

Inland freight transport growth shows signs of slowing down in the EU in the Q1/2010

Rail freight transport growth slowed down in the first quarter of 2010, according to preliminary estimates by the International Transport Forum. After two consecutive quarters of freight growth since the start of the economic crisis, the latest seasonally adjusted figures indicate that growth is again stagnating in the EU area (Figure 1). Rail freight volume fell by 0.1% in the first quarter 2010 compared with the previous quarter.

Within the EU, there are still differences between countries. A number of countries still see rail freight volume growing in the first quarter of 2010 compared with the previous quarter. However, the drop especially in Germany slows down the overall growth in the EU. In Germany, ton-kilometers by rail fell by nearly 3% compared with the previous quarter (Figure 2). Germany accounts for around 35% of the EU rail freight for which data is available.

After recording a strong recovery in the second and third quarters of 2009, the rail freight volume growth seems to be leveling off in the Russian Federation. Although seasonally adjusted data for the first quarter of 2010 shows 1.4% growth compared with the previous quarter it is still far away from the 9.2% growth reported in the third quarter of 2009. In the United States, on the other hand, rail freight volume grew by 5.9% in the first quarter, according to the seasonally adjusted ITF data. This was already the third consecutive quarter with an increase since the start of the crisis in the United States. However, as figures also show, recovery in rail freight is still far away in many countries and volumes are still below their pre-crisis levels (Figures 1 to 3).

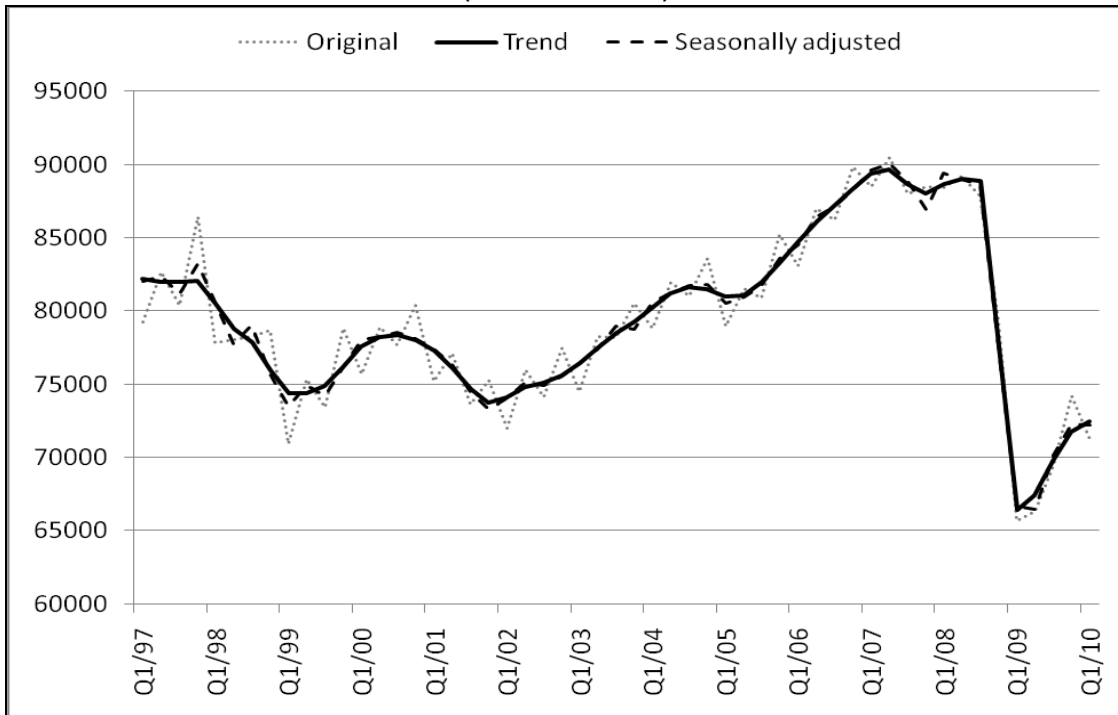
Road freight shows also signs of worsening trends for countries where data is available. While our previous briefing noted signs of recovery, our data for the first quarter indicates a shift in this trend once again. In the Russian Federation, the last quarter of 2009 ended with over 25% growth in road freight volume but the first quarter 2010 shows again decline by 9% compared with the previous quarter. A number of other countries saw road freight volume falling or slowing down in the first quarter of 2010 (Figure 4).

Growth in rail passenger transport shows also some signs of slowing down although the passenger transport was not affected by the crisis as much as freight transport. Our estimate suggests that the volume of rail passenger transport fell by 0.2% in the EU in the first quarter of 2010 compared with the previous quarter (Figure 5). For individual countries, passenger-kilometers show growth in Hungary and Germany while volume fell in Sweden, France and Poland (Figure 6).

The ITF Quarterly Transport Statistics are available at:

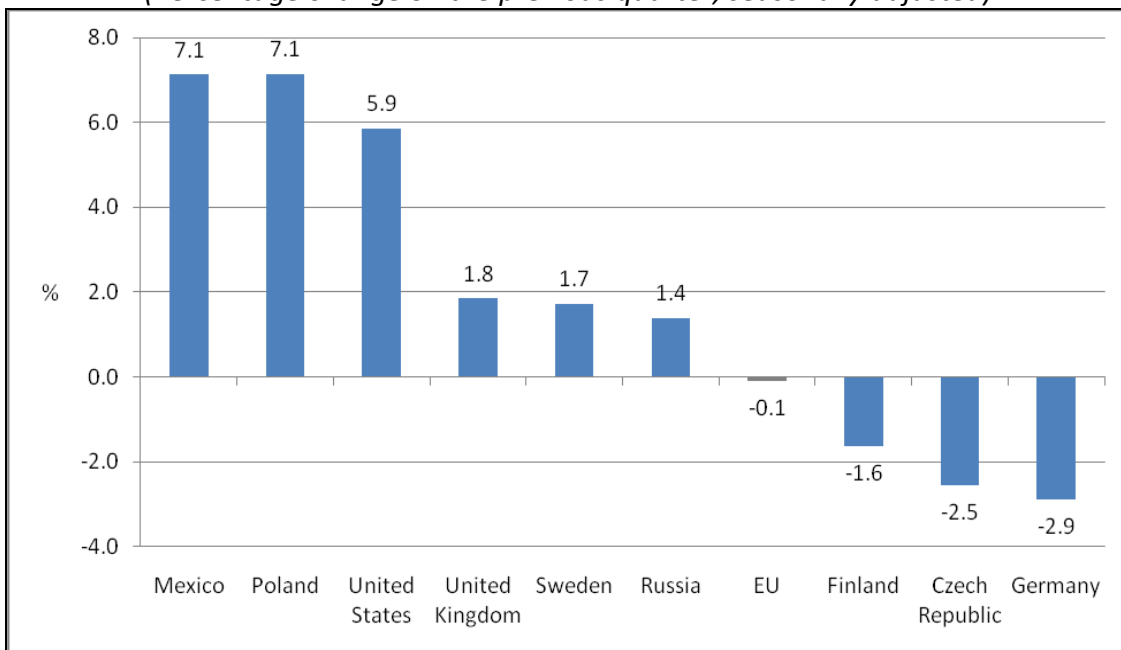
<http://www.internationaltransportforum.org/statistics/shortterm/index.html>

Figure 1. Rail freight in the EU
(million ton-km)



Data for the EU exclude Austria, Belgium, France, Greece and Luxembourg.

Figure 2. Rail freight in selected ITF countries Q1/2010, ton-km
(Percentage change on the previous quarter, seasonally adjusted)



Data for the EU exclude Austria, Belgium, France, Greece and Luxembourg.

Figure 3. Rail freight in the United States and Russian Federation
(million ton-km)

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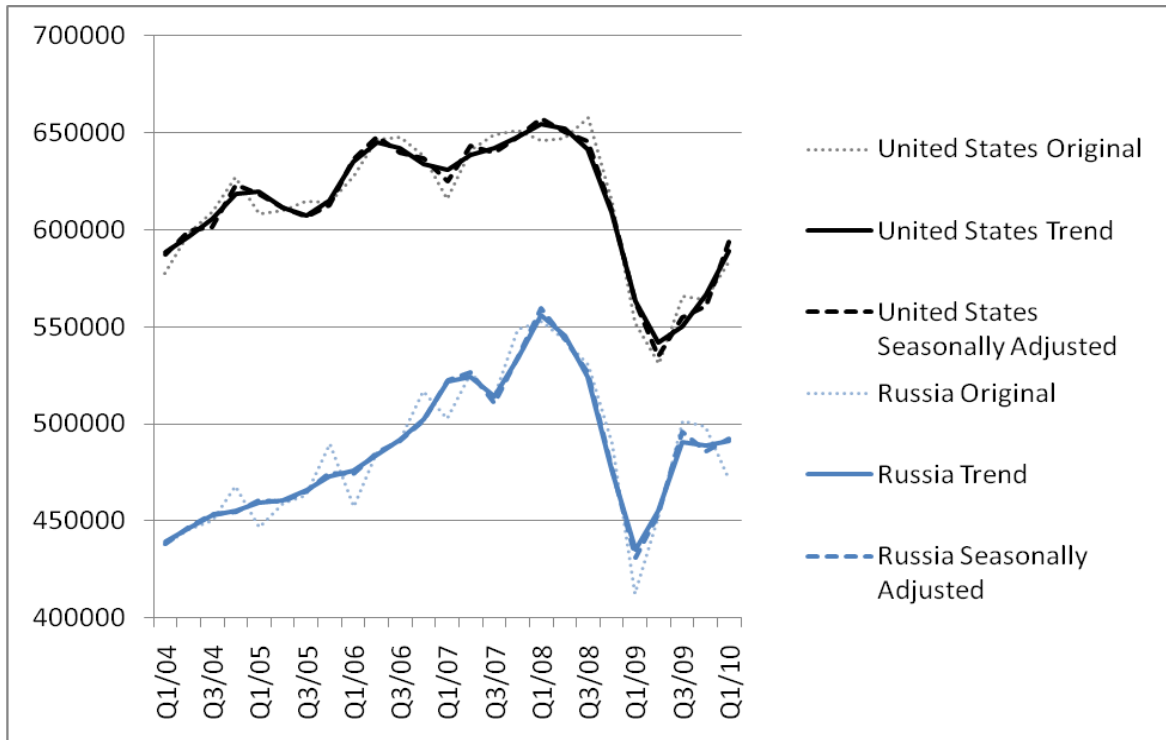


Figure 4. Road freight transport in selected ITF countries Q1/2010, ton-km
(Percentage change on the previous quarter, seasonally adjusted)

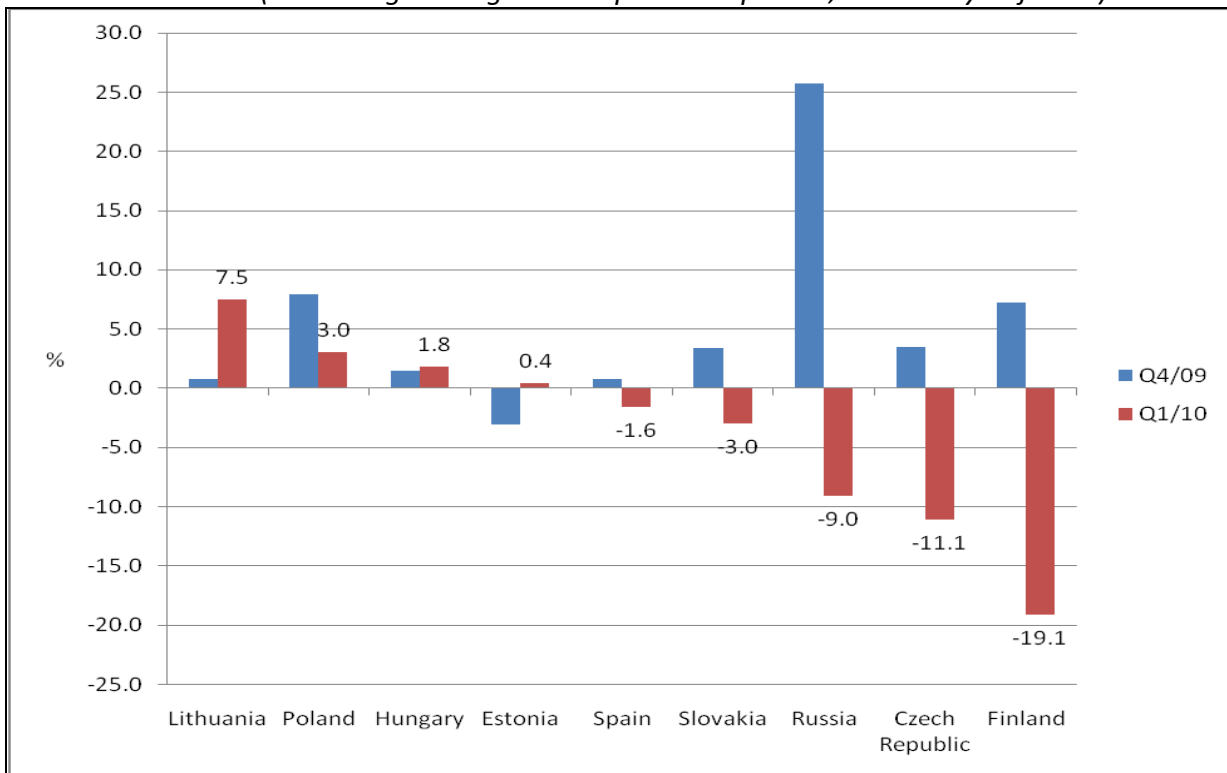
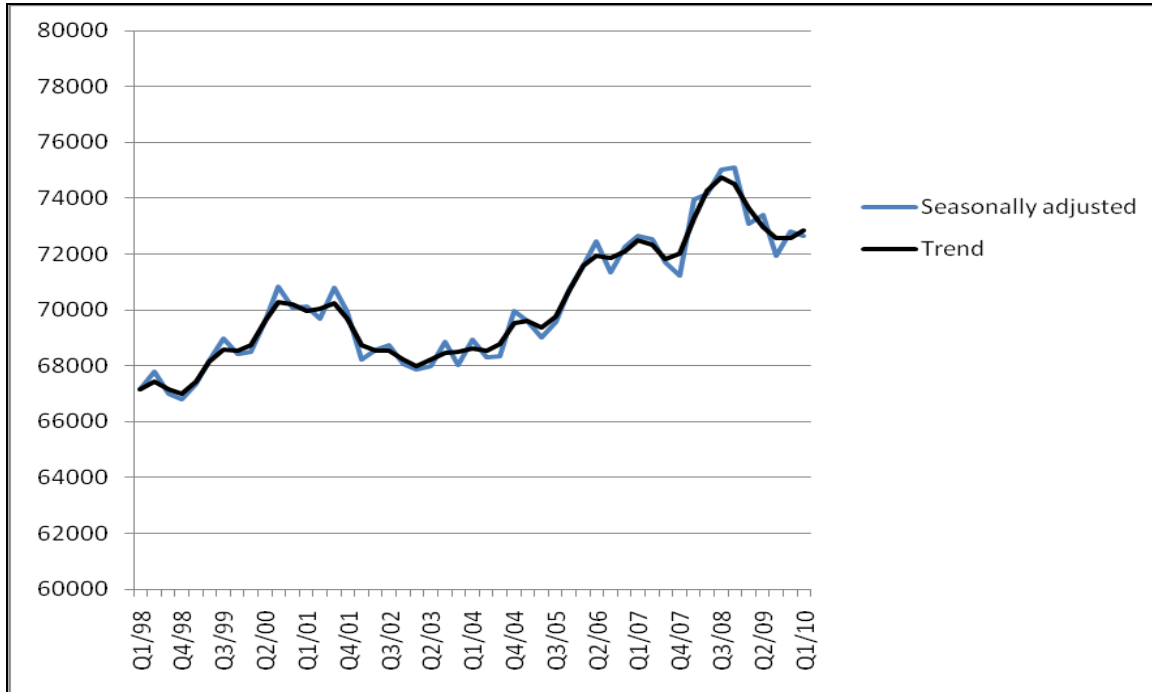


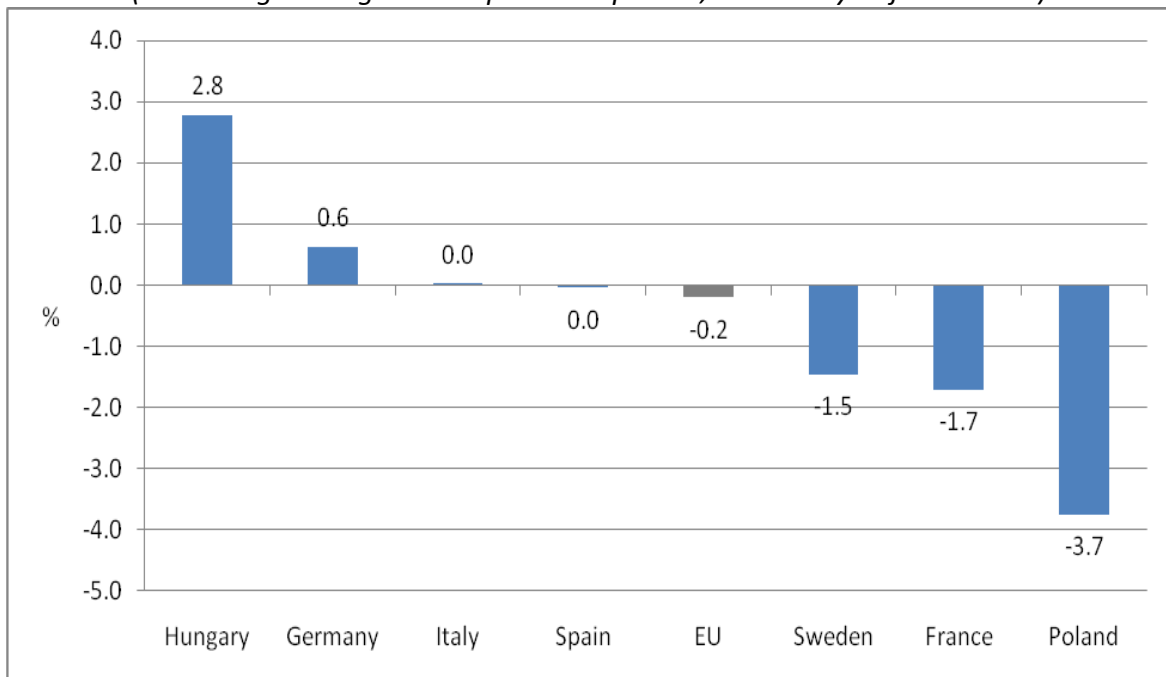
Figure 5. Rail passenger transport in the EU area
(million pass-km)

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Data for the EU excludes Austria, Belgium, Greece, Luxembourg, Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

Figure 6. Rail passenger transport in selected ITF countries Q1/2010, pass-km
(Percentage change on the previous quarter, seasonally adjusted data)



Data for the EU excludes Austria, Belgium, Greece, Luxembourg, Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

Further information

The Quarterly Briefing presents the ITF Quarterly Transport Statistics available for the ITF member countries, collected through a questionnaire.

National data are seasonally adjusted by the Joint Transport Research Centre of the International Transport Forum Secretariat and the OECD for analytical purposes.

Short-term data is normally compiled to allow timely identification of changes in any indicator and especially to identify possible turning points. However, quarterly transport statistics are often characterized by seasonal patterns. A time series from which the seasonal variations have been eliminated basically allows for the comparison of data between two quarters for which seasonal patterns are different, also helping to identify turning points and the underlying direction of the change.

Seasonal adjustment is carried out with the Demetra programme using the TRAMO/SEATS adjustment method. Seasonally adjusted estimates may differ from those produced by national authorities due to differences in the adjustment methodology.

For more detailed description of methodology, [click here](#).

For further information, please contact:

Jari Kauppila (jari.kauppila@oecd.org)

Mario Barreto (mario.barreto@oecd.org)