

RoRo survey: methods and quality

1. The statistics 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 to mainland Europe and from monthly information supplied by Eurotunnel. Disaggregation by the country of registration of powered vehicles is provided by most of the ferry operators and by Eurotunnel. On some routes the operators can extract the nationality directly from the manifests or waybills, while on others each one is identified from the registration number pattern.
2. Powered vehicles comprise rigid vehicles, lorries with semi-trailers (articulated units) and lorries with drawbar trailers (some vehicles under 3.5 tonnes gross vehicle weight are also included). Unaccompanied trailers comprise trailers and semi-trailers not accompanied on the ferry by a powered unit. Unaccompanied trailers are not carried by the Eurotunnel freight service.
3. Up to 1978, inward traffic was also recorded, but because it was similar to outward traffic, the data requirement was discontinued to save respondent effort; consequently statistics in this bulletin are for outward traffic only. Excluded from the statistics are ferry services to countries outside mainland Europe (such as Ireland). However, it is believed that all routes to mainland Europe carrying significant levels of traffic are included. A list of routes since 2004 can be found in table [roro0901](#).
4. The roll-on/roll-off ferry statistics enable the Department to meet the EC Regulation 1172/98 by providing control totals by route for grossing up the associated sample survey of international road haulage (IRHS) undertaken by hauliers using vehicles registered in the UK. The statistics are the only routinely published source of information on the number of foreign vehicles, by country of registration, visiting (see Note 3 above) the United Kingdom.
5. None of the results in this survey are now seasonally adjusted. Comparisons between quarters should be limited to comparisons with the same quarter in other years to avoid seasonal effects.
6. 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 and comparisons by country of registration before 2004 should therefore be treated with caution.
7. Further details of this review are given below. The revisions were necessary because incorrect definitions were being used by two major data providers and also because, in the light of new information supplied by data providers, adjustments were made to the imputation methods used by DfT. As a result of the review the survey was put onto a statutory basis, and since early 2008 returns have been received from all operators, with more complete reporting of country of registration. The quality of the results is therefore thought to have been substantially improved and the data are considered fit for purpose.

Revisions to the estimates

In 2007 several key operators were able to supply more reliable information about both the number of Roads Goods Vehicles and their country of registration. This new data raised questions about the robustness of the previously published estimates so a more thorough review of the figures was carried out, as a result of which revisions were made to the figures back to 2004. The RoRo bulletin was suspended following the publication of Q2 estimates in August 2007 until the publication in May 2008 of the annual 2007 estimates. The revised estimates are considered to be more robust since they are based on more complete information, comparison with other sources and further discussion with operators.

Overall total of Roads Good vehicles

Table1 shows the revisions to the total number of powered Roads Goods Vehicles. These largely reflect the removal of vans below 3.5 tonnes from the figures reported by several major operators. No adjustments were made before 2003, so there may be a small discontinuity in the series at this point. The changes in the RGV totals had a modest effect on the results in all tables. Some slight revisions were made to the numbers of unaccompanied trailers, but these are less significant.

Table 1 Road goods vehicles travelling to mainland Europe

Year	Thousands/Percentage				
	UK	Foreign	Total powered vehicles	Unaccompanied trailers	All vehicles ¹
Revised estimates					
2004	441	1,446	1,897	787	2,684
2005	418	1,513	1,941	763	2,704
2006	406	1,606	2,021	787	2,808
Estimates published August 2007					
2004	493	1,447	1,957	782	2,739
2005	517	1,472	2,021	756	2,777
2006	525	1,513	2,074	786	2,860
Change from estimates published August 2007					
2004	-52	-1	-60	5	-55
2005	-99	41	-80	7	-73
2006	-119	93	-53	1	-52
Change as percentage of estimates published August 2007					
2004	-11	0	-3	1	-2
2005	-19	3	-4	1	-3
2006	-23	6	-3	0	-2
1. Includes a small number of powered vehicles for which the country of registration is unknown					

Breakdown by country of registration

Changes were made to the country of registration breakdown, over and above the effect of the changes to totals described above. New methodology for the years 2004, 2005 and 2006 was developed as a result of discussion with operators and the use of the new information they had supplied. This new methodology resulted in a break in the series between 2003 and 2004 and comparisons by country of registration should therefore be treated with caution. Operators were unable to provide information that would allow the new methodology to be applied prior to 2004.

The chart below shows the effect of the revisions for selected countries of registration. The revised series are shown with heavy lines and the previous estimates with lighter lines. The revised figures for the UK are lower than previously published, showing a continuation of the downward trend rather than a possible reversal of the trend. Table 2 shows the detailed revisions for all countries.

Powered goods vehicles – compare revised and previous estimates for selected countries

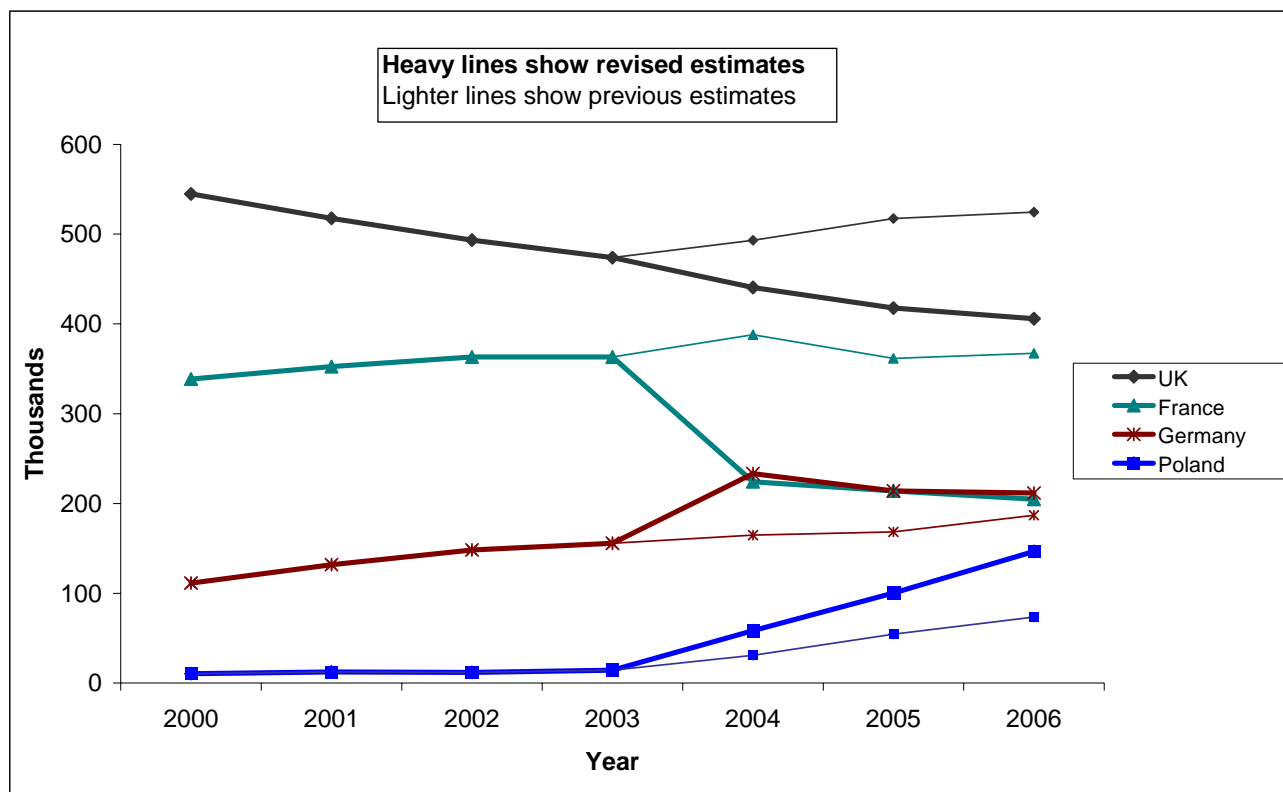


Table 2 Powered goods vehicles by country of registration

Thousands/Percentage															
Year	UK	DE	FR	IT	NL	BE	LU	IE	DK	GR	PT	ES	AT	SE	FI
Revised estimates															
2004	441	233	224	99	264	122	4	59	26	11	27	134	39	2	-
2005	418	214	214	92	252	117	4	56	23	10	25	128	36	1	-
2006	406	212	205	88	244	108	4	57	23	8	26	129	31	2	1
Estimates published August 2007															
2004	493	165	388	120	252	109	4	28	17	4	9	110	30	1	-
2005	517	168	361	97	253	109	3	32	18	4	9	105	27	1	-
2006	525	187	367	80	258	115	4	43	22	3	13	111	26	2	-
Change from estimates published August 2007															
2004	-52	68	-164	-21	12	13	-	31	9	7	18	24	9	1	-
2005	-99	46	-147	-5	-1	8	1	24	5	6	16	23	9	-	-
2006	-119	25	-162	8	-14	-7	-	14	1	5	13	18	5	-	1
Change as percentage of estimates published August 2007															
2004	-11	41	-42	-18	5	12	-	111	53	175	200	22	30	100	-
2005	-19	27	-41	-5	-	7	33	75	28	150	178	22	33	-	-
2006	-23	13	-44	10	-5	-6	-	33	5	167	100	16	19	-	-

Table 2continued Powered goods vehicles by country of registration

Thousands/Percentage												
Year	CY	CZ	EE	HU	LV	LT	MT	PL	SK	SI	BG	RO
Revised estimates												
2004	-	28	1	22	-	6	-	58	9	9	8	10
2005	-	46	1	44	1	12	-	100	18	12	11	16
2006	-	58	2	61	1	22	-	147	30	17	8	19
Estimates published August 2007												
2004	-	25	1	25	-	3	-	31	8	10	8	11
2005	-	41	2	38	1	7	-	54	13	11	11	14
2006	-	45	3	45	1	13	-	73	19	13	5	13
Change from estimates published August 2007												
2004	-	3	-	-3	-	3	-	27	1	-1	-	-1
2005	-	5	-1	6	-	5	-	46	5	1	-	2
2006	-	13	-1	16	-	9	-	74	11	4	3	6
Change as percentage of estimates published August 2007												
2004	-	12	-	-12	-	100	-	87	13	-10	-	-9
2005	-	12	-50	16	-	71	-	85	38	9	-	14
2006	-	29	-33	36	-	69	-	101	58	31	60	46

INTERNATIONAL IDENTIFICATION LETTERS

AT	Austria	LT	Lithuania
BE	Belgium	LU	Luxembourg
BU	Bulgaria	LV	Latvia
CY	Cyprus	MT	Malta
CZ	Czech Republic	NL	Netherlands
DE	Germany	PL	Poland
DK	Denmark	PT	Portugal
EE	Estonia	RO	Romania
ES	Spain	SE	Sweden
FI	Finland	SI	Slovenia
FR	France	SK	Slovakia
GR	Greece	UK	United Kingdom
HU	Hungary		
IE	Republic of Ireland	EU	European Union
IT	Italy	NMS	New Member States