



International Freight Transport Flows in Sweden and the Rest of the World **Summary**
Report 2014:18

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Transport Analysis

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Summary

Sweden has an economic structure that generates relatively heavy transport volumes in terms of both value and tonnage. In value, exports and imports account for nearly one-third of Sweden's gross national product. While the goods volumes have increased over time, Sweden's pattern of trade and its major import and export countries have remained relatively stable, with the Nordic region and Northern Europe serving as the most important markets.

The goods groups that Sweden trades on the international market are dominated economically by products tied to traditionally strong Swedish heavy industries, such as machinery, appliances, and means of transportation. In terms of tonnage, the goods flows are dominated by goods from the forestry, lumber, and paper industry; iron ore and steel; crude oil, petroleum products, and coal; and high-value-added goods and chemicals.

Different types of traffic dominate, depending on the types of goods to be transported and the distances involved. For a country like Sweden, which is largely surrounded by water, maritime transport dominates the major foreign long-distance goods flows. Lorry shipments are used mainly for domestic or nearby international shipments. It is also becoming increasingly common for goods to be shipped using various combinations of two or more types of traffic.

Growing international trade can have a number of causes, but the two most salient are said to be trade liberalisation and technological advances. One result of this is lower transport costs (Hummels 2007), which make it possible to manufacture products far from their market and to trade products in places where it was not formerly viable to do so. Increased globalisation and the integration of countries and regions have also resulted in more specialised production and in production networks becoming increasingly international, which has further intensified the need for international exchanges of goods.

From a global perspective, Asia has now surpassed Europe as the world's largest goods exporter, and this has affected Sweden's pattern of trade as well. From having historically traded mainly with nearby countries in the Nordic region and Western Europe, Sweden's eastward trade is now growing. Swedish trade from now until 2030 is expected to involve increased trade with Central and Eastern Europe and Asia, both in terms of volumes and as a share of total trade.



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.