

Rail freight by commodity groups in 2Q 2023

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In 2Q 2023 54.8 m tonnes of freight were carried. The transport performance was 14.8 bn tonne-km. These results are down by 5.8 m tonnes and 1.3 bn tonne-km respectively compared to 1Q 2023. It is mainly due to a significant decrease in hard coal freight from 22.5 m tonnes in 1Q 2023 to 17.1 m in 2Q 2023 (by 23.9%).

In the largest commodity group transported by rail, i.e. hard coal, lignite, crude oil and natural gas, there was a marked decrease in freight transported from 22.8 m tonnes in 1Q 2023 to 17.4 m tonnes (down by 23.7%) in 2Q 2023. The weight of the coal sub-group fell by 5.4 m tonnes compared to 1Q 2023. Such a low level of freight in the coal, lignite, crude oil and natural gas group was last seen in 2Q 2020.

Despite the decline in freight, the coal, lignite, crude oil and natural gas group, it continued to account for the largest share of rail freight with a market share of 31.7% in weight. Compared to 1Q 2023 the share of this group fell by 6 pp.

The share of freight of the second largest commodity group, i.e. metal ores and other mining and quarrying products, was 26.6% in weight carried (an increase by 3.4 pp compared to 1Q 2023) and 24.9% in transport performance (an increase by 3.2 pp compared to 1Q 2023) respectively. In 2Q 2023 14.6 m tonnes were carried within this group, which accounted for 3.7 bn tonne-km of the transport performance.

In the next commodity group, i.e. products of agriculture, hunting, forestry, fishing and fisheries, there was a decrease in the weight carried compared to 1Q 2023 by 0.7 m tonnes (32%). The transport of goods from the grain sub-group decreased by 0.5 m tonnes (29%). The food products, beverages and tobacco group decreased by 0.2 m tonnes and the chemicals, chemical products, man-made fibres, rubber and plastic products, nuclear fuel group dropped by 0.1 m tonnes compared to 1Q 2023.

The transport of the sub-group aggregate, sand, gravel, clays rose by 1.6 m tonnes. This sub-group belongs to the group metal ores and other mining and quarrying products, where, due to the decrease in iron ore shipments, there was an increase in shipments by only 0.5 m tonnes. In

the group of other non-metallic raw material products, there was an increase in shipments by 0.3 m tonnes, driven by a rise in shipments in the subgroups cement, lime, gypsum (by 0.2 m tonnes) and by 0.1 m tonnes in the subgroup other construction materials. For the other groups, the changes in volume did not exceed 100,000 tonnes.

The reduction in the carriage of goods such as coal or aggregates and the impossibility of replacing these cargoes with others is a situation that may affect the profitability of transport. Therefore, rail, as a non-carbon-intensive mode of transport, should seize its opportunity in the face of current market changes, such as the suspension of some and the launch of new directions of goods flow, for instance between the Baltic States and Western Europe, the growing segment of courier services or the transport of agricultural products. The greatest advantage of rail will always remain the possibility of transporting cargo weighing 2-3 thousand tonnes at a time. Such transport requires much less manpower and resources than road transport. These advantages should be supported by the greater flexibility of the rail sector and the digitalisation of this mode of transport. – comments Ignacy Góra, President of the Office of Rail Transport.

In 2Q 2023 65.1% of the total weight of goods was carried in domestic transport and the remaining 34.9% in international transport (18.2% in imports, 13.4% in exports and 3.3% in transit). In the transport performance it was respectively 56% in domestic transport, 19.8% in imports, 16.2% in exports and 8.1% in transit. The share of domestic and international freight remains after the first half of 2023 at a similar level to that for the whole of 2022.

Rail freight in the first half of 2023 shows significant declines in a number of commodity groups. In some of which, such as textiles and clothing, leather and leather products; wood and cork products, straw, paper and paper products, printing products and recordings; furniture, other finished goods, drops in the weight of goods transported were more than 50% compared to the first half of 2022.

Detailed data can be found on our statistics website [Dane Kolejowe](#) (Railway Data) in the [Commodity groups](#) section.