



**The Swedish Freight Transport System: Summary
Current Status and Historical Trends Report 2014:17**

The Swedish Freight Transport System: Current Status and Historical Trends **Summary**
Report 2014:17

Transport Analysis

Address: Torsgatan 30

SE-113 21 Stockholm

Phone: 010 414 42 00

Fax: 010 414 42 10

E-mail: trafikanalys@trafa.se

Webaddress: www.trafa.se

Publisher: Brita Saxton

Publication date: 2014-12-19

Summary

This report presents an account of the current status of the Swedish freight transport system, its condition today and how it has changed in recent years.

One general trend observed among all traffic types is a move toward bigger vehicles and vessels. For example, we see a shift toward lorries with ever-greater load capacities. One recently issued government report proposed changing the currently applicable maximum weight from 60 to 74 tonnes (Swedish Transport Administration 2014), which would open the door to even larger lorries. The total load capacity (i.e., total maximum load weight) of rolling stock has certainly decreased somewhat since 1990, although not to the same extent as has the number of railcars, which means that the remaining freight cars are bigger than before.

Among cargo vessels, the trend over time has resulted in fewer vessels (i.e., 132 in 2013), even as their total gross tonnage has remained relatively stable at just over 2 million gross tonnes. This means that the average gross tonnage of a cargo vessel increased by roughly 50% from 2004 to 2013. Over that same period, the average deadweight tonnage of dry cargo vessels increased just over 60% to 13,600 tonnes, even as the number of vessels fell from 138 in 2004 to 92 in 2013. A similar trend is also evident internationally; for example, the average size of newly produced container vessels worldwide increased by nearly 80% between 2005 and 2012.

Sweden's cargo aircraft fleet is fairly small. However, the international cargo aircraft fleet is relatively large, consisting of just over 1700 aircraft, approximately 20% of which have a cargo capacity exceeding 80 tonnes.

To maintain and enhance Sweden's competitiveness, it is important not only that vehicles be suited to their tasks but also that infrastructure (i.e., roads, railroads, seaports, and airports) be of high quality and that links to the outside world function smoothly. The picture that emerges from studying The Global Competitiveness Index (GCI) indicates that Sweden's infrastructure and freedom of action are relatively good from a Nordic perspective and compared with most countries in the world. According to the index, however, the Swedish infrastructure system's quality scores have been declining steadily in recent years. Between 2010 and 2014, the score for Sweden's road infrastructure fell by 0.2 points to 5.5, for the railroad infrastructure by 0.9 points to 4.5, for ports by 0.6 points to 4.5, and for airports by 0.5 points to 5.7.

Forty-six per cent of the Swedish road system consists of national roads, which account for roughly 98,500 km of road. The most common speed limit is 70 km/h. The rest of the road system consists of municipal roads and streets plus a large number of private roads. Currently ongoing road projects usually concern efforts to reduce congestion, improve safety, or provide better accessibility. The railroad system, which comprises just over 11,000 km of track, is mostly state-owned. To this can be added just over 220 km of streetcar and subway tracks. One key developmental issue for the railroads pertains to the implementation of the ERTMS international signal standard. The railroads are also grappling with deficient capacity and neglected maintenance. Sweden currently has some 120 seaports, which can be classed as either industrial or commercial. There are 51 Swedish Transport Agency-approved airports in

Sweden, 40 of which handle scheduled or charter service. Eleven of the airports are owned by the state corporation Swedavia.

Sweden made SEK 28.5 billion worth of investments in its national infrastructure in 2013,¹ corresponding to 0.8% of gross national product (GNP). Most of these investments were made in the road and railroad systems, which accounted for investments of SEK 17.4 billion and SEK 10.5 billion, respectively. These investments have been increasing over an extended period, both as a percentage of GNP and in absolute terms, albeit with a decline of just over 10% in 2013 compared with 2012. Operation and maintenance funding has also increased in recent years. A similar trend is discernible in the surrounding countries as well. Data from the International Transport Forum (ITF) indicate that Sweden is on a par with most countries in terms of investment as a share of GNP.

¹ Preliminary data from Sweden's National Accounts.



Transport Analysis is a Swedish agency for transport policy analysis. We analyse and evaluate proposed and implemented measures within the sphere of transport policy. We are also responsible for official statistics in the transport and communication sectors. Transport Analysis was established in April 2010 with its head office in Stockholm and a branch office in Östersund.