Department for Transport

UK Port Freight Statistics: 2014

About this release

The importance of shipping and trade to the economy of the UK, an island nation, has resulted in the establishment of a large number of ports around the coast, which are very diverse in terms of size and type of cargo handled.

This statistical release provides information on trends and patterns in the handling of freight traffic at UK sea ports.

In this publication

The key findings for 2014 are:

Port Freight Traffic (tonnage)

Total tonnage levels have **remained stable** compared to 2013, with **503.2 million tonnes** being handled by UK ports in 2014.

UK Port Tonnage (million tonnes)

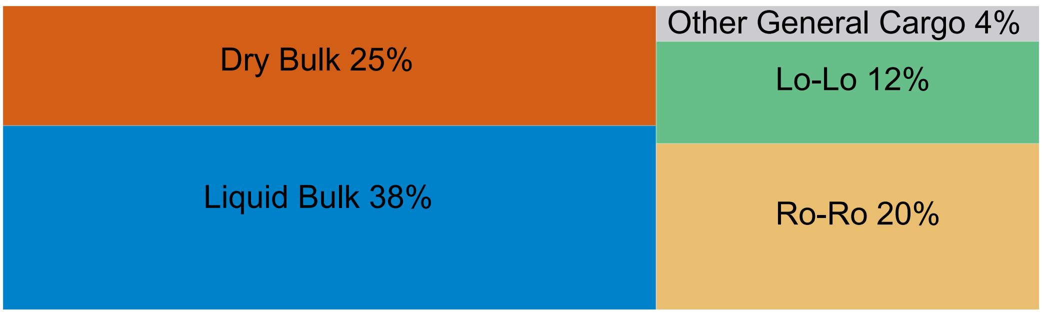
	Latest year on year change
Total: 503.2	0%
Inward: 325.5	0%
Outward: 177.7	0%

Major port tonnage was **stable** at **491.9 million tonnes**, accounting for 98 per cent of total traffic.

Minor port tonnage decreased by 2 per cent to **11.3 million tonnes.**

Liquid bulk remains the most common cargo, as shown below.

Chart 1: Cargo proportions at UK major ports, 2014



Unitised Traffic at Major Ports

Unitised traffic handled at UK major ports in 2014 **rose by 6 per cent,** with **22.8 million units** coming in and going out of UK major ports.

UK Major Port Units (million units)

	Latest year on year change
Total: 22.8	6%
Inward: 12.0	8%
Outward: 10.8	5%

The number of **main freight units** handled by UK major ports **rose** for the second time, to **12.8 million units.**

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1. All UK Ports

1.1 Summary

Between the early 1980s and 2000 the **total amount of freight traffic** increased by 35 per cent. The **2008 recession** resulted in the **largest year on year decline** seen in the last 30 years, falling by 11 per cent between 2008 and 2009.

Total tonnage levels were slightly increased in 2010 and 2011, but fell by 4 per cent in 2012. However, total freight traffic has remained broadly stable since, with **503.2 million tonnes** being handled **in 2014**.

Definitions

Inwards/Outwards:
Inwards and outwards includes both domestic and international traffic.

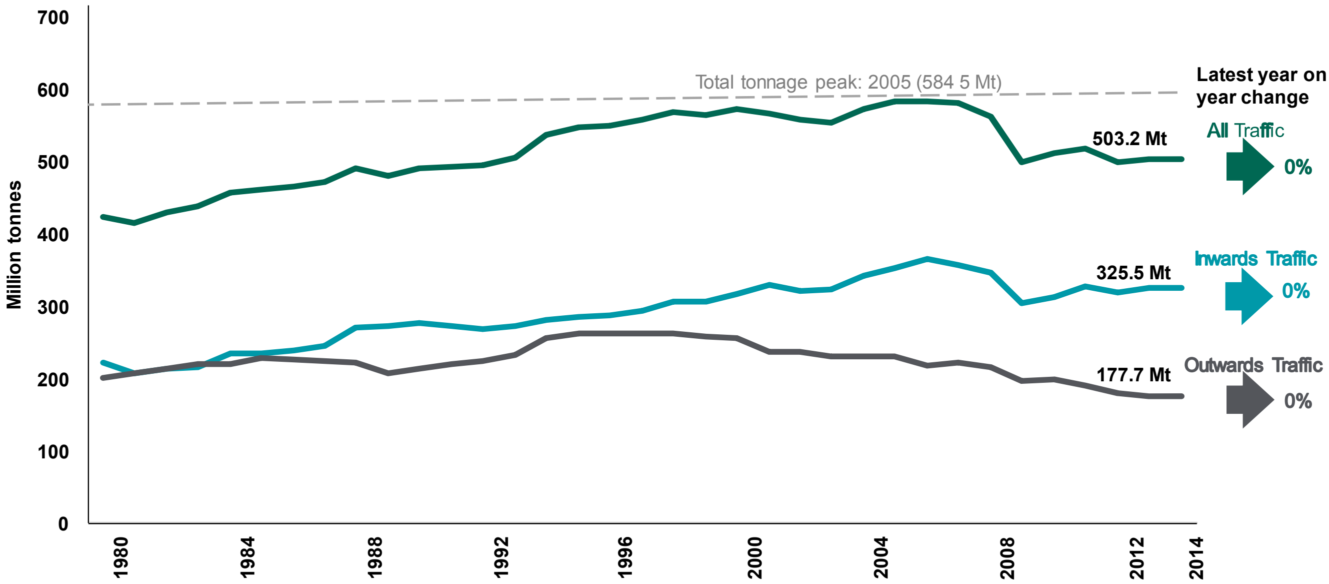
Imports/exports:
Only international traffic.

1.2 Inwards/ Outwards Tonnage

Inwards traffic has remained stable at 325.5 million tonnes, accounting for 65 per cent of all traffic in 2014. Inwards traffic followed a similar trend to all traffic since 1980.

The amount of **outwards freight traffic** grew by 23 per cent between 1990 and 1996, then remained steady until 1998. However, outwards traffic steadily declined since 1998. The lowest level of outwards traffic in the last 30 years was observed in 2013 (177.4 million tonnes), and has since **remained stable with 177.7 million tonnes in 2014.**

Chart 2: UK port traffic by direction, 1980 – 2014



1.3 Major ports

Major port tonnage **remained stable** for the second year in a row **with 491.9 million tonnes** handled at UK ports in 2014. **Inwards and outwards traffic through major ports also remained stable** compared to 2013. Inwards traffic at 318.1 million tonnes, accounted for 65 per cent of overall major port traffic. Outwards traffic amounted to 173.8 million tonnes.

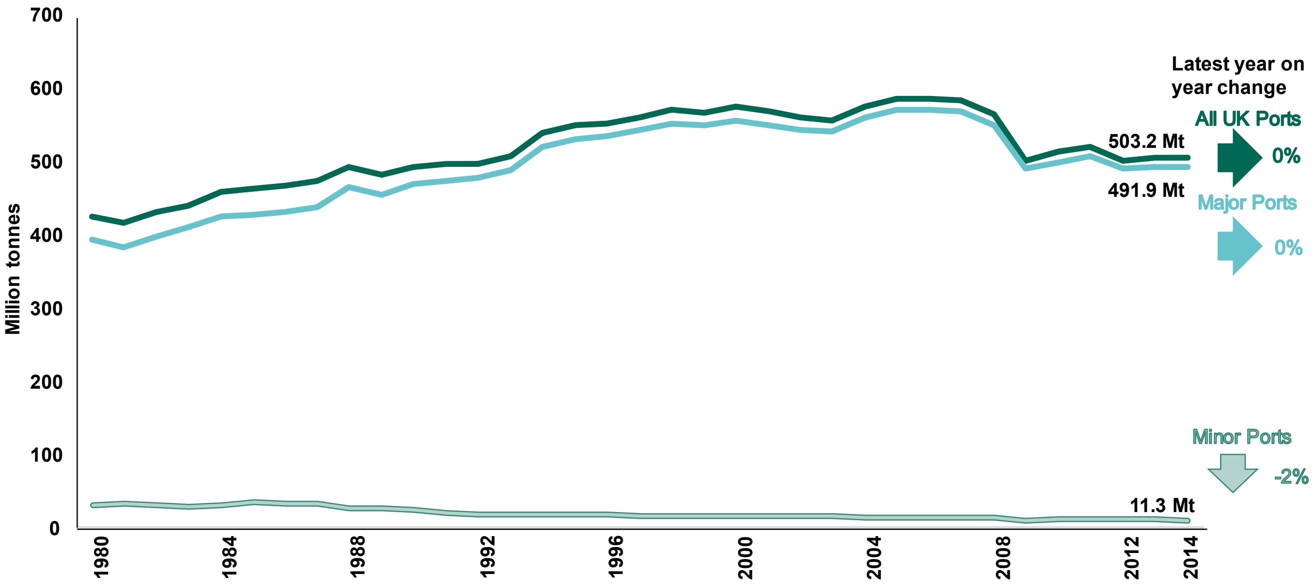
Detailed statistics on freight traffic (tonnage) can be found in the statistical data set, PORT0101.

1.4 Minor ports

Minor port tonnage decreased by 2 per cent compared to 2013 to **11.3 million tonnes**.

Inward traffic through minor ports decreased by 4 per cent to **7.4 million tonnes**. Whilst **outwards traffic** from minor ports remained stable at **3.9 million tonnes**.

Chart 3: UK major and minor port traffic, 1980 – 2014



1.5 Freight Tonnage by Port

Grimsby & Immingham has remained the UK's busiest port in terms of tonnage, handling **12 per cent of the UK market** in 2014. Grimsby & Immingham overtook London as the busiest port in 2000.

Of the top ten ports, **Dover** had the largest percentage increase in tonnage which was mostly due to the amount of road goods vehicles and trailers being imported and exported. **Felixstowe** was the second largest growing port, driven largely by container growth. Out of the top 10 busiest ports, **Milford Haven** saw the largest decrease in tonnage which was predominantly due to the decrease in crude oil imported at this port (see section 2.3).

Figure 1: Top 10 busiest ports (tonnage) in 2014

Million tonnes

Port	2013	2014	*Percentage change*
Grimsby & Immingham	62.6	59.4	*5%*
London	43.2	44.5	*3%*
Tees & Hartlepool	37.6	39.5	*5%*
Southampton	35.8	36.7	*2%*
Milford Haven	41.1	34.3	*17%*
Liverpool	31.1	31.0	*0%*
Felixstowe	26.2	28.1	*7%*
Dover	25.3	27.6	*9%*
Forth	26.4	24.6	*7%*
Belfast	16.8	16.8	*0%*

Detailed statistics on freight traffic (tonnage) can be found in the statistical data sets, PORT0101, PORT0409, PORT0411 and PORT0432.

2. Freight Tonnage by Cargo Type (Major Ports)

There are 51 major ports, which handle **98 per cent** of the overall traffic. A breakdown of cargo, including detailed information on the routes taken, is avaliable for major ports only.

2.1 Cargo Type Summary

In 2014, **major port** tonnage remained stable when compared to levels in 2013, with **491.9 million tonnes** being handled.

Liquid bulk was the largest of the main cargo types with **187.8 million tonnes** being handled at UK major ports, accounting for **38 per cent of all major port traffic** with its largest contributing subgroup being crude oil.

Dry bulk was the second largest cargo category with 122.0 million tonnes being handled at UK ports, making up **25 per cent of all traffic**. This category includes coal which accounts for the largest proportion at 37 per cent of dry bulk traffic, followed by other dry bulk at 35 per cent.

Definitions

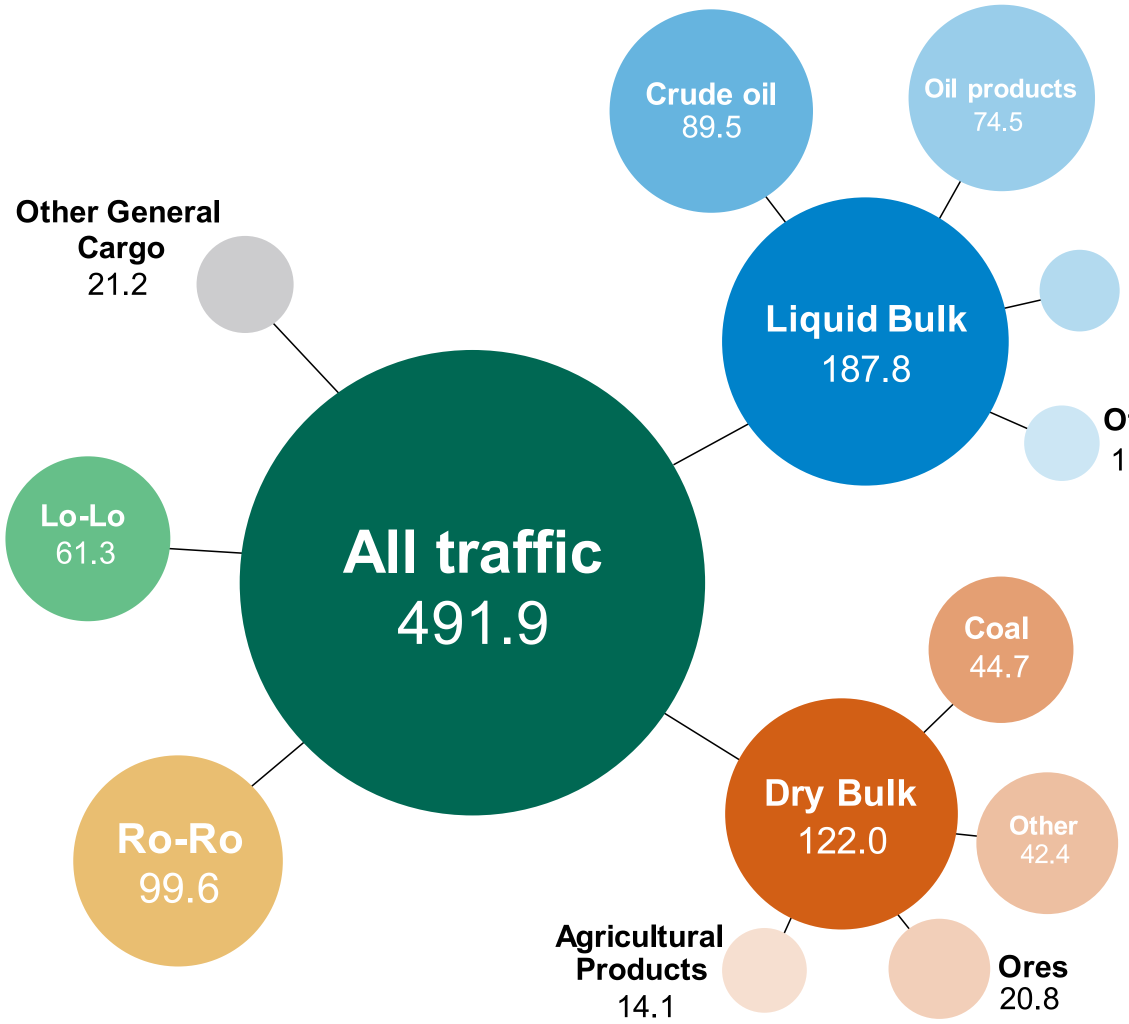
Cargo Category:

5 main categories-
liquid bulk, dry bulk, ro-ro traffic, lo-lo traffic and other general cargo.

Cargo is allocated a category in respect to how it is carried on the ship. The main categories are then are spilt into smaller subgroups of what the cargo particularly is eg crude oil.

Chart 4: UK major port traffic by cargo type, 2014

Million tonnes



Detailed statistics on freight traffic (tonnage) can be found in the statistical data sets, PORT0101 and PORT0104.

2.2 Cargo Category Trend

In 2014 freight handled at UK major ports has **remained stable at 491.9 million tonnes**.

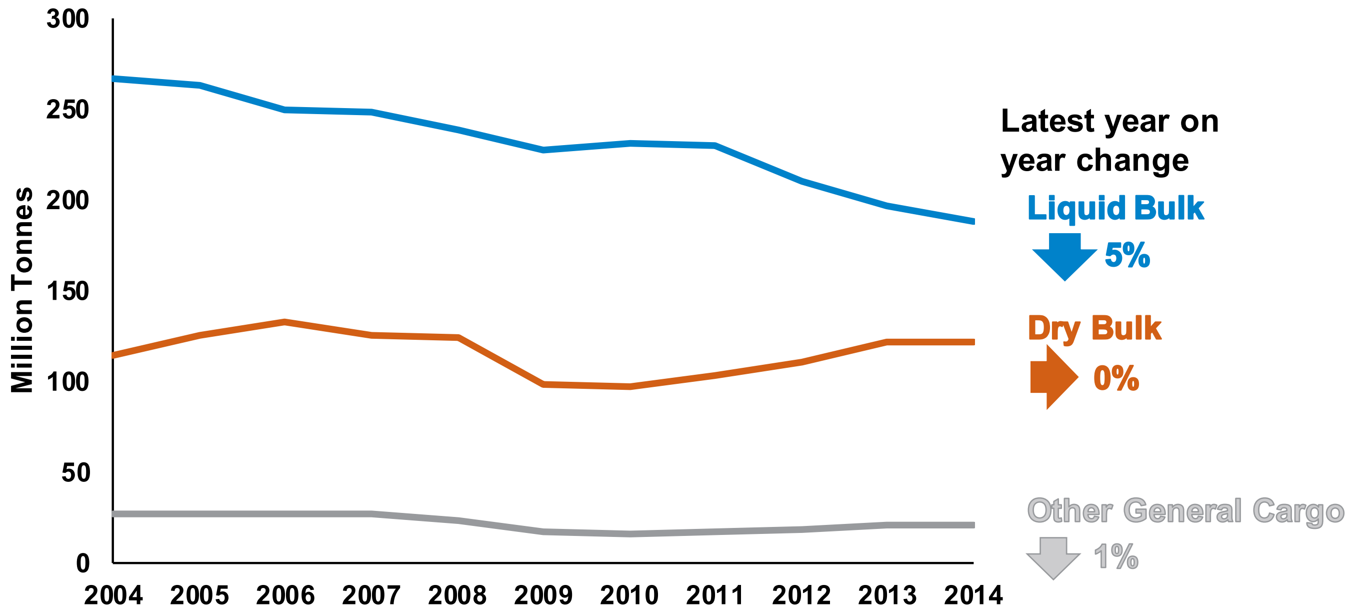
Liquid bulk fell by 5 per cent with **187.8 million tonnes** being handled at UK ports. Despite this decline it remained the most common cargo category handled. Liquid bulk has **steadily declined** since 2001 due to large decreases in crude oil imports and exports.

Dry bulk remained stable in 2014 with **122.0 million tonnes** being handled at UK major ports. This was largely due to the increase in Other dry bulk, which countered decreases in coal (see section 2.3).

Other general cargo, which includes forestry products, iron and steel products and all other cargo **decreased slightly** by 1 per cent compared to 2013. In 2014, there were 21.2 million tonnes of other general cargo handled.

Lo-Lo increased by 8 per cent to 61.3 million tonnes and **Ro-Ro** also **increased,** by 5 per cent to 99.6 million tonnes, in 2014 compared to the previous year.

Chart 5: Major port traffic by cargo type (tonnage), 2004 to 2014



Detailed statistics on freight traffic (tonnage) can be found in the statistical data set, PORT0104.

2.3 Cargo Subcategories Trend

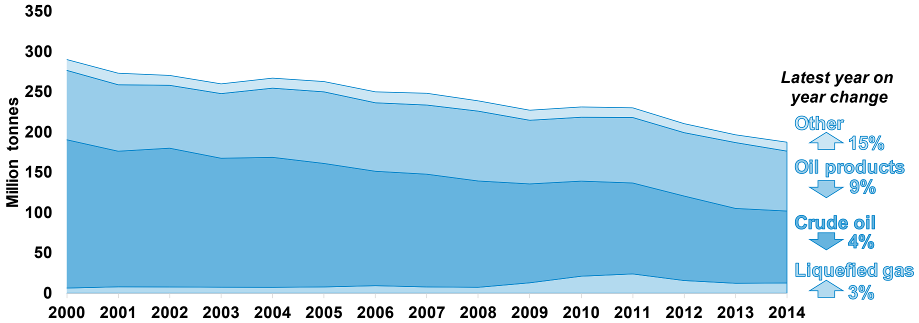
Bulk fuels (crude oil, oil products, liquefied gas and coal) fell for the third year, by 8 per cent to **221.4 million tonnes** in 2014. The amount of coal (dry bulk) handled in 2014 decreased by 14 per cent, with decreases also seen in oil products and crude oil.

Liquid Bulk

The volume of crude oil passing through UK ports nearly halved since 2000, from 184.3 million tonnes to 89.5 million tonnes in 2014. Crude oil tonnage fell by 4 per cent compared to 2013, carrying on the trend seen in the last decade, and falling to the lowest level in the last 20 years. Three oil refineries, based at Milford Haven and Dundee, closed in 2014 in a likely response to increasing international competition and a decline in demand for UK oil refinery.

Oil products tonnage fell by 9 per cent to 74.5 million tonnes compared to 2013: the **lowest level seen in the last 20 years**.

Chart 6: UK major port liquid bulk subcategories, 2000 – 2014



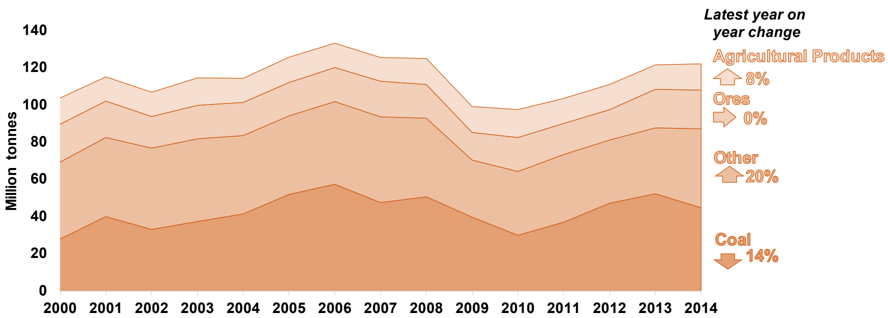
Dry Bulk

In 2014, there was a 14 per cent **decrease in the amount of coal** handled at UK ports to 44.7 million tonnes, **the first decrease since 2010**.

However, **other dry bulk increased** by 20 per cent to 42.4 million tonnes: **the largest increase since 2000**, with inwards movements of other dry bulk having increased by 24 per cent compared to the previous year. Other dry bulk goods include biomass fuels, typically in the form of wood pellets or woodchips. Decisions by major 'coal fuelled' power stations in the North of England, including Drax and Lynemouth, to switch from burning coal to biomass may be contributing to these trends seen in coal and other dry bulk tonnage. Grimsby & Immingham and Tyne ports handle biomass destined for these power stations and have confirmed that coal imports are being replaced by biomass imports in relation to power station fuel supplies.

Exports of other dry bulk tonnage also increased by 11 per cent, reflecting increased global demand for biomass products.

Chart 7: UK major port dry bulk subcategories, 2000 - 2014



Detailed statistics on freight traffic (tonnage) can be found in the statistical data set, PORT0104.

2.4 Cargo Type by Direction

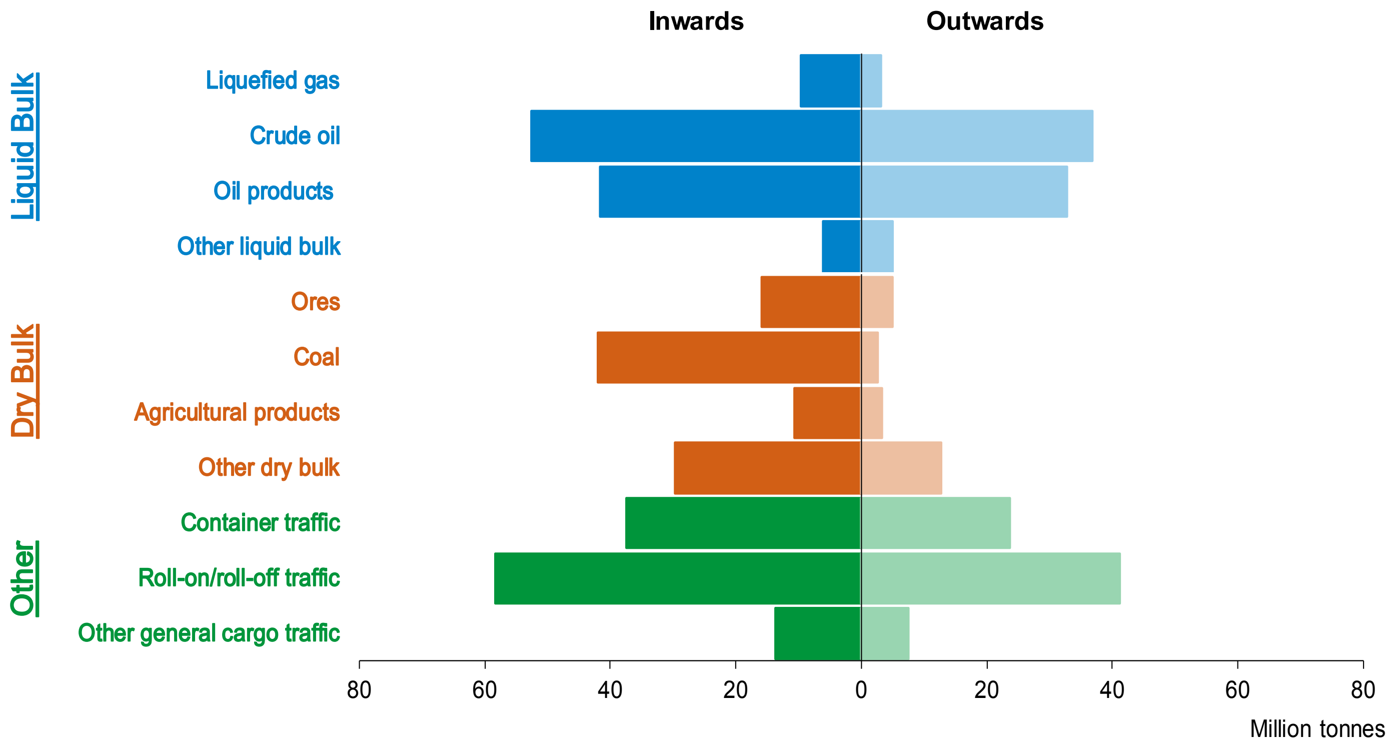
Similar amounts of **oil products** went in to UK major ports as came out in 2014, with 41.7 million tonnes travelling in to UK ports, compared to 32.8 million tonnes travelling out. This is a trend that has been seen thoughout the last decade.

In contrast far more **coal** entered UK major ports than left them - **94 per cent** (42.0 million tonnes) of the coal handled was **travelling in** to UK major ports.

Transportation of **crude oil out of** UK major ports declined by **53 per cent over the last decade**. However, in 2014, outwards crude oil traffic increased very slightly by 1 per cent to 36.9 million tonnes, following six years of decline. **Inwards crude oil traffic has continued to fall** for the third year in a row to 52.6 million tonnes in 2014.

Liquefied gas travelling out of UK major ports has steadily declined **since 2003** with 3.1 million tonnes being handled by UK ports in 2014, the lowest in the last decade.

Chart 8: Cargo subcategory by direction, 2014



Detailed statistics on freight traffic (tonnage) can be found in the statistical data set, PORT0104.

2.5 Port by Cargo Type

Despite the recent oil refinery closures in the region, **Milford Haven has remained the UK's busiest port in terms of liquid bulk**, handling 18 per cent of liquid bulk traffic in 2014. **Grimsby & Immingham accounted for the most dry bulk traffic at 17 per cent of all dry bulk traffic,** however, dry bulk tonnage at this port has decreased by 11 per cent compared to the previous year (see section 2.3).

Figure 2: Busiest ports by main cargo type, 2014

Million tonnes/percentage share of cargo's tonnage

Liquid Bulk

Milford Haven	33.4	18%
Southampton	23.0	12%
Tees & Hartlepool	20.9	11%
Grimsby & Immingham	20.9	11%
Forth	20.4	11%

Dry Bulk

Grimsby & Immingham	21.3	17%
London	12.7	10%
Tees & Hartlepool	11.7	10%
Port Talbot	9.4	8%
Clyde	8.5	7%

Lo Lo Containers

Felixstowe	25.1	41%
Southampton	9.6	16%
London	9.1	15%
Liverpool	4.9	8%
Forth	2.3	4%

Roll on/ Roll off

Dover	27.3	27%
Grimsby & Immingham	14.8	15%
London	7.8	8%
Liverpool	7.1	7%
Belfast	5.5	6%

Many of the **UK major ports** are **specialised** in the cargo categories they handle, as seen with Milford Haven, Felixstowe and Dover (see map on the next page).

3. Trade Routes

3.1 All UK Ports Summary

In 2014, **4 out of every 5 tonnes of freight** handled by UK ports was being **imported or exported from international ports,** similar to the previous two years - a total of 404.6 million tonnes in 2014. However, international traffic is now 8 per cent lower than the peak (439.5 million) in 2006.

Since 1987, the UK has imported more freight by sea than it has exported. In 2014 **two thirds of international traffic were UK imports**.

Grimsby & Immingham dominated EU routes and was also the second largest port for international traffic for non-EU short sea and deep sea routes.

Definitions

International freight routes are split into three main categories:

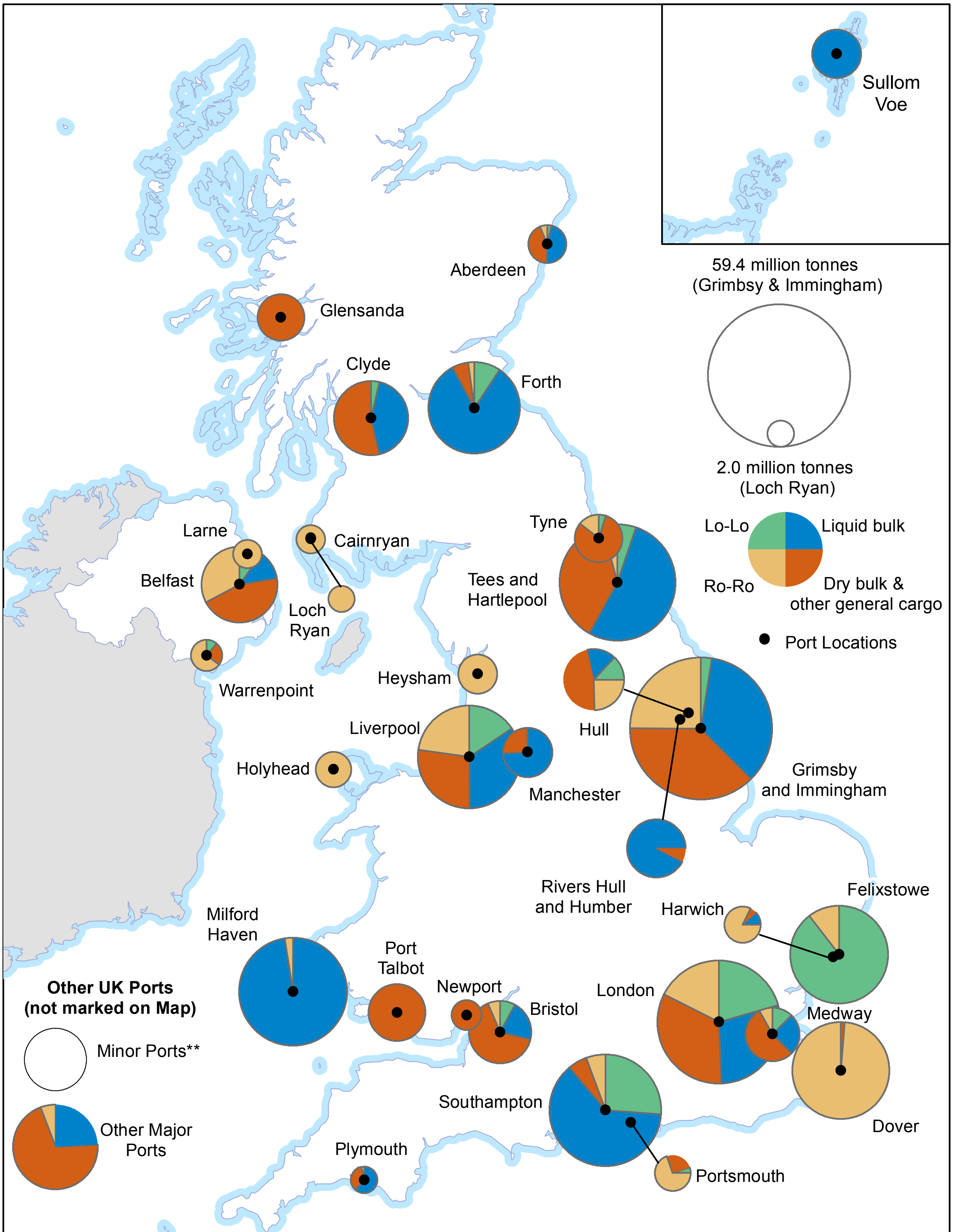
EU: all members of the European union.

Non-EU short sea: includes European countries not in the EU, Mediterranean and North African countries such as Egypt.

Non-EU deep sea: includes all other routes.

Detailed statistics on freight traffic (tonnage) can be found in the statistical data sets, PORT0102, PORT0103 and PORT0106.

UK ports by cargo*, 2014



* All ports marked on map handled over 2 million tonnes of freight in 2014.

**Information on tonnage by cargo is not available for minor ports.

3.2 Domestic traffic

Domestic traffic (coastwise and one-port) within all UK ports **increased for the first time in 2014 since 2005.** This was a 2 per cent increase to 98.6 million tonnes compared to 2013.

Domestic traffic is largely coastwise, with coastwise accounting for **82% of all domestic traffic**. In 2014, there were **80.8 million tonnes** of traffic transported coastwise between UK major ports. This was a 3 per cent increase compared to 2013, the first increase since 2007.

One-port tonnage slightly decreased by 1 per cent to **17.8 million tonnes**.

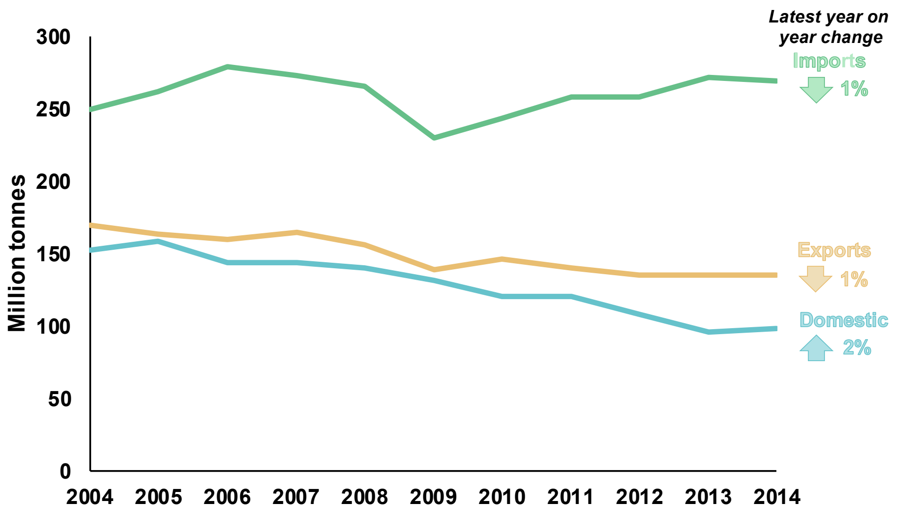
Definitions

Domestic: Made up of coastwise and one-port traffic (see below).

Coastwise: Traffic travelling within UK waters between ports in the United Kingdom.

One-port: Sand and gravel etc dredged from sea bed and landed at a port for commercial purposes; and traffic to and from UK offshore locations eg oil & gas installations and wind farms.

Chart 9: All UK ports imports, exports and domestic traffic: 2004 – 2014



Detailed statistics on freight traffic (tonnage) can be found in the statistical data sets, PORT0102, PORT0106 and PORT0110.

3.3 International Traffic by Destination/Route

In 2014, 204.1 million tonnes of traffic travelled between UK major ports and EU countries (42 per cent of major port traffic). In 2014 there were 54.8 million tonnes of freight which passed to and from the Netherlands, accounting for 14 per cent of all international traffic. The **Netherlands are the UK's largest trading partner in the world**. This may be in part due to cargo initially travelling to the Netherlands from worldwide ports of origin and being reloaded before continuing on to the UK (known as transhipment). France was the UK's largest trading partner until 2005 when it was exceeded by the Netherlands.

Liquid bulk and dry bulk accounted for just under two thirds of international traffic moving in and out of UK major ports (37 per cent and 24 per cent of total international traffic, respectively). **Imports of liquid bulk** from **Norway** amounted to 22.5 million tonnes in 2014 (25 per cent of all liquid bulk imports), making it the **largest cargo specific trading route** which it has been thoughout the last decade. The **Netherlands** was the **largest exporting trade route** with 16.9 million tonnes of liquid bulk traffic being exported (29 per cent of all liquid bulk exports).

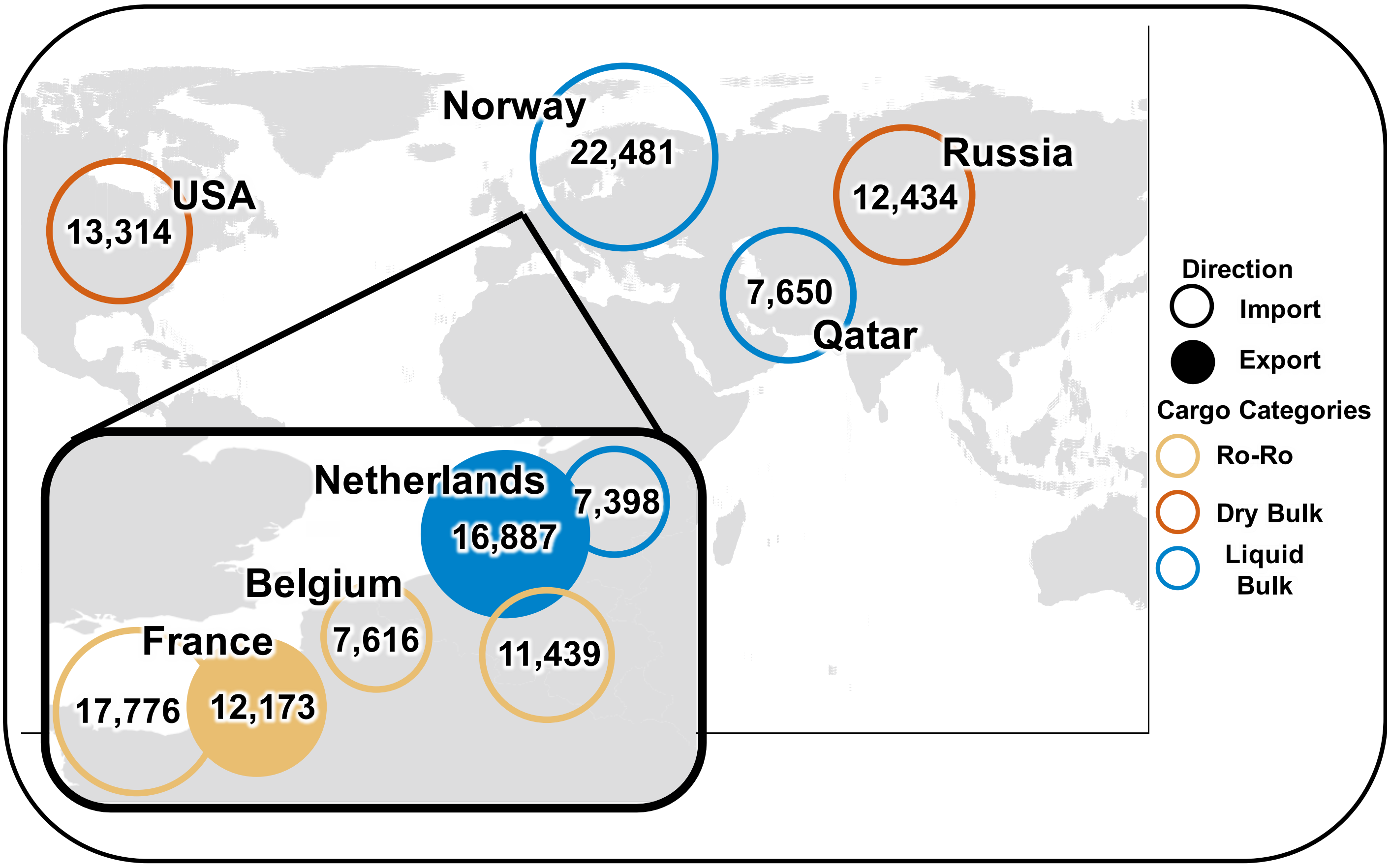
Deep sea traffic accounted for 120 million tonnes, 24 per cent of major port tonnage. **Out of the deep sea countries, the route between the UK and USA was the busiest**, primarily due to 13.3 million tonnes of dry bulk being imported into the UK from the USA in 2014.

Figure 3: Top 10 busiest routes to UK major ports, by cargo category and direction, 2014

Thousand tonnes

Country	Cargo Category	Direction	Tonnage	Compared to 2013
Norway	Liquid Bulk	In	22,481	↑
France	Ro-Ro	In	17,776	↑
Netherlands	Liquid Bulk	Out	16,887	↑
USA	Dry Bulk	In	13,314	↓
Russia	Dry Bulk	In	12,434	↓
France	Ro-Ro	Out	12,173	↑
Netherlands	Ro-Ro	In	11,439	↑
Qatar	Liquid Bulk	In	7,650	↑
Belgium	Ro-Ro	In	7,616	↑
Netherlands	Liquid Bulk	In	7,398	↓

Figure 4: Map of top 10 busiest routes to UK major ports, 2014 (proportionate circles, tonnes)



1. All Unitised Traffic through UK Major Ports

1.1 Summary

Unitised traffic handled at UK major ports in 2014 **rose, by 6 per cent with 22.8 million units** coming in and out of UK major ports. This was mainly due to large increases seen in the number of Lo-Lo main freight and import/export motor vehicles handled at UK ports.

1.2 Main Freight Units

The number of **main freight units** handled by **major ports** rose for the second time, to 12.8 million units. Main freight accounted for **56 per cent of all unitised traffic**. Main freight units travelling through UK major ports grew from the early 90s, increasing by 87 per cent between 1992 and 2007 to 13.3 million units. However, in 2009 traffic fell to 11.6 million units, following the global recession.

The number of **trade vehicles and other Ro-Ro freight** through all UK ports declined by 22 per cent between 2008 and 2009, falling to 2.9 million units. However, there has been continued growth since then and in 2014 levels were **44 per cent higher than in 2009** at 4.2 million units. The UK has benefitted, in recent years, from significant investments by many of the world's major vehicle manufacturers.

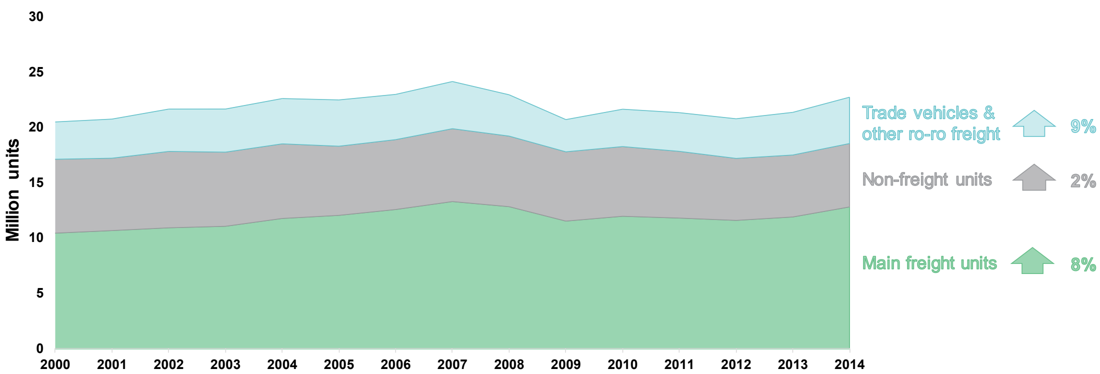
The volume of **Lo-Lo main freight** rose by 14 per cent in 2014 compared to the previous year. Lo-Lo main freight units were at their **highest since 1970** (5.6 million units) with an **average annual growth rate of 3 per cent. Grimsby & Immingham experienced the largest increase in Lo-Lo main freight units**, up 51 per cent to 123 thousand units in 2014. This has been attributed to investments in systems which have reduced turnaround times. The economic upturn and increasing consumer confidence may be a contributing factor to this recent success. 2014 also saw the opening of the port, London Gateway, with all traffic of Lo-Lo main freight units increasing by 14 per cent at the Port of London compared to 2013.

Definitions

Unitised traffic is traffic that is **lifted (Lo-Lo)** or **rolled (Ro-Ro)** onto a ship inside a container or vehicle from which it is not unpacked. It is measured in terms of the number of units, as well as the weight of the goods they contain. This includes containers and all Ro-Ro (trade, passenger, import/ export motor vehicles). These figures include both loaded and empty units.

Unitised traffic can initially be broken down into **freight units** (those units which are used for trade) and **non-freight units** (e.g. passenger cars). Freight units can be further subdivided into **main freight** units (units which contain cargo) and **trade vehicles and other ro-ro freight** (e.g. cars to be sold).

Chart 10: Unitised traffic through UK major ports, freight and non-freight units, 2000 - 2014



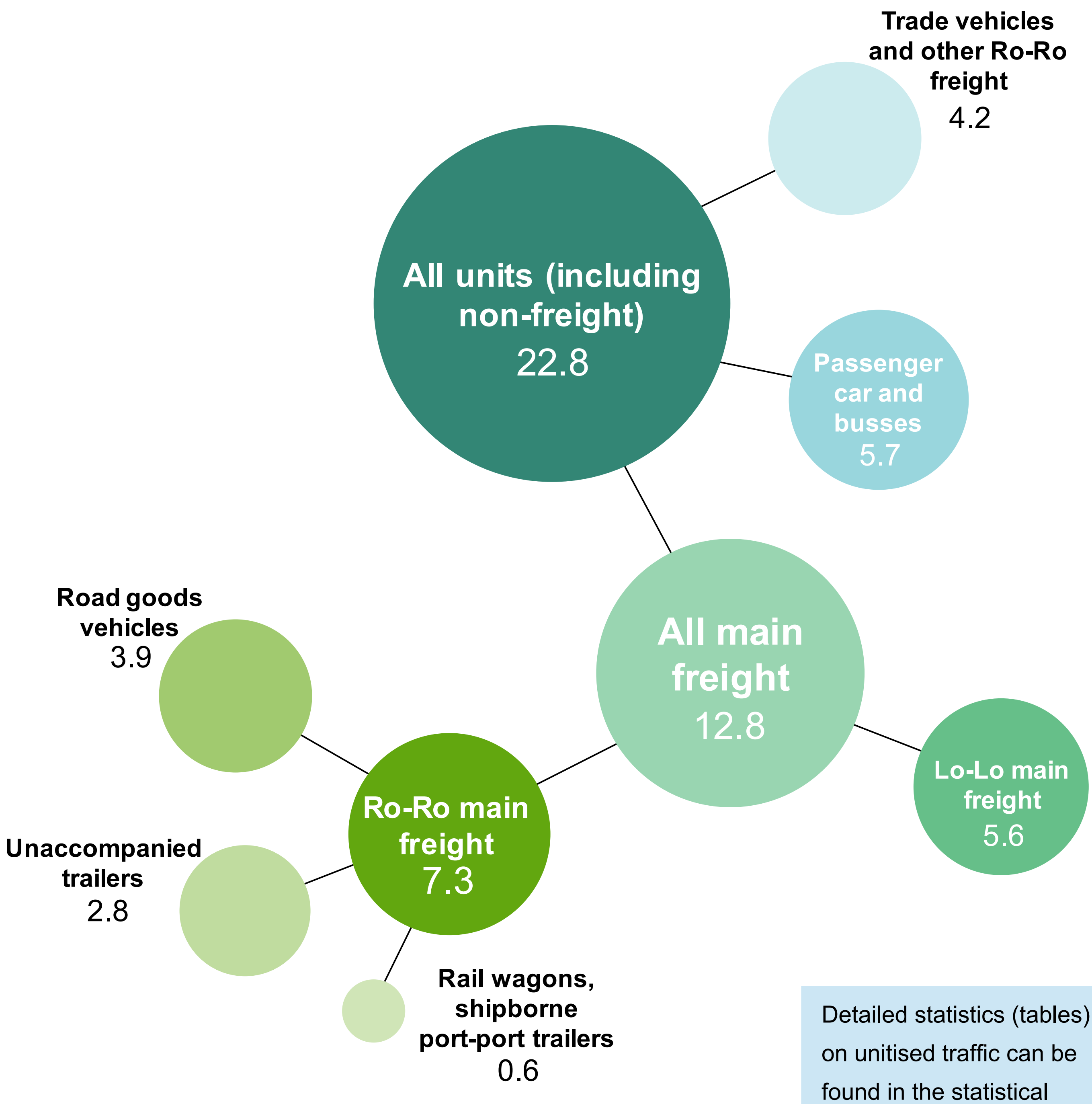
Detailed statistics (tables) on unitised traffic can be found in the statistical data sets, PORT0201, PORT0203, PORT0204, PORT0205 and PORT0208.

1.3 Non-Freight Units

A quarter of the units handled by UK major ports in 2014 were **non-freight units** in the form of passenger cars and buses (**5.7 million units**).

Chart 11: Breakdown of UK major port's unitised traffic by cargo category, 2014

Million units



Detailed statistics (tables) on unitised traffic can be found in the statistical data sets, PORT0204 and PORT0206.

1.4 Loaded Units

In 2014, 94 per cent of Ro-Ro main freight units travelling in to UK major ports, were loaded (3.4 million units), compared to 74 per cent of those travelling out of the UK (2.7 million units). **Overall, 84 per cent of Ro-Ro main freight units were loaded.**

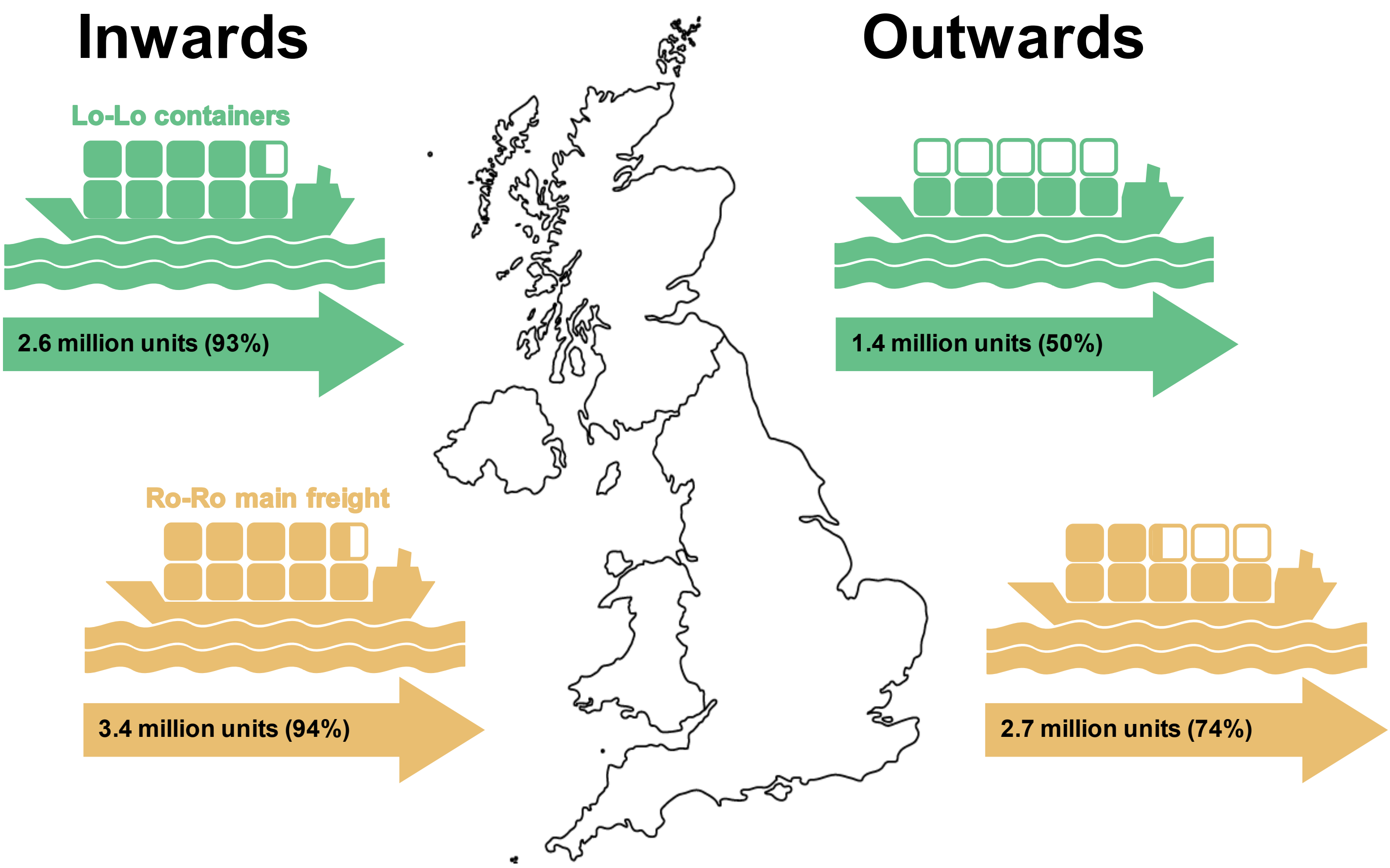
Over 93 per cent of Lo-Lo containers coming in to UK major ports were loaded compared to 50 per cent leaving. **Seventy-two per cent of all Lo-Lo containers were loaded units (4.0 million units) in 2014.**

Definitions

TEU (twenty-foot equivalent units) is a standardised measure to allow for the different sizes of container boxes.

Size	TEU
20ft	1
40ft	2
>20ft & <40ft	1.5
>40ft	2.25

Figure 5: Percentage of loaded Lo-Lo units and Ro-Ro main freight by direction, 2014



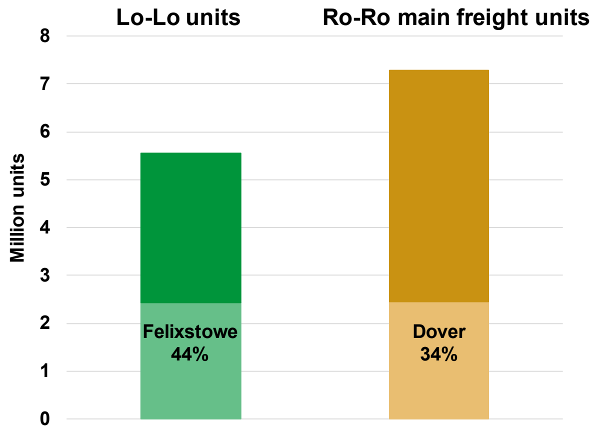
Detailed statistics (tables) on unitised traffic can be found in the statistical data set, PORT0206.

1.5 Unitised Traffic by Main Goods Cargo Type and Major Port

Felixstowe was the busiest unitised main freight port in 2014, handling 2.6 million units, of which 92 per cent was Lo-Lo traffic. Felixstowe handled the most Lo-Lo traffic compared to other UK major ports, with **2 out of every 5 Lo-Lo units** handled by Felixstowe.

Dover handled the largest amount of UK **Ro-Ro main freight**, with 2.5 million units being handled in 2014 accounting for **34 per cent** of all main freight Ro-Ro traffic.

Figure 6: Busiest ports for Lo-Lo units and Ro-Ro main freight units, 2014



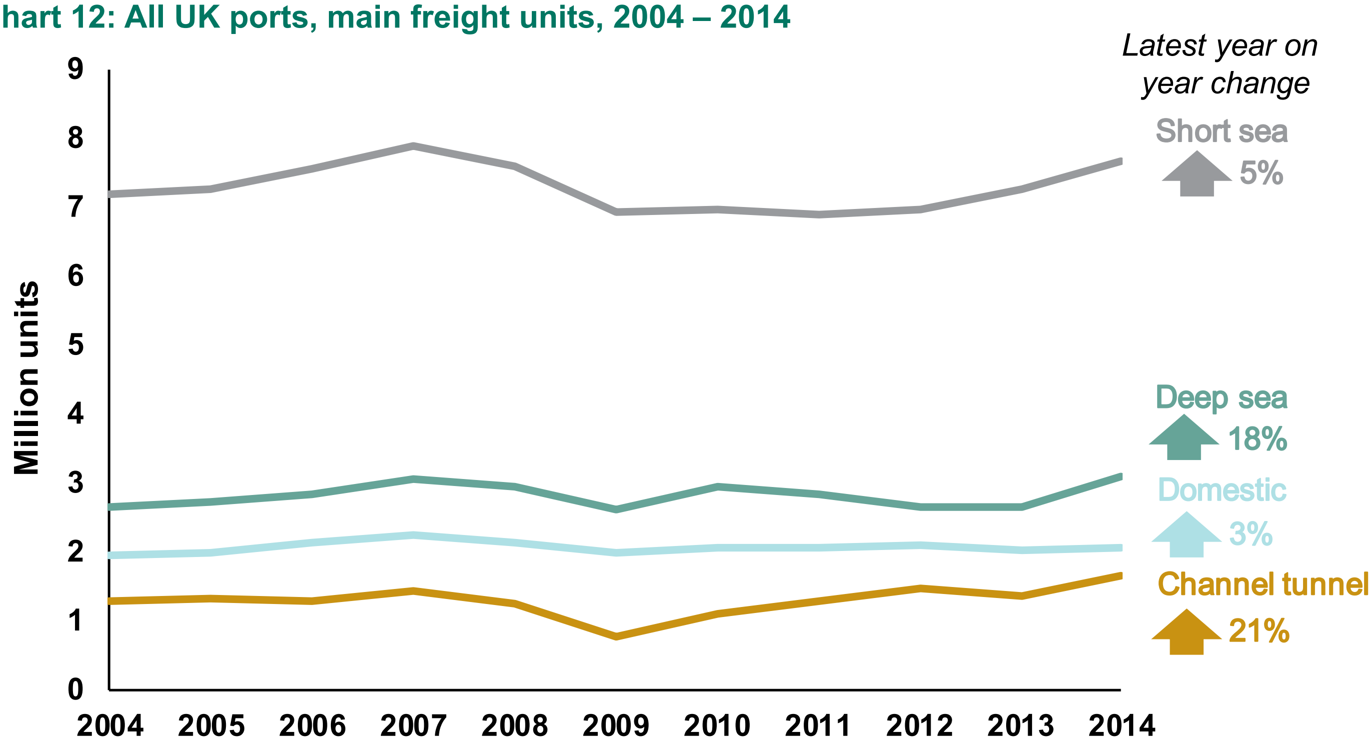
Detailed statistics (tables) on unitised traffic can be found in the statistical data sets, PORT0202 and PORT0206.

2. Trade Routes

2.1 Summary (All UK Ports)

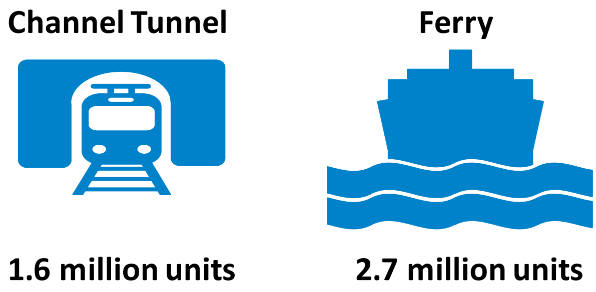
Main freight units travelling between UK ports and **international ports** (deep sea and short sea) **increased** for the second year in a row to **10.7 million units** in 2014. The number of **domestic main freight units** through UK ports **increased** by 3 per cent with **2.1 million units** being handled (16 per cent of the total main freight traffic).

Chart 12: All UK ports, main freight units, 2004 – 2014



Some **1.6 million main freight units** travelled through the **Channel Tunnel** in 2014, an increase of 21 per cent since the previous year, and the highest volume in the last 20 years. However, there were 1.1 million more units which travelled to France from the UK by sea.

Figure 7: Main freight units travelling through the Channel Tunnel and by Ferry, 2014



Detailed statistics (tables) on unitised traffic can be found in the statistical data sets, PORT0202, PORT0204, PORT0206 and PORT0207.

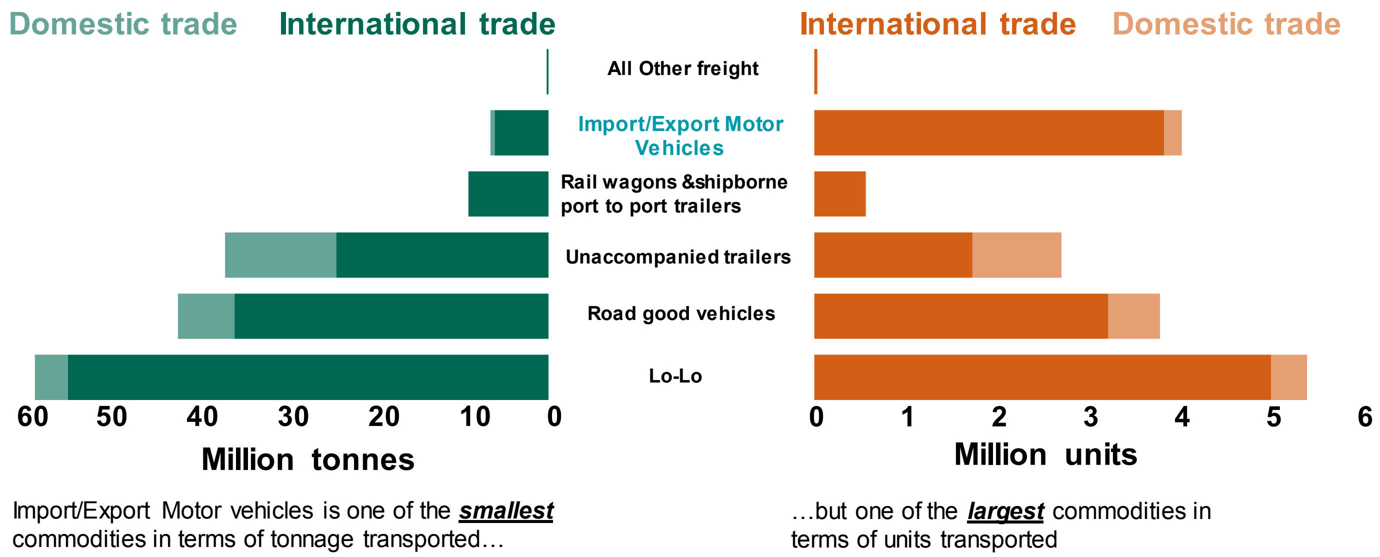
2.2 Trade Routes by Cargo Category

Ninety-three per cent of **Lo-Lo containers** handled by UK major ports travelled to or from an **international destination**. In 2014, **5.2 million Lo-Lo units** (8.8 TEUs) travelled between UK major ports and international ports, with a total weight of 57.3 million tonnes.

Nearly a quarter (23 per cent) of international unitised traffic was by passenger vehicles. Freight units made up the remainder, of which import/export motor vehicles were the largest unit type with 3.9 million units.

Despite **import/export motor vehicles** being the second most common commodity, accounting for 20 per cent of all international traffic, they were **among the smallest in terms of tonnage** (6.4 million tonnes). This is in comparison to the 3.3 million units of road goods vehicles and trailers which travelled to international destinations, with cargo weighing 37.5 million tonnes.

Chart 13: Freight traffic by route and units, 2014



The most common unitised **domestic** commodity was also **passenger vehicles**, of which there were 1.2 million units (36 per cent of domestic traffic). **Freight units** accounted for the remainder, of which unaccompanied road good trailers were the majority share, accounting for 29 per cent of domestic unitised freight traffic and weighing 13.3 million tonnes.

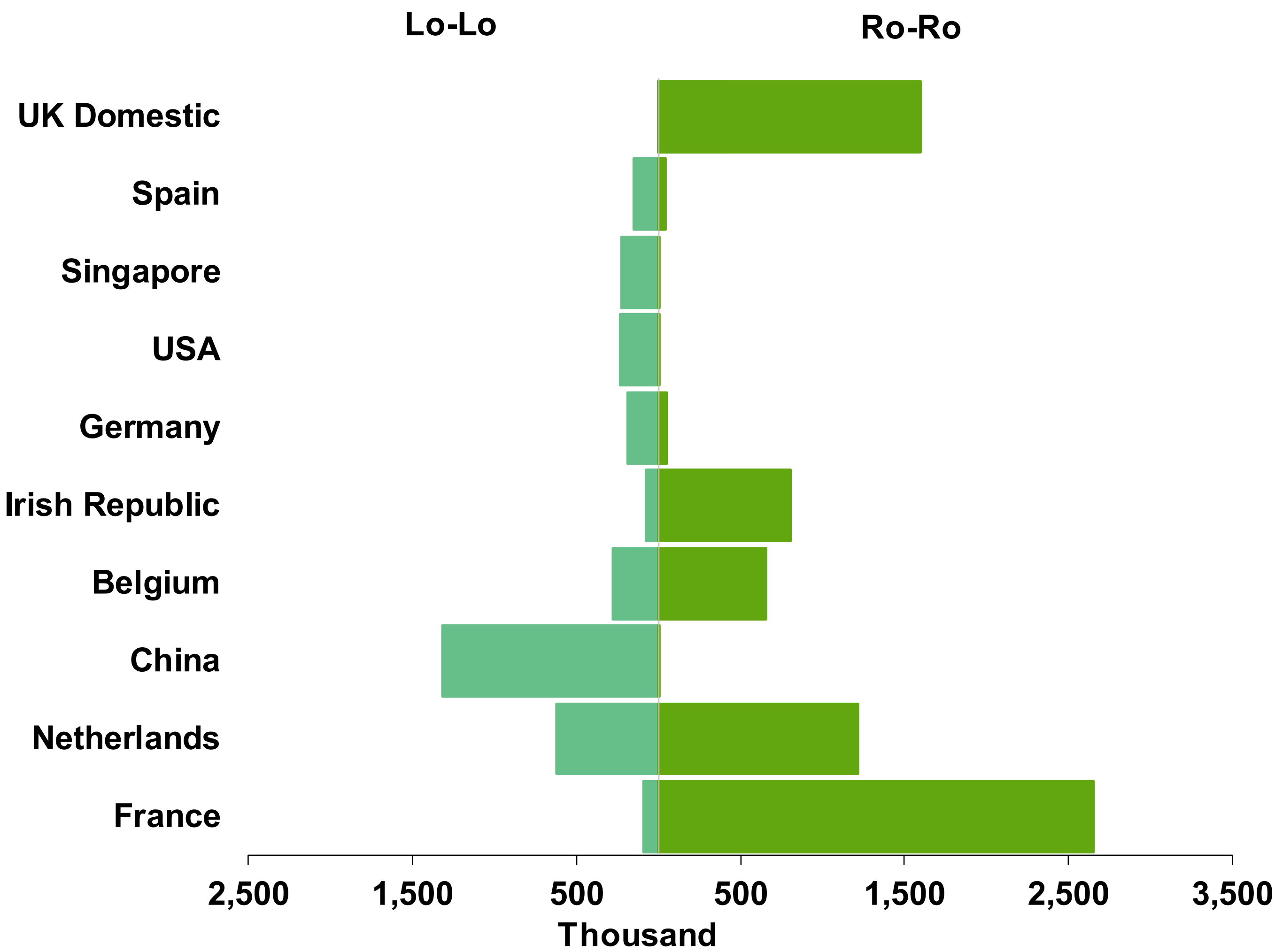
2.3 Trade Destination

Very few trading routes are used for both Lo-Lo and Ro-Ro main freight traffic, as seen in chart 13. Transporting units through **Roll-on/Roll-off** was the primary method of transporting units between the **UK major ports and Europe**, with 77 per cent of main freight units being Ro-Ro units.

Routes between UK major ports and Europe tend to be dominated by Ro-Ro, whilst routes outside of Europe / world wide ports tend to ship Lo-Lo containers.

Of the traffic travelling on **deep sea journeys, 99.96 per cent were Lo-Lo containers** with the majority of them travelling between the UK and China (42 per cent of all deep sea main freight traffic).

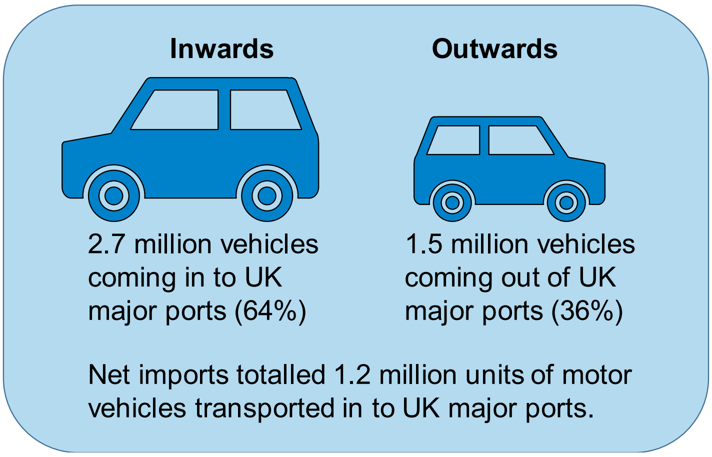
Chart 14: Number of main freight units travelling between UK's top 10 unitised traffic trading partners, 2014



Detailed statistics (tables) on unitised traffic can be found in the statistical data set, PORT0207.

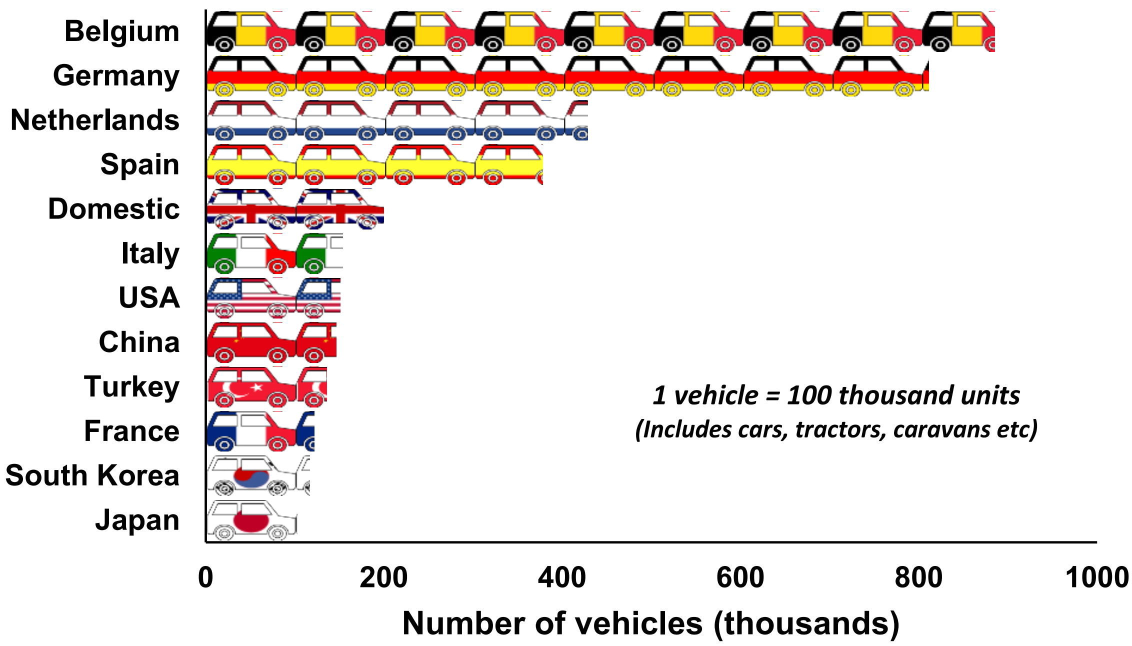
There were 4.1 million **import/export motor vehicles** moved through UK ports in 2014, an increase of 9 per cent, which **continues the year-on-year annual growth seen since 2010.**

Figure 8: Import/export motor vehicles, by direction, 2014



Belgium is the busiest trading destination, accounting for 21 per cent of all import/export motor vehicles handled at UK major ports.

Chart 15: Import/export motor vehicle routes, 2014



Detailed statistics (tables) on unitised traffic can be found in the statistical data set, PORT0212.

3. Strengths and weaknesses of the data

- The port freight statistics relate to traffic to and from ports in the United Kingdom, unless otherwise stated, and do not cover ports in the Isle of Man or the Channel Islands.
- Final port freight statistics are published 8 months after the year end. At this stage a full reconciliation of port and shipping agent data will have been carried out, and the grossing procedures described in the Technical Note are completed and checked. The detailed results in this release are based on the grossed data and the full range of analyses, including those by route and vessel type are then available.

4. Glossary

- Lo-Lo (lift-on lift-off) containers: standard shipping containers that are lifted on or off ships. Containers can also be carried on Ro-Ro (roll-on roll-off) services, usually on port-to-port trailers, road goods vehicles or unaccompanied trailers, in which case they will be treated as Ro-Ro traffic.
- Main freight units: all Lo-Lo containers and those Ro-Ro units intended mainly for carrying freight - road goods vehicles, unaccompanied trailers, rail wagons, shipborne port to port trailers and shipborne barges.
- Major ports: Ports handling over one million tonnes per year, and a small number of other key ports, together accounting for over 98% of UK port traffic. More detailed statistics are collected from these ports.
- Minor ports: All other ports handling freight traffic. Only total weight of goods loaded and unloaded is collected from these ports.
- Tonnage: The weight of goods transported, including crates and other packaging, but excluding the unloaded weight of any shipping containers, road goods vehicles, trailers and other items of transport equipment where these are used.
- Units: Includes all roll-on roll-off (Ro-Ro) units whether carrying freight or not (road goods vehicles, unaccompanied trailers, shipborne port-to-port trailers, passenger vehicles, trade vehicles, and other Ro-Ro units), as well as lift-on lift-off (Lo-Lo) containers. In most port statistics outputs, freight-carrying roll-on roll-off units are normally reported separately from others, but this detail is not available at the time of publication of the quarterly statistics, in which combined totals are given.

5. Users and uses of the data

These statistics are collected to provide information on trends and patterns in the handling of freight traffic at UK sea ports. Users of the data include central government, the devolved administrations and local government, the maritime industry, transport consultants and academics, and international organisations. Uses, both inside and outside government, include:

- To provide general background to sector trends, and to inform the development and evaluation of policy, and to inform decision making
- In the development or testing of transport and environmental models and forecasts
- In market analysis by transport consultants and businesses.
- To respond to requests for information from Parliament, members of the public and international organisations, including Eurostat's compilation of maritime statistics for the EU

We continuously review the content of these statistics to ensure that they provide the most useful information whilst minimising burdens on data providers. We welcome any feedback on these statistics by email to maritime.stats@dft.gsi.gov.uk.

6. Background notes

- The web tables and charts give further detail of the key results presented in this statistical release. They are available here: Ports statistics.
- Full guidance on the methods used to compile these statistics can be found here: notes
- National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure they meet customer needs: Code of Practice
- Details of Ministers and officials who receive pre-release access to these statistics up to 24 hours before release can be found here: pre-release access list.
- Provisional summary quarterly statistics on freight handled by UK major ports are also updated quarterly. The latest tables can be found here: Quarterly summary.