

**Standard Report
on
Methods and Quality
for
STATISTICS OF PORT TRAFFIC**

This documentation applies to the reporting period:
2008

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1. Overview

The release titled 'Statistics of Port Traffic' provides data on the scale and development of the carriage of goods and passengers by sea. It provides summary data on the type and size of vessel traffic inwards and outwards, type of goods loaded and unloaded and the origin and destination country of the vessels. Data are collected on a quarterly basis covering 21 ports and are published annually. The data are compiled from returns made from Scheduled Harbour Authorities, State companies, and a number of other harbours. The statistics contained in the release can be used to compare maritime transport in Ireland with that of other European countries. The release was first published in 1972.

2. General information

2.1 Statistical Category

Primary Statistical Survey

2.2 Area of Activity

Transport Statistics

2.3 Organisational Unit Responsible, Persons to Contact

Services Division

Transport Section

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2.4 Objectives and purpose; history

The Statistics of Port Traffic survey was introduced to provide detailed official information on the volume of activity at Irish ports. The data, which originally related to numbers of arrivals of vessels, net register tonnage of vessels and to the tonnage of goods handled, were supplied by the Harbour Authorities (without whose co-operation the initiation of this series would not have been possible). The first release, which covered Port activity for the years 1969, 1970 and 1971, consisted simply of one table summarising the activity of all the ports in the state. Subsequently, to meet additional information demands, the series was expanded to include information on vessel characteristics, category of goods traffic, details of roll-on/roll-off traffic, details of lift-on/lift-off traffic, region of trade and passenger numbers. Currently the release has 11 separate tables detailing this information.

2.5 Periodicity

Annual

2.6 Client

The survey was originally conducted to meet a general National requirement. However, this national requirement has since been supplemented by an EU requirement. Council Directive 95/64/EC on statistical returns in respect of the carriage of goods and passengers by sea requires all EU Member States to collect and compile statistics of port traffic.

2.7 Users

- Government departments
- Shipping enterprises
- Eurostat
- Freight Forwarding Agents
- General National Requirement
- Research institutions
- Individual research

2.8 Legal basis

Data are collected to satisfy EU requirements under Council Directive 95/64/EC on statistical returns in respect of the carriage of goods and passengers by sea and National requirement under S.I. Number 750 of 2007, Statistics (Carriage of goods and passengers by sea) Order 2007.

3. Statistical concepts, methods

3.1 Subject of the statistics

The subject of the statistics is the activity at Irish ports, which is measured in terms of number of arrivals and departures by port, the goods loaded and unloaded at each port and the origin and destination partner port.

3.2 Units of observation/collection units/units of presentation

Data are collected and also presented on the number of arrivals and gross tonnage of vessels by type and size of vessel and the tonnage of goods handled by ports, classified by category of traffic and region of trade. The units of observation are vessels arriving and departing. The units of collection are the various Port Authorities. The Port Authorities already collect information on shipping for their own administrative purposes and they compile and summarise this information for the CSO.

3.3 Data sources

The data are provided by Harbour Authorities and Port Companies.

3.4 Reporting unit/respondents

The reporting units are as follows:

Scheduled Harbour Authorities

Arklow Harbour Commissioners
Bantry Bay Harbour Commissioners
Kilrush Town Council
Kinsale Harbour Commissioners
Sligo Harbour Commissioners
Tralee and Fenit Pier and Harbour Commissioners
Youghal Town Council

State Companies

Drogheda Port Company
Dublin Port Company
Dundalk Port Company
Dun Laoghaire Harbour Company
Galway Harbour Company
New Ross Port Company
Port of Cork Company
Port of Waterford Company
Shannon Foynes Port Company
Wicklow Port Company

Other Harbours

Castletownbere Fishery Harbour Centre
Greenore Port
Killybegs Fishery Harbour Centre
Rosslare Europort

3.5 Type of survey/Process

The survey is a census. The returns are collected primarily by email from the Harbour Commissioners and by postal replies from the smaller port companies.

3.6 Characteristics of the sample

3.6.1 Population and Sampling Frame

Census of all Harbour Authorities and Port Companies. Ports handling over 1 million tonnes of goods or recording more than 200,000 passenger movements annually are obliged to send data electronically at the end of each quarter and the smaller ports must complete a quarterly survey form.

3.6.2 Sampling Design

The survey is a full census.

3.7 Survey technique/data transfer

Ports handling over 1 million tonnes of goods or recording more than 200,000 passenger movements annually are obliged to send data via Excel spreadsheet at the end of each quarter and the smaller ports must complete a quarterly survey form which can be returned electronically or by hardcopy through the post.

3.8 Questionnaire (incl. Explanations)

The attached survey form is sent to the smaller ports at the end of each quarter.

http://www.cso.ie/surveysandmethodologies/surveyforms/documents/transport_tourism/pdf_docs/port_traffic.pdf

3.9 Participation in the survey

All Port Authorities and Port Companies are obliged to participate in the survey

3.10 Characteristics of the survey/Process and its Results

The data file that is received quarterly contains the following variables for each vessel:

- Reporting Port
- Type of Cargo
- Direction
- Port of loading/unloading
- Gross weight of goods in tonnes
- Number of passengers
- Nationality of registration of vessel
- Number of vessels by type and size
- Deadweight of vessels
- Gross tonnage of vessels

A simple aggregation is then carried out on the data and the following classification variables are reported on in the publication:

- Number of Arrivals and Gross Tonnage of Vessels classified by Type of Vessel
- Number of Arrivals and Gross Tonnage of Vessels classified by Vessel Size Class
- Tonnage of Goods handled classified by Category of Traffic
- Tonnage of Goods handled classified by Category of Traffic and Region of Trade
- Details of Roll-on/Roll-off Traffic handled by Port
- Number of Livestock handled classified by Port and Region of Trade
- Tonnage of Goods handled classified by Port and Region of Trade

3.11 Classifications used

EU classifications are in use for the following characteristics:

- Type of vessel
- Size of vessel
- Category of traffic
- Gross tonnage of goods
- Region of Trade

3.12 Regional breakdown of results

Published results are broken down by region of trade as detailed below:

- Great Britain & Northern Ireland
- Other EU
- Non-EU
- Other Ports
- Coastal Trade (Other Irish Ports)

Eurostat compiles and publishes the results at NUTS2 level (Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics – which is an EU geographical classification, level 2 of which specifies regional groupings, e.g. the Border, Midland, West regional grouping).

4. Production of the statistics, Data processing, Quality Assurance

4.1 Data capture

Data are received quarterly from the ports via email and post. Where the data are received by email they will usually be in Excel or text format. This data has to be manually reformatted and saved in Comma Separated Value format. Once reformatted, the data is processed using the statistical software tool SAS. This processing essentially involves writing the data to data (.DAT) files in the appropriate specification for transmission to Eurostat.

4.2 Coding

Coding is based on Eurostat list of codes compiled for all EU Member States. The data are pre-coded by the ports when they are compiling the data so no actual coding occurs when processing the data.

4.3 Data Editing

Data editing and validation is carried out using GENEDI a cross-platform generic data validation tool developed by EUROSTAT (the European Commission Statistical Agency), to ensure that all codes used are valid and that there is consistency in the data. Duplicate records are also identified. Any queries that arise are forwarded to ports for clarification and amendment if necessary.

4.4 Imputation (for non-response or incomplete data sets)

Not Applicable as all ports respond

4.5 Grossing and Weighting

Not applicable

4.6 Computation of Outputs, Estimation Methods Used

Outputs are compiled by aggregation of data

4.7 Other Quality Assurance Techniques Used

For each quarterly transmission, Eurostat carries out quality checks where comparisons for the Irish data are made with previous quarters and previous year. Eurostat is also in a position to check the data with corresponding reports from other Member States. For each transmission, Eurostat reports back on its findings. If the report identifies any possible inconsistencies, the CSO checks these with the relevant Port. If amendments are made to the data, they are re-transmitted to Eurostat.

In addition, when all 4 quarters' data are being aggregated for the Statistics of Port Traffic release, the individual results are sent to the various Port Authorities by way of a final check on the data. If the Port Authorities are happy with the final figures then they are published. If any changes are required then the quarterly data concerned is re-calculated and resent to Eurostat.

5. Quality

5.1 Relevance

The port traffic data are of major relevance for the Government and Department of Transport as an indicator of how the sector is performing, and also to implement and monitor policies for maritime transport.

5.2 Accuracy and Reliability

5.2.1 Sampling effects, representativity

Not applicable

5.2.2 Non Sampling effects

5.2.2.1 Quality of the data sources used

Not applicable.

5.2.2.2 Register Coverage

A register is not required for the survey. The number of ports in the state is limited and unchanging.

5.2.2.3 Non-response (unit and item)

Not applicable.

5.2.2.4 Measurement errors

The scope for measurement error is limited given that there is little room for ambiguity in the standard reporting template and given the fact that the various Port Authorities will already collect the data for their own purposes. It is possible that some measuring errors may occur as a result of coding errors on behalf of the Port Authorities. However, there is a mechanism in place (GENEDI) to catch these in most cases if and when they occur.

5.2.2.5 Processing errors

The scope for processing errors is limited, in that the data is not processed manually. In any case, edit checks are done on the data files received from ports to ensure that all codes used are valid and that there is consistency in the data from the previous quarter. Any variable that is highlighted as a result of the edit checks carried out on the data are forwarded to ports for clarification and amended.

5.2.2.6 Model-related effects

Not Applicable

5.3 Timeliness and punctuality

5.3.1 Provisional results

Provisional results are not compiled.

5.3.2 Final results

Final data are provided in the annual release which is published 6 months after the end of the reference period. The information published is the number of ships arriving in port, their gross tonnage, the tonnage of goods handled, details of roll-on/roll-off traffic, details of lift on/lift off traffic and the number of livestock handled. Results are also disseminated by Eurostat on its New Cronos database.

5.4 Coherence

Some coherence checks are carried out by Eurostat regarding intra-EU maritime trade. Eurostat is in a position to report discrepancies between the maritime statistics submitted by the differing EU Member States. Any such discrepancies reported are followed up with the Port Authorities as necessary. In practise discrepancies rarely arise.

5.5. Comparability

Each quarter, Eurostat compares the transmitted data with the previous quarters, on a port-by-port basis. Any unusual differences are reported back and are followed up with the Port Authorities as necessary.

5.6 Accessibility and Clarity

5.6.1 Assistance to Users, Special Analyses

Detailed tables of Statistics of Port Traffic release are available on the CSO's website from 1998 onwards. In addition paper copies of the release are also available. Special analyses are available on request.

5.6.2 Revisions

The data are not revised.

5.6.3 Publications

5.6.3.1 Releases, Regular Publications

Statistics of Port Traffic, Annual

<http://www.cso.ie/releasespublications/documents/transport/current/spt.pdf> - Most recent annual release

5.6.3.2 Statistical Reports

Transport 2008 (Transport Omnibus)

<http://www.cso.ie/releasespublications/documents/transport/2008/transport08.pdf>

Statistical Yearbook of Ireland

http://www.cso.ie/releasespublications/statistical_yearbook_ireland_2009.htm

5.6.3.3 Internet

Most recent annual release

<http://www.cso.ie/releasespublications/documents/transport/current/spt.pdf>

Archived release, 1998-2008

http://www.cso.ie/releasespublications/pr_transarchive.htm

Database Direct

<http://www.cso.ie/px/pxeirestat/database/eirestat/Maritime%20Statistics/Maritime%20Statistics.asp>

Eurostat Transport (including Maritime) Data Dissemination

<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/transport/introduction>

5.6.4 Confidentiality

All data received from the individual Port Authorities are treated as strictly confidential in accordance with Part V of the Statistics Act, 1993. This data is not available under the Freedom of Information Act, 1997. Only aggregate statistical data is disseminated.

6 Additional documentation and publications

Additional information on the survey, including the differing data fields collected and the codification used, can be found in the Annexes of Council Directive 95/64/EC:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CONSLEG:1995L0064:20040101:EN:PDF>

StatCentral (the Portal to Ireland's Official Statistics)

<http://www.statcentral.ie/viewStat.asp?id=156>