



Department for Transport

Road goods vehicles travelling to Europe: July 2017 to June 2018

About this release

This statistical release summarises the number of road goods vehicles travelling to 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 on all the ferry routes from Great Britain and Europe, plus the Channel Tunnel.

Domestic routes within the UK are excluded from the main findings, however information on routes to Northern Ireland is contained in a separate section, on [page 4](#) of this release.

In this publication

- Country of vehicle registration [p2](#)
- Country of disembarkation [p3](#)
- Island of Ireland [p4](#)
- Strengths and weaknesses [p5](#)
- Background notes [p5](#)

3.5 million road goods vehicles travelled from Great Britain to Europe in the twelve months ending June 2018, up 1% from the previous year. This was comprised of:

Compared to the year ending June 2017



2.4 million vehicles

↓ 2%

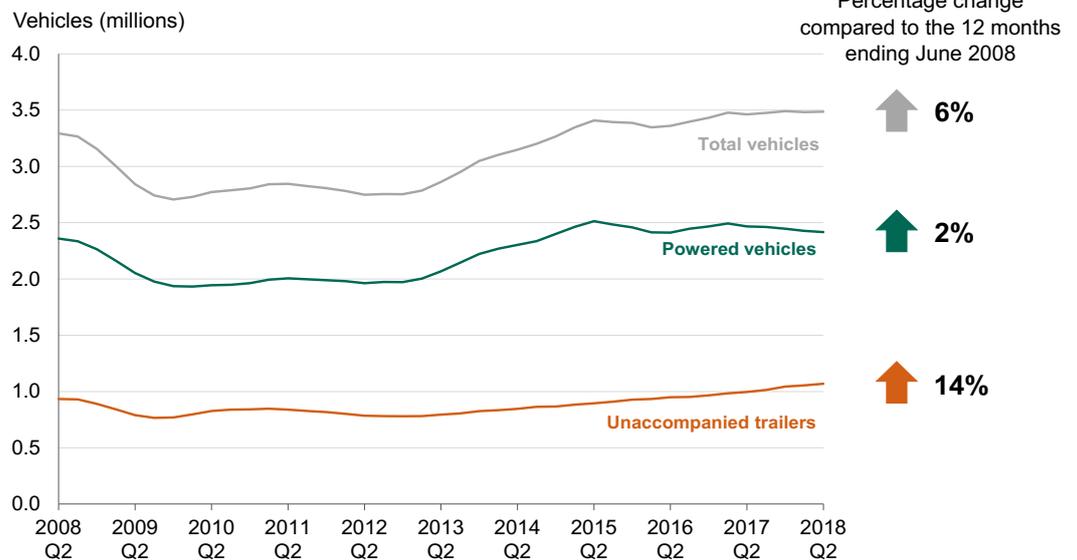


1.1 million vehicles

↑ 7%

The number of road goods vehicles travelling from Great Britain to Europe in the twelve months ending June 2018 is 6% higher than the pre-recession peak in 2008. Over the last 3 years, the rolling 12 month totals for road goods vehicles travelling from Great Britain to Europe, has been broadly stable at around 3.5 million.

Road goods vehicles travelling from Great Britain to Europe, rolling 12 month totals, June 2008 to June 2018 (Table [RORO0101](#))



Definitions



Powered vehicles (over 3.5 tonnes) includes: Rigid lorries, tractors & trailers (counted as one unit) and tractive units only.



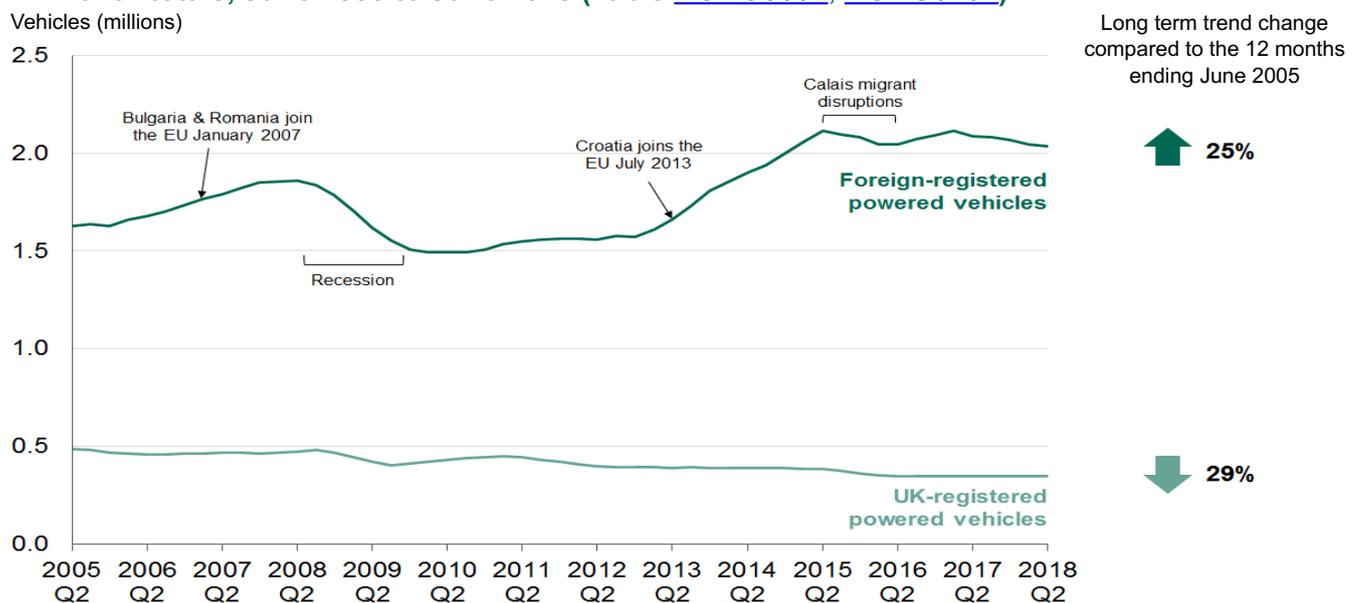
Unaccompanied trailers includes: tow-bar trailers and articulated semi trailers, not accompanied on the ferry by a powered unit.

Country of vehicle registration

There has been more **foreign-registered** vehicles travelling from Great Britain to Europe than **UK-registered** vehicles since 1997. In the twelve months ending June 2018, the number of foreign-registered powered vehicles travelling from Great Britain to Europe (2.0 million) decreased by 3% compared to the previous year. The number of UK-registered powered vehicles travelling from Great Britain to Europe (0.3 million) remained unchanged. Note: These figures will not sum to the total number of powered vehicles (2.4 million) given in previous page due to a combination of rounding and the omission of unknown vehicles.

Generally, the number of UK-registered powered vehicles travelling from Great Britain to Europe has been in gradual decline since 2005, while the number of foreign-registered powered vehicles has been steadily increasing since 2010. However, since 2015, the number of foreign-registered vehicles travelling to Europe has remained between 2.0 and 2.1 million, which reflects the stabilising trend of road goods vehicles travelling to Europe.

Chart 1: UK and foreign-registered powered vehicles travelling from Great Britain to Europe, rolling 12 month totals, June 2005 to June 2018 (Table [RORO0601](#), [RORO0701](#))



Note: 2005 Q2 is the earliest comparable rolling 12 month total, due to the addition of data on road goods vehicles using Irish Sea ports from 2004 (the first point from which it was collected)



The proportion of powered vehicles registered to Western European countries such as the **UK**, **Netherlands**, **Germany** and **France** that travelled from Great Britain to Europe has fallen as a result of Eastern European countries such as **Poland** and **Romania** having greatly increased their share since joining the European Union (EU).



The volume of powered goods vehicles registered to **Poland** has increased from when it first joined the EU in 2004 (3%), to 20% in the twelve months ending June 2018 - **the largest share of any country**.



The **UK** was the most prevalent country of vehicle registration ten years ago. However, it is now second with a 14% (0.3 million) share of all powered goods vehicles travelling from Great Britain to Europe.



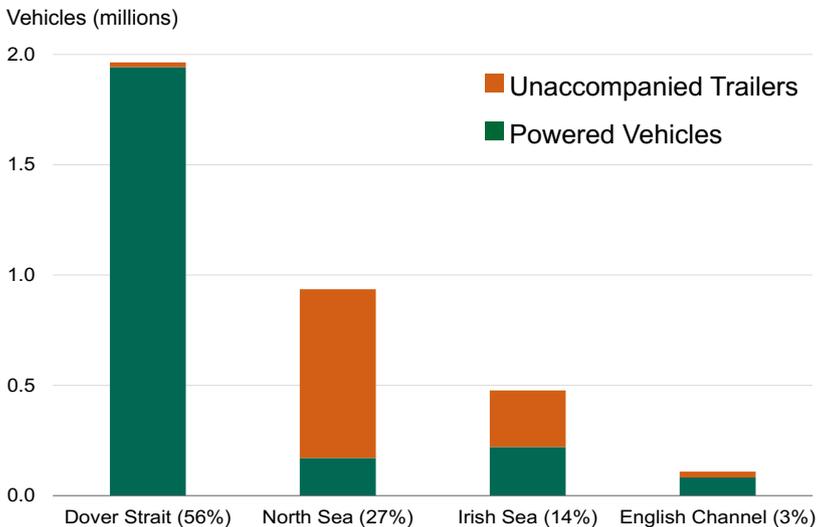
Since **Romania** joined the EU in 2007, its share of powered goods vehicles travelling from Great Britain to Europe has risen from 2% to 10% in the twelve months ending June 2018, making it the third largest country of vehicle registration.

More information on country of vehicle registration for other EU countries can be found in Table [RORO0201](#).

Country of disembarkation

In the twelve months ending June 2018, more vehicles left via the Dover Strait port group (56%) than all of the other port groups combined. The majority of **powered vehicles** travelling to Europe left via the Dover Strait port group (80%), whereas the majority of **unaccompanied trailers** travelled via the North Sea port group (72%).

Chart 2: Road goods vehicles travelling from Great Britain to Europe by port group and type, July 2017 to June 2018 (Tables [RORO0401](#), [RORO0501](#))

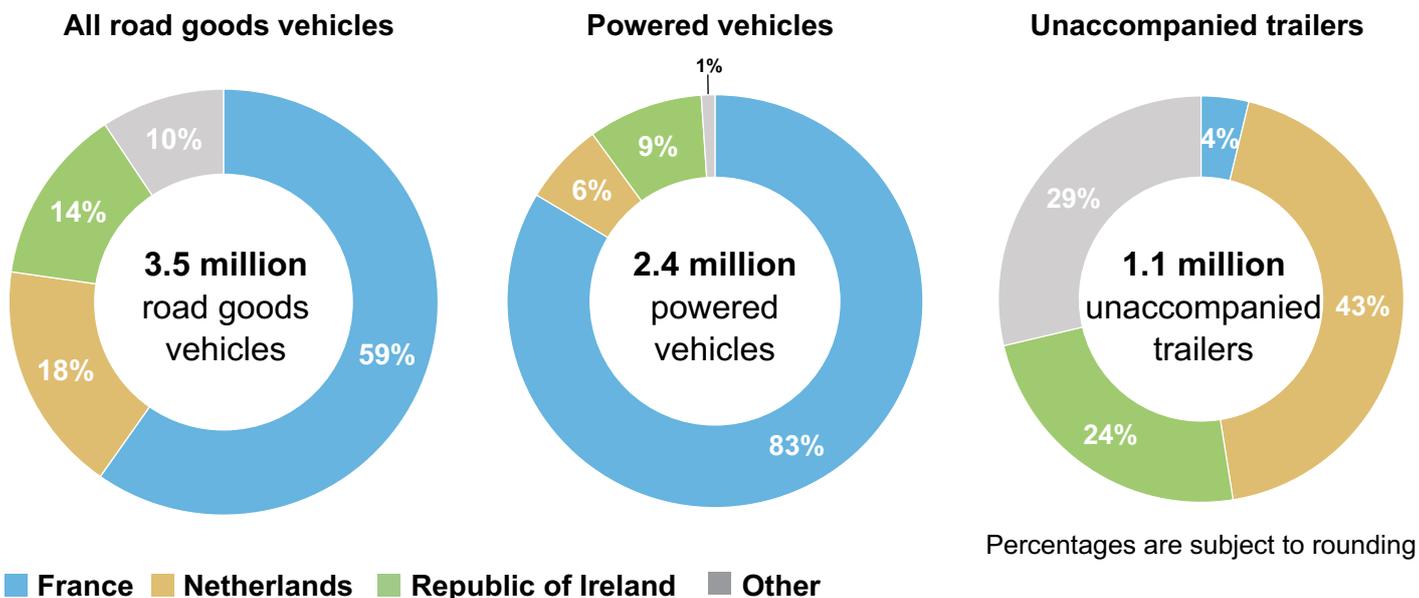


Port Groups

There are four port groups: **Dover Strait** (Ferry routes from Dover, Folkestone and Ramsgate; along with road goods vehicles using the Channel Tunnel), **North Sea** (All ports on the east coast of Great Britain, north of and including the Thames estuary), **Irish Sea** (All ports on the west coast of Great Britain), and **English Channel** (All ports on the south coast of Great Britain, west of Folkestone).

There is a prevalence of powered vehicles on shorter routes. **France** is the most common country of disembarkation for powered vehicles travelling from Great Britain to Europe, accounting for 83% of all powered vehicles. In contrast, there is a prevalence of unaccompanied trailers on longer routes. **Netherlands** is the most common country of disembarkation for unaccompanied trailers travelling from Great Britain to Europe, accounting for 43% of all unaccompanied trailers. Detailed statistics on road goods vehicles travelling to Europe by country of disembarkation and port group can be found [here](#).

Chart 3: Road goods vehicles travelling from Great Britain to Europe by country of disembarkation, July 2017 to June 2018 (Tables [RORO0301](#), [RORO0401](#), [RORO0501](#))



Percentages are subject to rounding

■ France ■ Netherlands ■ Republic of Ireland ■ Other

'Other' predominantly Belgium, along with Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Norway, Spain and Sweden.

Island of Ireland

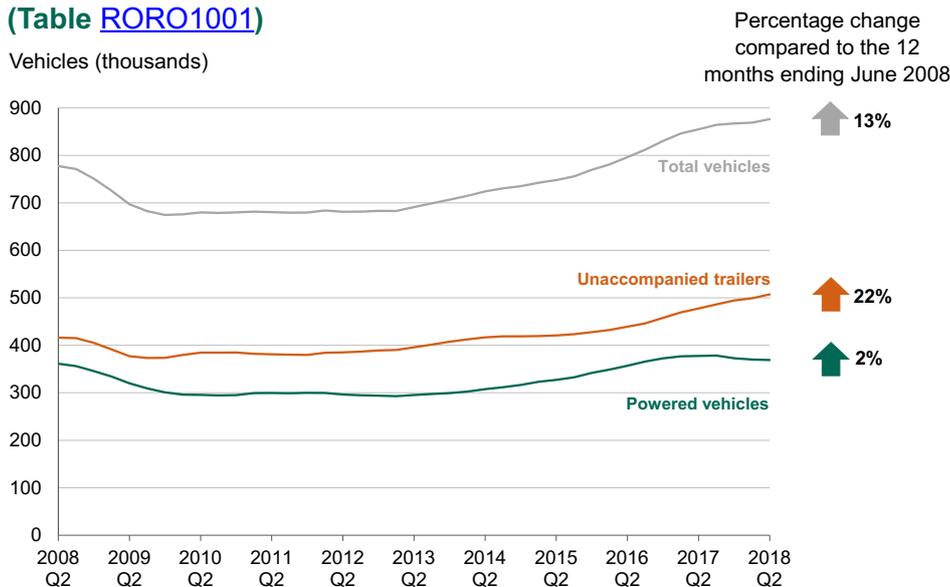
Vehicles travelling on domestic ferry routes from Great Britain to Northern Ireland are not included in the main part of this release; however this section includes statistics on those vehicles in order to give a complete picture of activity travelling from Great Britain to the **island of Ireland**, i.e. both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland combined. Detailed statistics can be found in Table [RORO1001](#).

Overall trends

In the twelve months ending June 2018, a total of 876 thousand road goods vehicles travelled from Great Britain to the island of Ireland, a 2% increase compared to the year ending June 2017, of which:

- ▶ 369 thousand (42%) were **powered vehicles**, a 2% decrease compared to the twelve months ending June 2017. Of these, 220 thousand (60%) disembarked in the Republic of Ireland and 149 thousand (40%) disembarked in Northern Ireland.
- ▶ 507 thousand (58%) were **unaccompanied trailers**, a 6% increase compared to the twelve months ending June 2017. Of these, 257 thousand (51%) disembarked in the Republic of Ireland and 251 thousand (49%) disembarked in Northern Ireland.

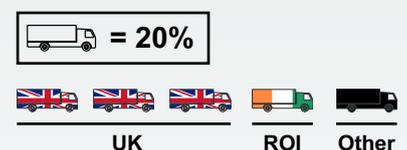
Chart 4: Road goods vehicles travelling from Great Britain to the island of Ireland, rolling 12 month totals, June 2008 to June 2018 (Table [RORO1001](#))



Country of disembarkation for Irish Sea port group, July 2017 - June 2018



Country of vehicle registration to the island of Ireland, July 2017 - June 2018



*ROI = Republic of Ireland

In the twelve months ending June 2018, powered vehicles travelling to the island of Ireland were predominantly UK-registered (59%), with a further 21% being Irish-registered, and 20% registered elsewhere or unknown.

Country of vehicle registration

In the twelve months ending June 2018, powered vehicles travelling from Great Britain to the island of Ireland were predominantly either UK or Irish-registered (80% in total). However, there are stark contrasts in the proportion of UK and Irish-registered powered vehicles travelling from Great Britain to the island of Ireland:

- ▶ 149 thousand powered vehicles disembarked in Northern Ireland, of which 90% were UK-registered and 7% were Irish registered.
- ▶ 220 thousand powered vehicles disembarked in the Republic of Ireland, of which 38% were UK-registered and 30% were Irish registered.

Note: Remaining powered vehicles are registered elsewhere or unknown

Strengths and weaknesses of the data

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

Figures for outward traffic only are presented here; 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. Ferry routes to countries outside Europe, such as Morocco, are not included here. A list of active routes recorded since 2004 can be found in Table [RORO0901](#).

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 the country of vehicle registration. 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.

Further information about the statistics and methodology in this report can be found in the [Roll-on Roll-off International Freight Statistics notes and definitions](#).

Background notes

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

Further information such as definitions and background on the statistics can be found in the [Roll-on Roll-off International Freight Statistics notes and definitions](#).

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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