



Department for Transport

Road goods vehicles travelling to mainland Europe: January to March 2017 (Quarter 1)

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 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.

This release and the traffic it details is sometimes referred to as "RoRo" (Roll-on / Roll-off).

In this publication

- Key results.....p1
- Overall trends.....p2
- By country of vehicle registration.....p3
- By port group.....p4
- By country of disembarkation.....p5
- Strengths and weaknesses of the data.....p7
- Background notes.....p7

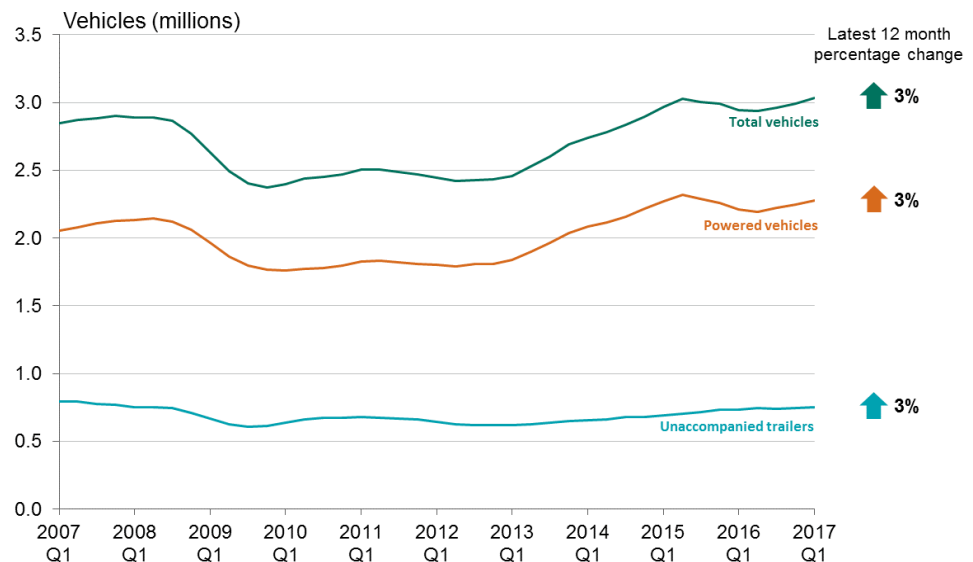
In the year ending March 2017, just over 3 million road goods vehicles travelled from Great Britain to mainland Europe, this is a 3% increase compared to the year ending March 2016.

Of the total volume of road goods vehicles travelling to mainland Europe, 2.3 million were **powered vehicles** and 0.8 million were **unaccompanied trailers**. This represents a 3% increase in both powered vehicles and unaccompanied trailers travelling to mainland Europe, compared to the year ending March 2016.

January - March 2017 (Quarter 1 total)

Between January to March 2017 (Quarter 1), 758 thousand road goods vehicles travelled from Great Britain to mainland Europe, representing a 6% increase on Quarter 1 2016. Of these vehicles, 573 thousand were **powered vehicles** and 185 thousand were **unaccompanied trailers** - respective increases of 6% and 5% on Quarter 1 2016.

Road goods vehicles travelling from Great Britain to mainland Europe, rolling 12-month totals, March 2007 to March 2017



Definitions



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.



Overall trend in road goods vehicles travelling to mainland Europe

Just over 3.0 million road goods vehicles travelled from Great Britain to mainland Europe in the year ending March 2017 (comprising 2.3 million powered vehicles and 0.8 million unaccompanied trailers). This was 3% higher compared to the year ending March 2016.

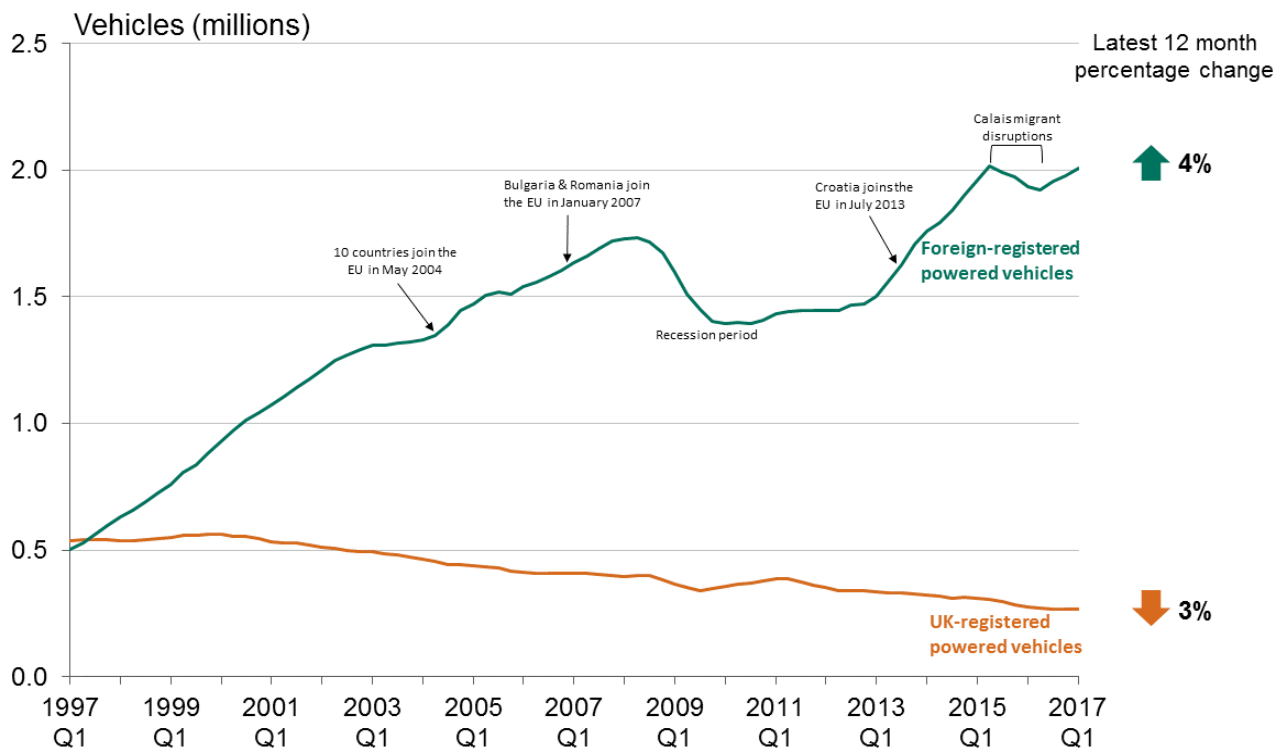
The long term trend shows that the total number of goods vehicles travelling from Great Britain to mainland Europe increased by 81% in the last 20 years.

During the year ending March 2017 the number of foreign registered powered vehicles travelling from Great Britain to mainland Europe, increased by 4% to just over 2 million. In comparison, the number of UK registered powered vehicles travelling from Great Britain to mainland Europe, fell by 3% to 0.3 million compared to the previous year.

Since 1997 the number of UK-registered powered vehicles has been in gradual decline while the number of foreign-registered powered vehicles travelling from Great Britain to mainland Europe has been rapidly increasing, with the exception of a recession related dip between 2009 - 2013.

The large increases in the number of foreign registered powered vehicles travelling to Europe have seen the UK's percentage share drop to 12% of the total from a peak of 52% in 1996.

Powered vehicles travelling from Great Britain to mainland Europe by registration, rolling 12-month totals, March 1997 to March 2017



January - March 2017 (Quarter 1 total)

Between January to March 2017 (Quarter 1), 758 thousand road goods vehicles travelled from Great Britain to mainland Europe (573 thousand powered vehicles and 185 thousand unaccompanied trailers). This was 6% higher than Quarter 1 2016 (716 thousand road goods vehicles).

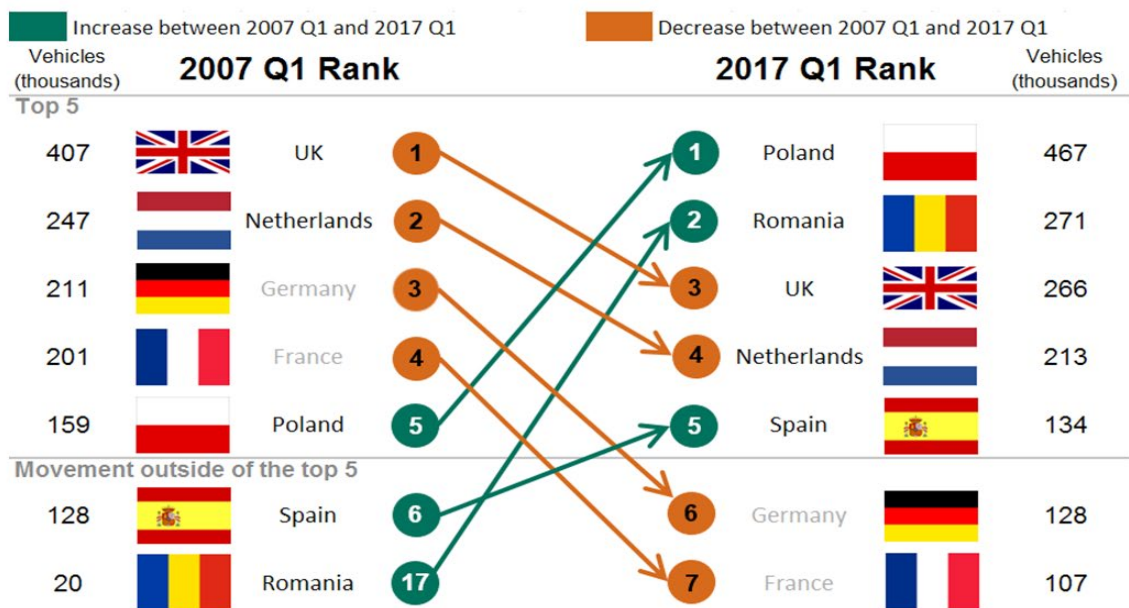
Country of vehicle registration

Over the last 20 years there was a four fold increase in the number of foreign-registered powered vehicles travelling from Great Britain to mainland Europe (from 0.5 million in 1996 to just over 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 have increased from 3% in 2004 when it first joined the EU, to 21% in the year ending March 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 5% from 446 thousand in the year ending March 2016 to 467 thousand in the year ending March 2017.

Since Romania joined the EU in 2007, its share of powered goods vehicles has risen from 1% to 12% in the year ending March 2017. Since the end of 2016, Romania has had the second largest share of powered goods vehicles travelling from Great Britain to mainland Europe, surpassing the UK.

Powered vehicles travelling from Great Britain to mainland Europe, by country of registration, rolling 12-month totals, March 2007 to March 2017



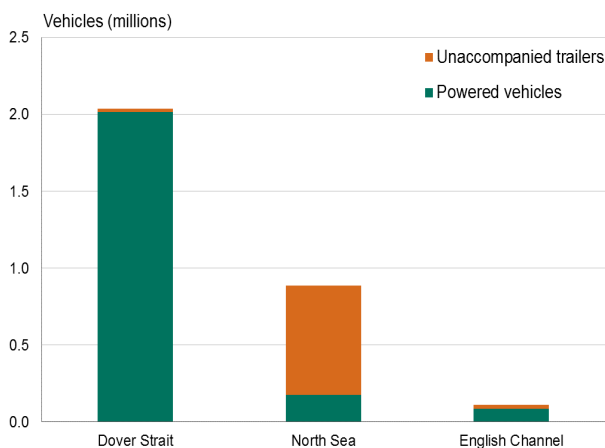
January - March 2017 (Quarter 1 total)

Between January to March 2017 (Quarter 1), 66 thousand powered vehicles travelling from Great Britain to mainland Europe were **UK-registered** (12% of the total). This was a decrease of 35% compared to 10 years earlier (101 thousand).

There were 506 thousand **foreign-registered** powered goods vehicles travelling from Great Britain to mainland Europe in Quarter 1 2017, accounting for 88% of all powered vehicles. This was 7% higher than Quarter 1 2016.

Road goods vehicles travelling from Great Britain to mainland Europe by port group and type, April 2016 to March 2017

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



The majority (88%) of **powered vehicles** travelling to mainland Europe left via the Dover Strait ports, 2.0 million powered vehicles, while the vast majority (94%) of **unaccompanied trailers** travelled from the North Sea ports, 0.7 million.

There has been a small shift over the last ten years in the proportion of road goods vehicles travelling to mainland Europe from the Dover Strait port group away from the North Sea port group. In the year ending March 2017, 2.0 million used the **Dover Strait ports** (67%) and 0.9 million road goods vehicles used the **North Sea ports** (29%). This compares with 63% that used the Dover Strait ports and 32% that used the North Sea ports in the year ending March 2007.

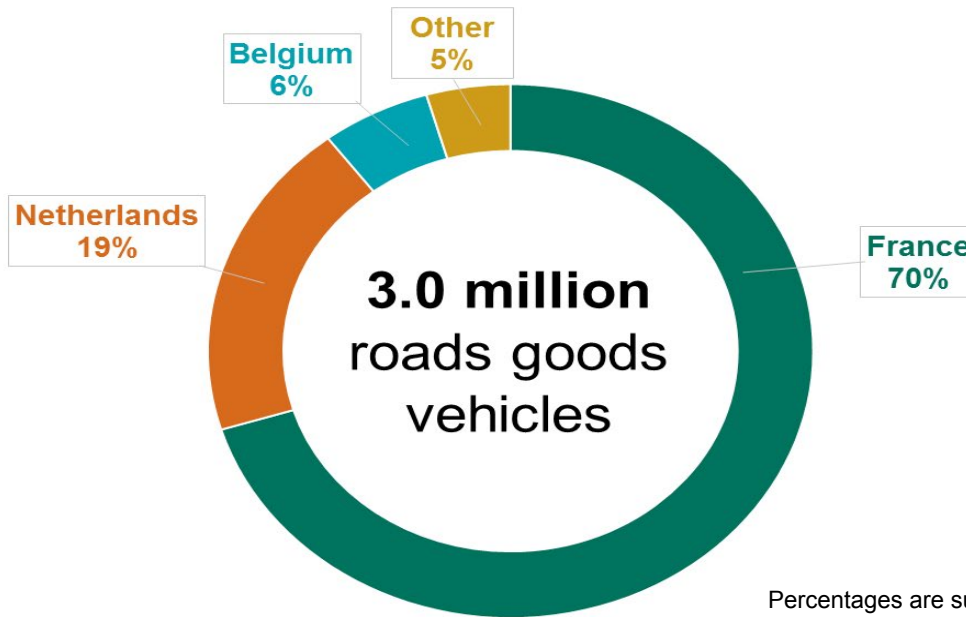
January - March 2017 (Quarter 1 total)

Between January to March 2017 (Quarter 1), 513 thousand road goods vehicles travelled from the Dover Strait ports, the majority of which were powered vehicles (99%). In comparison, 216 thousand road goods vehicles travelled from the North Sea ports, the majority of which were unaccompanied trailers (80%), while, 29 thousand goods vehicles travelled from the English channel ports, the majority of which were powered vehicles trailers (77%).

The chart at the top of the page shows that there has been a prevalence of powered vehicles on shorter routes from the Dover Strait ports and unaccompanied trailers on longer routes 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 avoid having to pay for drivers accompanying freight during long periods of non-driving time and to avoid breaching regulations on the number of hours drivers can operate.

Country of disembarkation

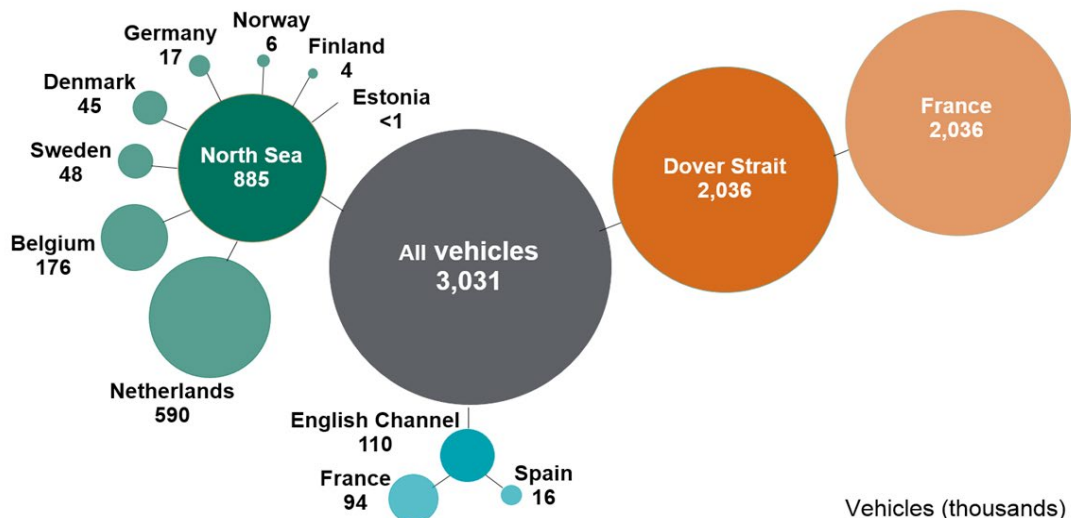
Road goods vehicles travelling from Great Britain to mainland Europe, by country of disembarkation, April 2016 to March 2017



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

France is the most common country for road goods vehicles travelling from Great Britain to mainland Europe to disembark in - accounting for 70% of all goods vehicles (just over 2.1 million) travelling to mainland Europe and 92% of powered vehicles (just under 2.1 million). The majority of these French destined goods vehicles travelled from the **Dover Strait ports** (95 per cent), and the remainder from the **English Channel ports**. **France** is the only country of disembarkation for the **Channel Tunnel**.

Road goods vehicles travelling from Great Britain to mainland Europe by port group and country of disembarkation, April 2016 to March 2017



The majority of road goods vehicles travelling from Great Britain to mainland Europe via North Sea ports are destined for the Netherlands. Of the total goods vehicles which travelled from the **North Sea ports**, 67% disembarked in the **Netherlands** (0.6 million). Over half (57 per cent) of all unaccompanied trailers which travelled from Great Britain to mainland Europe disembarked in the **Netherlands** (0.4 million).

Most good vehicles travelling through the **English Channel ports** in the year ending March 2017 were destined for France (85%) followed by **Spain** (15%).

January - March 2017 (Quarter 1 total)

Between January to March 2017 (Quarter 1), 528 thousand **powered vehicles** disembarked in **France** (92 per cent of the total). This is a 6% increase compared to quarter 1 2016 (496 thousand powered vehicles).

The number of powered vehicles disembarking in the **Netherlands** was unchanged compared to the same quarter last year, at 38 thousand.

In comparison, 10 thousand **unaccompanied trailers** disembarked in **France** (5% of the total), unchanged on the same Quarter last year, compared to 105 thousand in the **Netherlands** (57% of the total), an increase of 6% on the same Quarter last year.

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; whilst 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.

Following a data quality review in early 2008, survey returns have since been supplied by all roll-on / roll-off ferry operators, resulting in more complete reporting of country of registration. The quality of the data is therefore thought to have been substantially improved since then and the data are considered fit for purpose.

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>



To hear more about DfT statistics publications as they are released please follow us on Twitter via our @DfTstats account: <http://www.twitter.com/DfTstats>. TWITTER, TWEET, RETWEET and the Twitter logo are trademarks of Twitter, Inc. or its affiliates.