officials who receive pre-release access to these statistics up to 24 hours before release can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/roll-on-roll-off-international-freight-statistics-pre-release-access-list>

## Strengths and Weaknesses of the data

- The results in this bulletin are compiled from quarterly returns provided by the roll-on / roll-off ferry operators, giving the number of powered vehicles and unaccompanied trailers carried on each route from GB to mainland Europe, and from monthly information supplied by Eurotunnel.
- Disaggregation by country of registration of powered vehicles is supplied by most of the ferry operators and by Eurotunnel. Some operators identify this from the registration number pattern whilst others extract the nationality from the manifest or waybill. A few operators use the country of booking as a proxy for the country of registration of the powered vehicle.
- Revised estimates for 2004 to 2007 were published in May 2008 following a data quality review. This resulted in a break in the series between 2003 and 2004. For full details see the Technical Note.
- As a result of the review the survey was put on a statutory basis and since early 2008 returns have been supplied by all operators resulting in more complete reporting of country of registration. The quality of the data is therefore thought to have been substantially improved and the data are considered fit for purpose.