



Department for Transport

Road goods vehicles travelling to mainland Europe: April to June 2017 (Quarter 2)

About this release

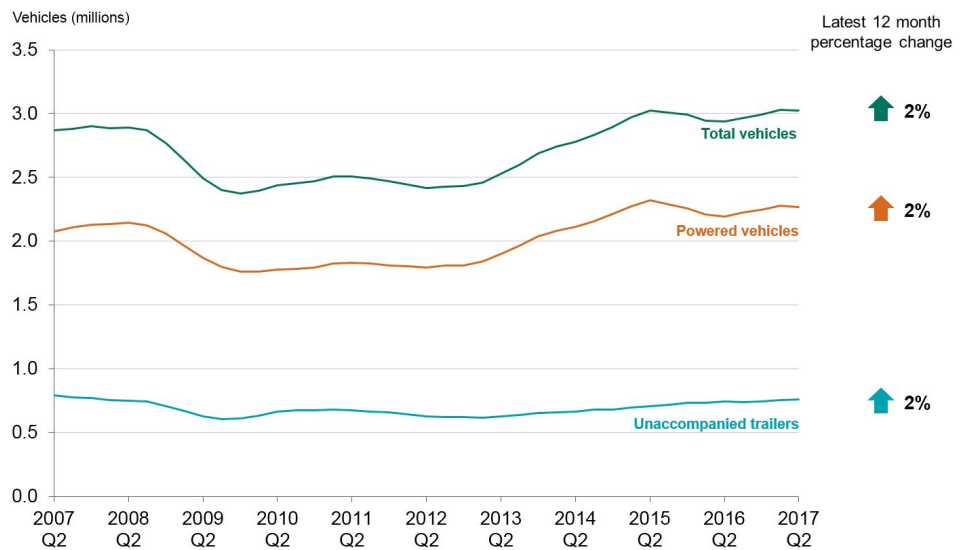
This statistical release summarises results from the survey of road goods vehicles travelling to mainland Europe. It collects information from roll-on / roll-off (also called 'RoRo') ferry operators and Eurotunnel, on the number of powered vehicles and unaccompanied trailers, carried (outbound) on all the main ferry routes between Great Britain and mainland Europe, plus the Channel Tunnel. Ferry routes between Great Britain and Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland are not included.

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In the year ending June 2017, just over 3 million road goods vehicles travelled from Great Britain to mainland Europe, a 2% increase compared to the year ending June 2016.

Road goods vehicles travelling from Great Britain to mainland Europe, rolling 12 month totals, June 2007 to June 2017 (Table [RoRo0101](#))



April - June 2017 (Quarter 2 totals)

Between April and June 2017 (Quarter 2), 752 thousand road goods vehicles travelled from Great Britain to mainland Europe, 3% fewer than in Quarter 2 2016. Of these vehicles, 556 thousand were **powered vehicles** and 196 thousand were **unaccompanied trailers** - representing a 5% decrease and a 3% increase respectively on Quarter 2 2016.

Definitions



Powered vehicles (over 3.5 tonnes) includes: Rigid lorries, Tractors & Trailers (counted as one unit) and Tractive units only.



Unaccompanied trailers includes: tow-bar trailers and articulated semi trailers, not accompanied on the ferry by a powered unit.

Revisions

This release, initially scheduled for 17 August, was postponed owing to issues found in the data supplied by ferry operators. Further investigation resulted in some revisions to the historic series. While numbers have been revised, there has been no effect on overall trends. Further details of the revisions can be found on [page 7](#).

Overall trend in road goods vehicles travelling to mainland Europe

Around 3.0 million road goods vehicles travelled from Great Britain to mainland Europe in the year ending June 2017 (comprising 2.2 million powered vehicles and 0.8 million unaccompanied trailers). This was 2% more than in the year ending June 2016.

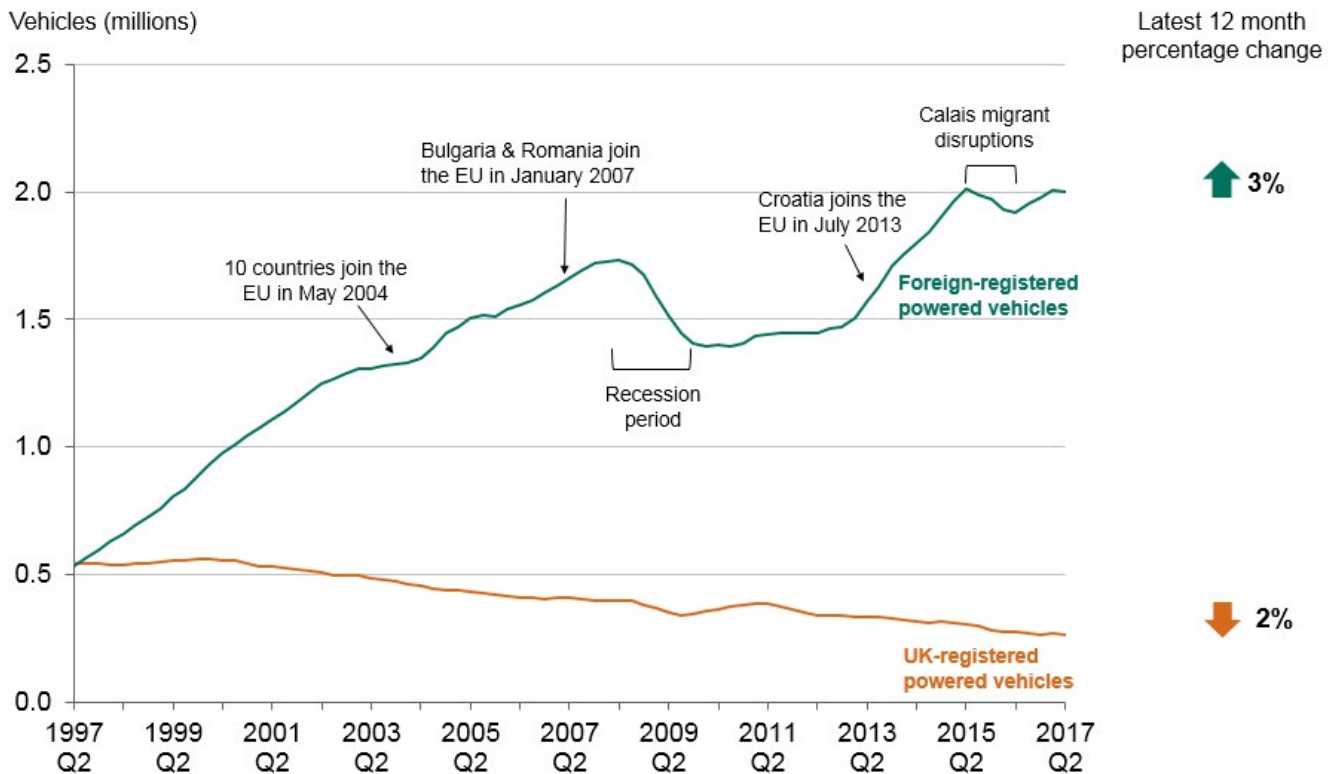
The long term trend shows that the total number of road goods vehicles travelling from Great Britain to mainland Europe has been increasing, with the figure in the year ending June 2017 being 73% higher than the figure 20 years earlier.

During the year ending June 2017 the number of foreign registered powered vehicles travelling from Great Britain to mainland Europe increased by 3% to just under 2 million. In comparison, the number of UK registered powered vehicles travelling from Great Britain to mainland Europe fell by 2% (to 0.3 million) compared to the previous year.

Over the last 20 years, the number of UK-registered powered vehicles travelling from Great Britain to mainland Europe has been in gradual decline while the number of foreign-registered powered vehicles has been steadily increasing, with the exception of a recession related dip between 2008 and 2009.

Back in 1996, over half of the powered vehicles travelling from Great Britain to mainland Europe were for UK-registered vehicles (52%), compared to only 12% in the latest 12 month period.

Powered vehicles travelling from Great Britain to mainland Europe by registration, rolling 12 month totals, June 1997 to June 2017 (Table [RoRo0101](#))



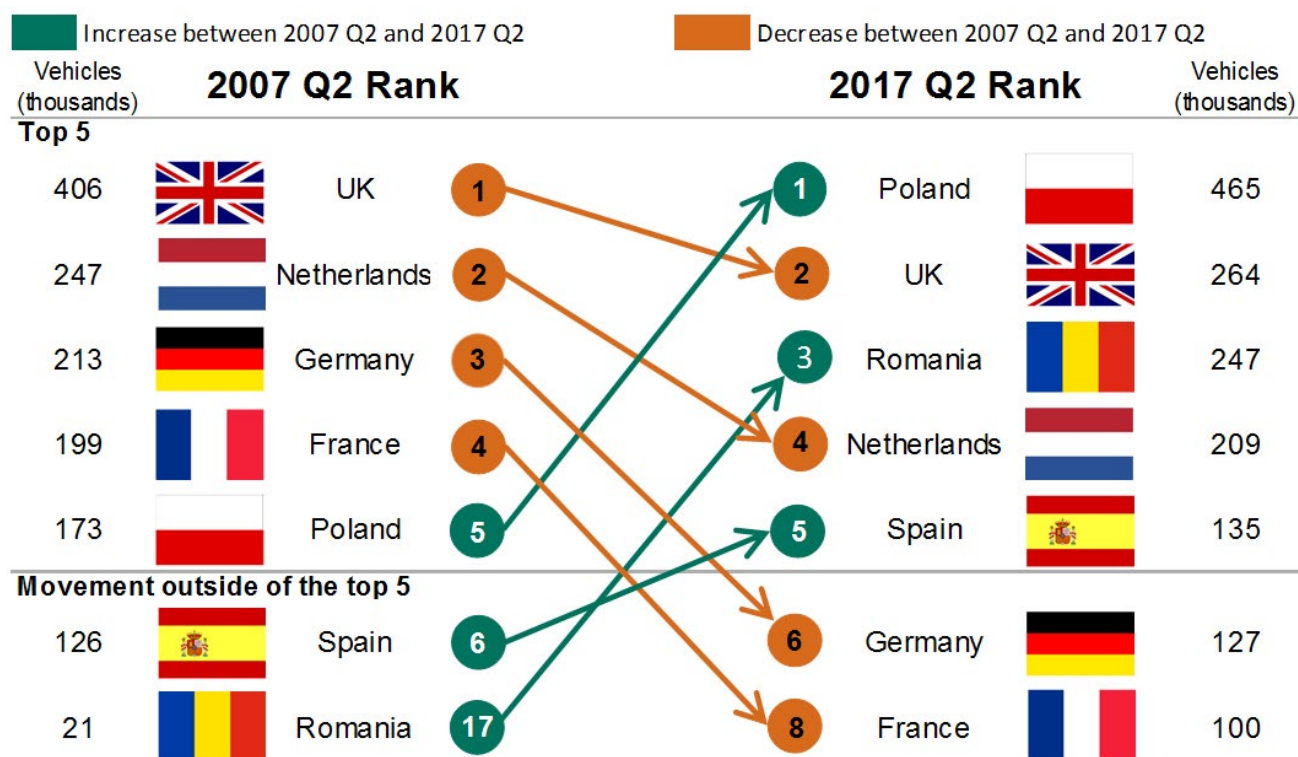
Country of vehicle registration

Over the last 20 years there has been a four fold increase in the number of foreign-registered powered vehicles travelling from Great Britain to mainland Europe (from 0.5 million in the year ending June 1997, to just under 2.0 million in the latest 12 month period).

The proportion of powered vehicles registered to countries such as the **UK, Netherlands, Germany** and **France** that travelled from Great Britain to mainland Europe has fallen as a number of other countries have greatly increased their share since joining the European Union (EU). The volume of powered goods vehicles registered to **Poland** has increased from 3% in 2004 when it first joined the EU, to 21% in the year ending June 2017. This is a larger share than any other country and the number of powered vehicles registered to Poland, travelling from Great Britain to mainland Europe, increased by 4% from 449 thousand in the year ending June 2016 to 465 thousand in the year ending June 2017.

Since **Romania** joined the EU in 2007, its share of powered goods vehicles travelling from Great Britain to mainland Europe has risen from 1% to 11% in the year ending June 2017.

Powered vehicles travelling from Great Britain to mainland Europe, by country of registration, rolling 12 month totals, June 2007 to June 2017 (Table [RoRo0201](#))



April - June 2017 (Quarter 2 total)

Between April to June 2017 (Quarter 2), 556 thousand powered vehicles travelled from Great Britain to mainland Europe of which 67 thousand were **UK-registered** (12% of the total); a decrease of 35% compared to 10 years earlier (103 thousand).

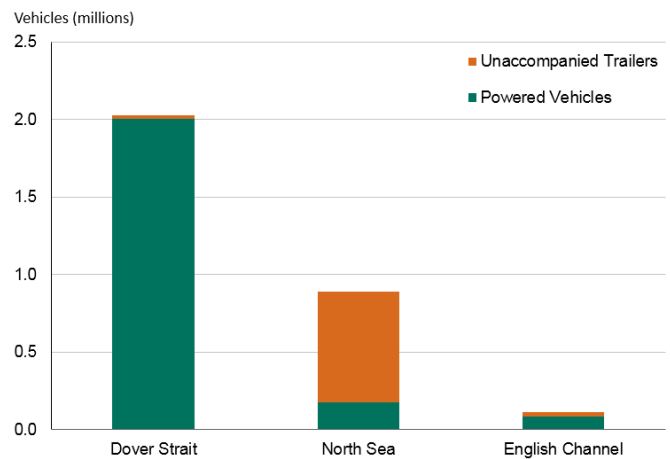
488 thousand **foreign-registered** powered goods vehicles travelled from Great Britain to mainland Europe in Quarter 2 2017, accounting for 88% of all powered vehicles. This was 5% fewer than Quarter 2 2016 but 14% more than 10 years earlier.

In the year ending June 2017, 2 million road goods vehicles travelling to mainland Europe used the **Dover Strait** ports (67% of the total), 888 thousand used **North Sea** ports (30% of the total) and 111 thousand used **English Channel** ports (4% of the total).

The majority (88%) of **powered vehicles** travelling to mainland Europe also left via the Dover Strait ports, while the vast majority (94%) of **unaccompanied trailers** travelled from the North Sea ports.

Road goods vehicles travelling from Great Britain to mainland Europe by port group and type, July 2016 to June 2017 (Tables [RoRo0401](#), [RoRo0501](#))

■ North Sea ports ■ Dover Strait ports ■ English Channel ports



The chart shows that there is a prevalence of powered vehicles on the shorter routes, such as to France, from the **Dover Strait** ports. There is also a prevalence of unaccompanied trailers on the longer routes, for example to the Netherlands, from the **North Sea** ports. This is largely due to the fact that unaccompanied trailers are used on longer distance journeys instead of powered vehicles for less urgent cargo. There are also **cost factors** whereby haulage firms may seek to be more efficient by not using powered vehicles on longer routes due to driver's cost constraint and the regulations on the number of hours drivers can operate.

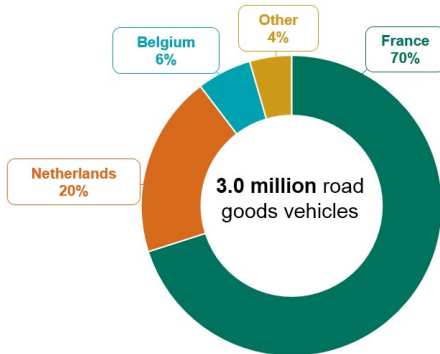
April - June 2017 (Quarter 2 total)

Between April to June 2017 (Quarter 2), 496 thousand road goods vehicles travelled from the **Dover Strait** ports, the majority of which were powered vehicles (99%). In comparison, 228 thousand road goods vehicles travelled from the **North Sea** ports, the majority of which were unaccompanied trailers (81%). There were 28 thousand road goods vehicles that travelled from the **English channel** ports, the majority of which were powered vehicles (76%).

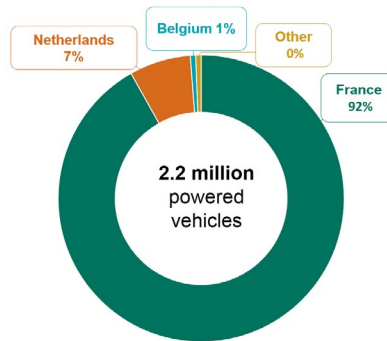
Country of disembarkation

Road goods vehicles travelling from Great Britain to mainland Europe, by country of disembarkation, July 2016 to June 2017 (Tables [RoRo0302](#), [RoRo0402](#), [RoRo0502](#))

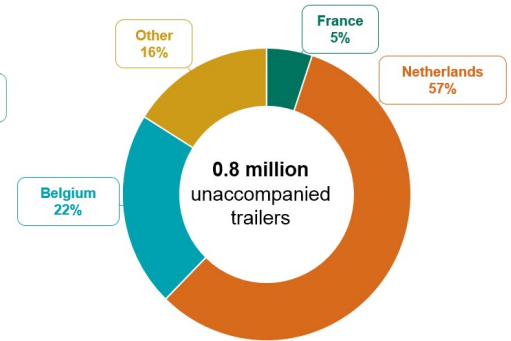
All road goods vehicles



Powered vehicles



Unaccompanied trailers



Other includes: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Norway, Spain and Sweden

Percentages are subject to rounding

France is the most common country for all road goods vehicles and powered vehicles travelling from Great Britain to mainland Europe to disembark in - accounting for 70% of all road goods vehicles (just over 2.1 million) and 92% of powered vehicles (just under 2.1 million). The majority of these road goods vehicles destined to France travelled from the **Dover Strait ports** (96%) and the remainder from the **English Channel ports**. **France** is the only country of disembarkation for the **Channel Tunnel**.

In comparison, the **Netherlands** is the most common country for unaccompanied trailers travelling from Great Britain to mainland Europe to disembark in, accounting for 57% (435 thousand) of all unaccompanied trailers. **Belgium** is the second most common country for unaccompanied trailers to disembark in (22%) whilst only 5% of unaccompanied trailers disembarked in France.

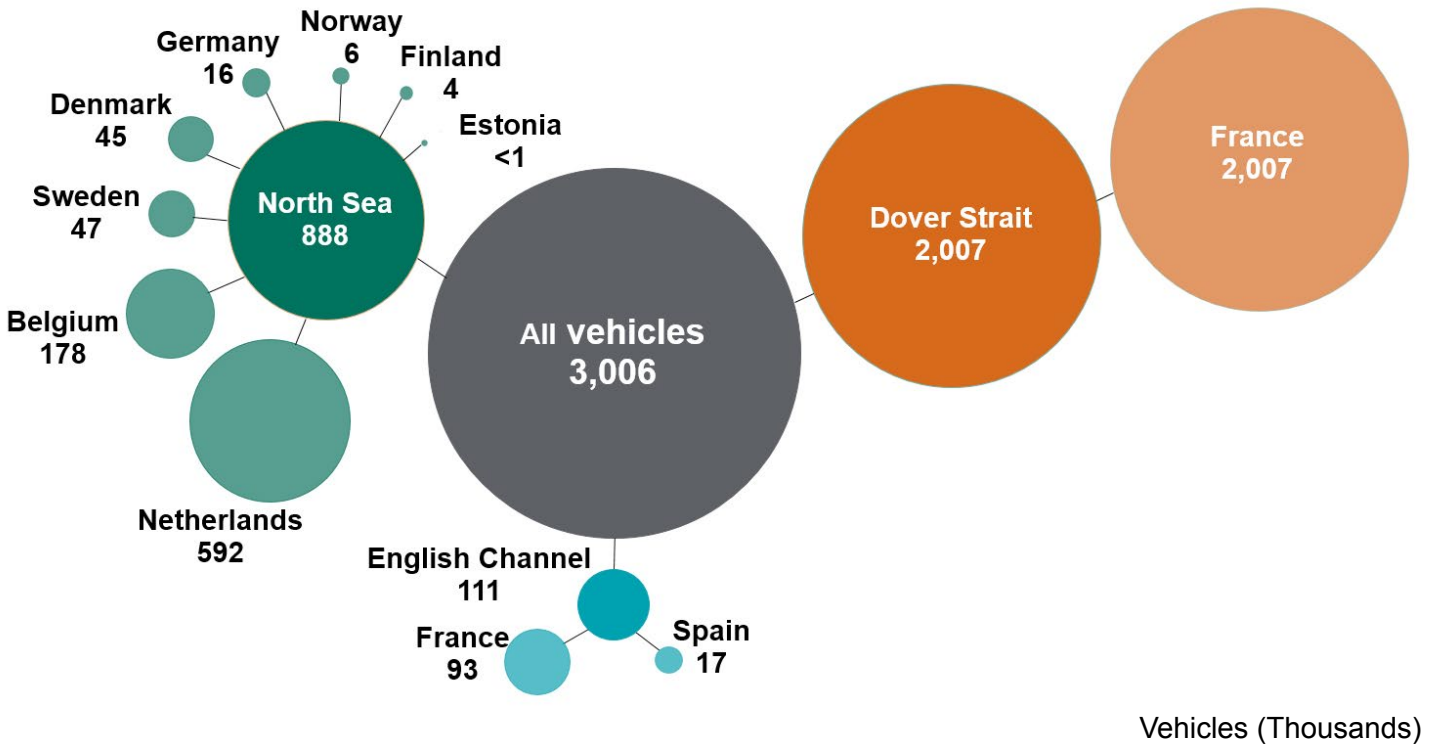
April - June 2017 (Quarter 2 total)

Between April to June 2017 (Quarter 2), 519 thousand **road goods vehicles** disembarked in **France** (69% of the total), which is a 5% decrease compared to Quarter 2 2016 (544 thousand powered vehicles).

A total of 509 thousand **powered vehicles** disembarked in **France** (92% of the total), a 5% decrease compared to Quarter 2 2016 (534 thousand powered vehicles). The number of powered vehicles disembarking in the **Netherlands** was 40 thousand, a 4% decrease compared to the same quarter last year (41 thousand powered vehicles).

In comparison, only 10 thousand **unaccompanied trailers** disembarked in **France** (5% of the total), while 112 thousand unaccompanied trailers disembarked in the **Netherlands** (57% of the total).

Road goods vehicles travelling from Great Britain to mainland Europe by port group and country of disembarkation, July 2016 to June 2017 (Table [RoRo0302](#))



The majority of road goods vehicles travelling from Great Britain to mainland Europe via North Sea ports are destined for the Netherlands. Of all the road goods vehicles which travelled from the **North Sea ports**, 67% disembarked in the **Netherlands** (0.6 million), whilst a further 20% disembarked in Belgium (0.2 million).

Most road good vehicles travelling through the **English Channel ports** in the year ending June 2017 were destined for **France** (84%) followed by **Spain** (16%), whilst all road goods vehicles travelling through the **Dover Strait** ports were destined for France.

April - June 2017 (Quarter 2 total)

Between April to June 2017 (Quarter 2), 496 thousand road goods vehicles travelled via the **Dover Strait** ports to **France**, the only country of disembarkation for this port group.

There were around 152 thousand road goods vehicles that travelled via the **North Sea** ports to the **Netherlands**, while 23 thousand road goods vehicles travelled via the **English Channel** to **France**.

What is being revised?

Whilst undertaking routine quality assurance checks on the data, the DfT identified inconsistent figures in data supplied by a ferry operator in the Dover Strait port group. Further investigations uncovered issues in the operator's quarterly data submission to DfT, which dated back to 2008.

The errors found in the data related to the total number of powered vehicles, including the country of vehicle registration and the number of unaccompanied trailers. The ferry operator was able to supply corrected data relating to 2013 onwards, but they were not able to supply data prior to this. As such, care should be taken when reviewing data relating to the country of vehicle registration between 2008 and 2013 for the Dover Strait port group, as there may be some minor classification issues.

Following this process, the DfT has taken a full review of data for other routes and operators. A number of minor revisions have been made to the data, affecting the country of registration for powered vehicles.

What is the effect of these changes?

The corrections detailed above mean the total number of road goods vehicles travelling to mainland Europe have been revised from 2013 onwards. These revisions affect all of the data tables which accompany this release. The effect of these changes can be seen below:

Total number of powered vehicles travelling to mainland Europe:

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016
Original Figures	2,037,000	2,216,000	2,258,000	2,245,000
Revised Figures	2,056,000	2,216,000	2,258,000	2,247,000

Total number of UK-registered vehicles travelling to mainland Europe:

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016
Original Figures	326,000	313,000	283,000	266,000
Revised Figures	336,000	322,000	286,000	267,000

A large number of minor revisions were also made reclassifying the country of registration for powered vehicles as given in Table [RoRo0201](#). While most of these revisions were small in magnitude, there were around twenty-five individual revisions made. These revisions did not affect the countries ranking as given on [page 3](#).

Strengths and weaknesses of the data

The figures in this release are derived from quarterly returns provided by the roll-on / roll-off ferry operators, who provide the number of powered vehicles (by country of registration) and unaccompanied trailers carried on each ferry route from Great Britain to mainland Europe. Equivalent information for the number of powered vehicles travelling through the Channel Tunnel are provided by the Office of Rail and Road.

Ferry routes to countries outside mainland Europe (such as Ireland) are not included; only outward traffic is recorded. Up to 1978, inward traffic was also recorded, but as it was similar to outward traffic, the data requirement was discontinued to save respondent effort.

Information on the country of registration for powered vehicles is derived by some operators 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.

Since a data quality review in early 2008, survey returns have been supplied by all roll-on / roll-off ferry operators, which has resulted in more complete reporting of country of registration.

Background notes

The data tables give further detail on the key results presented in this statistical release. These data tables are available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/road-freight-domestic-and-international-statistics>

Guidance on the methods used to compile these statistics, 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>

Details of ministers and officials who receive pre-release access to these statistics up to 24 hours before release can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/roll-on-roll-off-international-freight-statistics-pre-release-access-list>



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