



**TRANSPORT  
SCOTLAND**  
CÒMHDHAIL ALBA

# **Scottish Transport Statistics 2025**

## **International Comparisons**

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## Introduction

This chapter compares some statistics for Scotland with the 27 EU member countries over a mixture of years. Due to the increased EU membership over the years overall comparisons with EU-14 and EU-27 countries are made.

Due to definitional variations across countries comparisons may not be exact (see Sections 3, 4 & 5), especially where noticeable difference exist between the UK figure and the *UK/GB calculated on the same basis* as the figure for Scotland.

In some cases, the EU countries' figures do not all relate to the same year. (See the International comparisons section of the user guide). Because of such differences, the commentary in Section 2 generally does not reference the year. General trends will tend to be similar over recent years and so the impact of this should be minimal.

## Key Points

- **Scotland has less road and rail network by area compared to the EU average.**
- **Scotland has higher car use but less car ownership than the EU average**
- **The proportion of freight carried by road is lower than in the rest of the EU due to the higher proportion carried by pipeline in Scotland.**

## Main points

### Population

Scotland has a low population: only eleven of the EU-27 (Finland, Slovak Republic, Ireland, Croatia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Latvia, Estonia, Cyprus, Luxembourg and Malta) have fewer people. Scotland also has a low population density (74 people per square kilometre) compared with the overall EU average (EU-14: 113; EU-27:

106). Only seven of the EU-27 countries (Croatia, Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, Lithuania, Latvia and Sweden) have a lower population density than Scotland.

## Road Network

For its area, Scotland has a short Motorway network (5.7 km of Motorway per thousand square kilometres), well below the overall EU figure (EU-14: 14.8; EU-27: 18.1). Four of the EU-27 countries (Sweden, Romania, Estonia and Finland) have a lower figure than Scotland. This does not include Latvia and Malta which have no motorway.

The total length of the Scottish road network relative to the area of the country is 5 per cent below the EU-27 average when 'other roads' and unclassified roads in Scotland are excluded (Scotland: 379 km of road per thousand square kilometres; EU-14: 328; EU-27: 401).

Scotland has a short rail network for its area (34.6 km of route per thousand square kilometres) compared with the overall EU figure (EU-14: 34.8; EU-27: 47.6). Nine of the 27 EU countries (Spain, Lithuania, Ireland, Latvia, Portugal, Estonia, Sweden, Finland and Greece) have a lower value than Scotland. This does not include Cyprus and Malta which do not have a railway network.

## Vehicles per Population

Scotland has few cars for the size of its population (483 per thousand population) compared with the EU as a whole (EU-14: 582; EU-27: 570). Seven of the EU-27 countries have lower figures than Scotland.

Scotland also has few goods vehicles relative to the size of its population (72 per thousand population) compared with the overall EU average (EU-14: 75; EU-27: 78). Of the EU-27, thirteen countries have lower figures.

The number of new vehicle registrations in Scotland was relatively high (29 per thousand population), higher than the EU-27 average – three of the EU-27 countries had higher rates (Luxembourg, Belgium and Germany).

## Air travel

Relative to the size of its population, Scotland had more international air passengers to or from the EU-27 countries (2.36 per head of the population, not counting internal UK traffic) than the overall EU figure (EU-14 2.04; EU-27: 1.81).

## Road Fatalities

Scotland's number of road deaths per million population is well below the overall EU average (Scotland: 27; EU-14: 41; EU-27: 45). Of the EU-27 countries, only Sweden had a lower figures.

## Freight

For freight transport, road has a low modal share in Scotland (67.2%) compared with the overall EU figure (EU-14: 72.7%; EU-27: 75.5%). The modal share of pipelines (24.9%) was higher than in any EU country. The modal shares of rail and inland waterways in Scotland are both below the overall figures for the EU-27.

## Table Comparisons

- Rates (per thousand population or per thousand square km) are based on the countries' areas and populations presented in *EU Energy and Transport in Figures*. As figures are rounded to a few decimal places, results won't be as precise as they using exact figures. Therefore figures should be regarded as broad indicators;
- Country figures may not be on *exactly* the basis due to the availability of data. There is plenty of scope for differences in interpretation or definition (e.g. should

the surface area of inland lochs and lakes be included when calculating a country's area?);

- Scotland figures may differ from those elsewhere in *Scottish Transport Statistics* in order to provide Scottish figures on the same basis as the GB or UK figures given in the final two columns.
- GB and UK figures are on the same basis as the figures for Scotland. The closer that these figures are to the UK (or GB) figures from *EU Energy and Transport in Figures* (columns to the left of the EU-14 and EU-27), the closer that the Scottish basis is to the EU countries.
- Many of the Scotland figures are derived from GB-wide surveys conducted by the Department for Transport and UK figures may not be as readily available. As Northern Ireland may account for a small percentage of a UK figure, there is likely to be little difference between figures for GB and UK, particularly for rates.
- Some of the Scotland, GB and/or UK figures appear with more significant digits than the figures for the EU countries, increasing the precision of the rates.



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