THE EUROPEAN **ROAD FREIGHT RATE** DEVELOPMENT **BENCHMARK**

Q4 2025

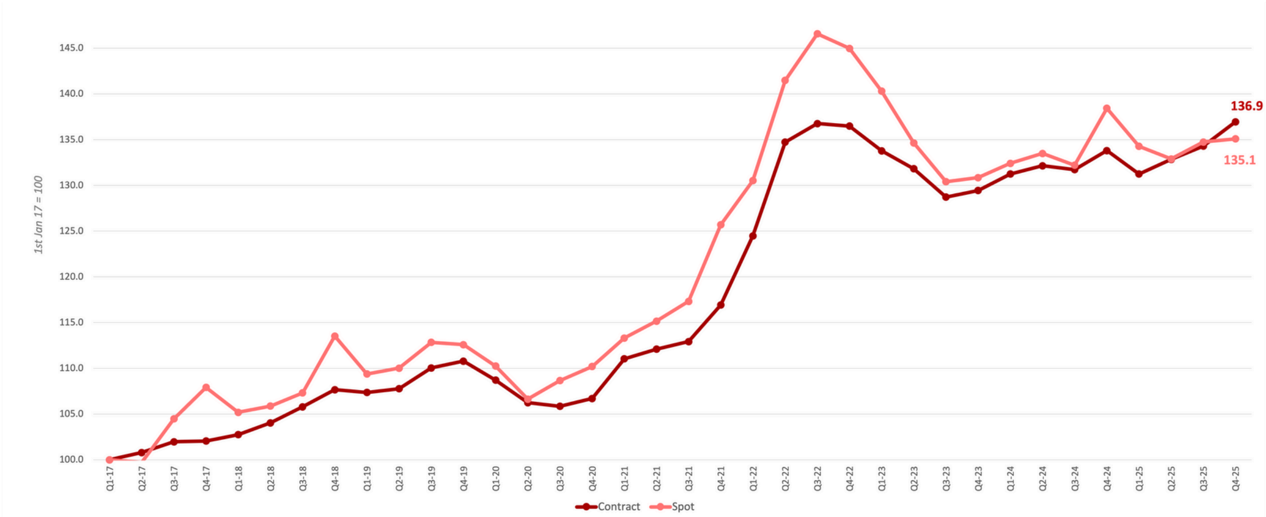
FEBRUARY 2026

CONTENT

01.

EUROPEAN ROAD FREIGHT RATE BENCHMARK INDEX

Ti x Upply x IRU European Road Freight Rates index Q4-2025



Source: Upply

BENCHMARK SPOT AND CONTRACT

Data

The European road freight rate indexes (Jan 2017 = 100) show divergence between contract and spot markets in Q4 2025. Contract rates climbed to 136.9, a solid 2.6-point increase QoQ and a 3.1-point rise YoY. Meanwhile, spot rates reached 135.1, advancing modestly by 0.3 points from the previous quarter but declining 3.3 points compared to the same period last year.

Market Story

In November 2025, retail trade volumes jumped 2.3% YoY across both the eurozone and EU, according to Eurostat, following a revised 1.9% growth in October. This sustained consumer demand helps explain the uptick in contract rates, as businesses are expecting stronger demand in the upcoming months, and locking in contracts now.

Operating costs also added slight upward pressure to contract rates. CNR data shows the cost of running a 40-tonne long-haul truck rose in Q4 2025. Diesel rose 0.66% QoQ. Driver costs increased 1.28%, up from 1.22% the previous quarter, though they're still below 2024 levels. Finance and insurance costs rose the most, by 4.23%. Meanwhile, the latest ACEA data on truck registrations paints a challenging picture for the European market, with new registrations declining 6.2 percent year-on-year. This downward trend affected most major fleets, with notable exceptions being Poland, which saw a 7 percent increase in new registrations.

The most striking development came from Lithuania, where new truck registrations surged 59 percent year-on-year to reach 11,103 units in 2025, the highest figure ever recorded for the country. This represents a remarkable recovery from the previous year's decline. Denmark also posted modest growth of 5 percent, driven primarily by electric truck registrations that offset losses in diesel vehicles. This shift likely reflects transport operators' adaptation to the new tolling scheme under Eurovignette requirements.

The alternative powertrain segment showed promising growth, with battery-electric trucks capturing 2.1 percent of heavy-duty registrations and a more substantial 15.4 percent of medium-duty registrations.

However, the gains observed in certain countries were overshadowed by significant declines in Europe's three largest markets: Spain (-4 percent), France (-9 percent), and Germany (-12 percent). An interesting pattern emerged in Spain, where Q4 registrations quadrupled compared to Q3, suggesting market volatility and potential correction from earlier quarters rather than a sustained recovery trend.

Across the continent, economic growth was mixed. UK GDP was up just 0.1% in Q3 2025, vs. Q2 2025, while the eurozone managed 0.3%. France grew a respectable 0.5%, but Germany remained stagnant.

Household spending paints an interesting picture. Real wages in the eurozone rose 2.6% on average in 2025, household consumption only grew 1.2%, half the pace of wage growth. Spanish consumers spent a little more thanks to rising wages and lower mortgage costs. However, Italy and Germany are still stuck in the same consumption rut they've been in since COVID.

Households are now saving more than €0.15 of every euro earned, the highest savings rate in three decades outside the pandemic period. This cautious behaviour, combined with shaky consumer confidence, reduced demand in Q4. Demand-side pressure remained muted subsequently keeping spot rates from spiking during what should have been a busy holiday season.

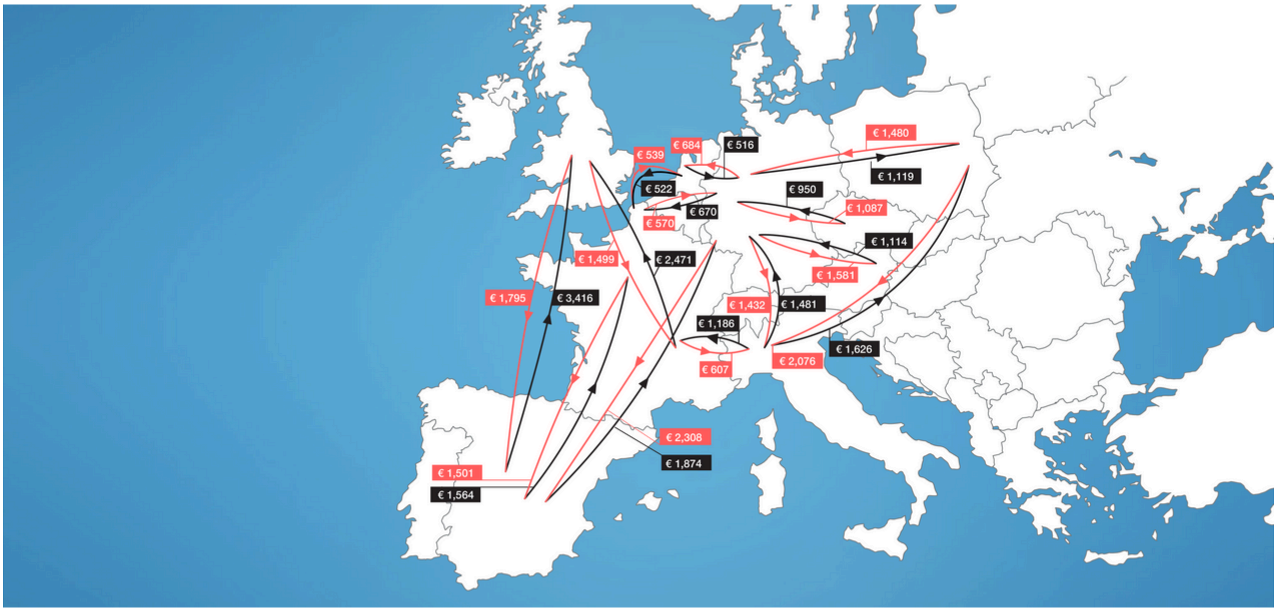
Outlook

Looking ahead, inflation should ease to just under 2% in 2026, which is good news for purchasing power. A stronger euro, and cheaper energy will all help stimulate consumption, therefore putting upward pressure on rates, though real wage growth will decelerate compared to 2025. Competitive pressure from Chinese imports might put more upwards pressure on port routes, inching rates upwards.

Despite feeling secure about their own finances, UK consumers are reluctant to spend especially on major purchases like cars and furniture. KPMG also expects eurozone GDP to grow 1.1% in 2026, driven mainly by a 1.3% increase in consumption. Major European central banks have wrapped up their rate cutting cycles, and interest rates should hold steady through 2026 as inflation hits target levels. That could ease finance costs for trucks, therefore slightly cutting operating costs.

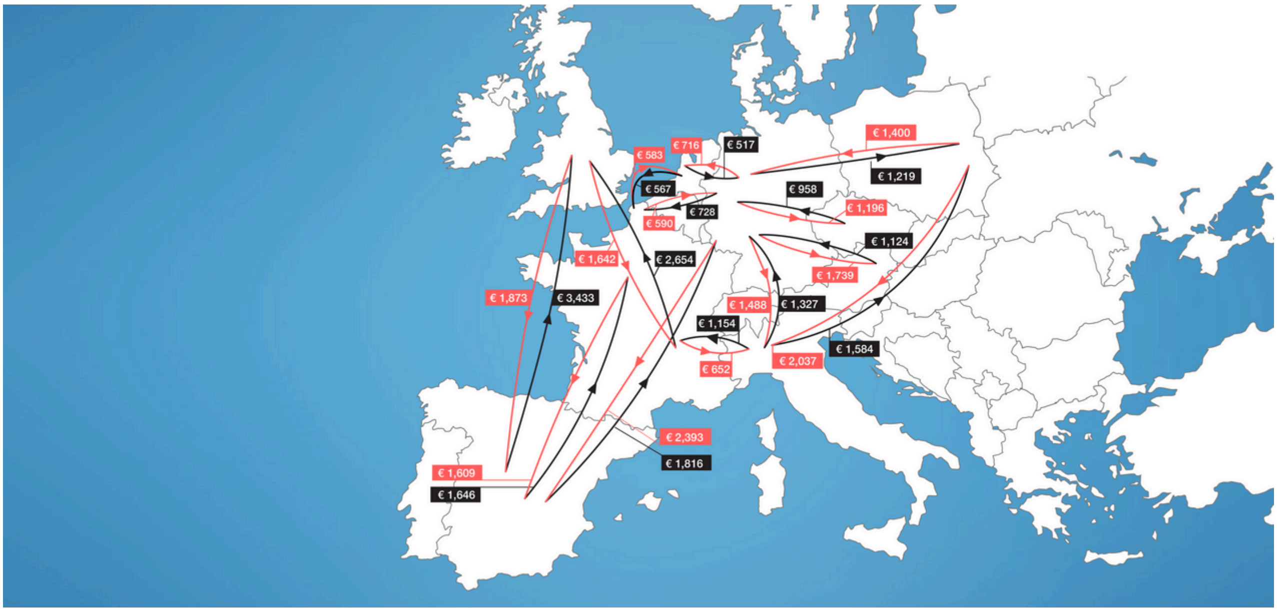
Southern EU countries should continue outperforming in 2026, though not as dramatically as in 2025. We're already seeing some slowdown in Spain and Italy, which could translate to softer spot rate increases in those markets. Germany’s economic growth is set for a considerable rebound, while Frances's economy is set to grow 0.9% in 2026, according to Eurostat. According to the European Commission’s autumn forecasts, growth in the EU27 is expected to reach 1.4% increase in the upcoming year, thus we expect to see moderate rate growth as demand recovers.

Ti x Upply x IRU European Road Freight Benchmark Map – Q4 2025 Contract Rates



Source: Upply

Ti x Upply x IRU European Road Freight Benchmark Map – Q4 2025 Spot Rates



Source: Upply

02.

VOLUME DEVELOPMENT

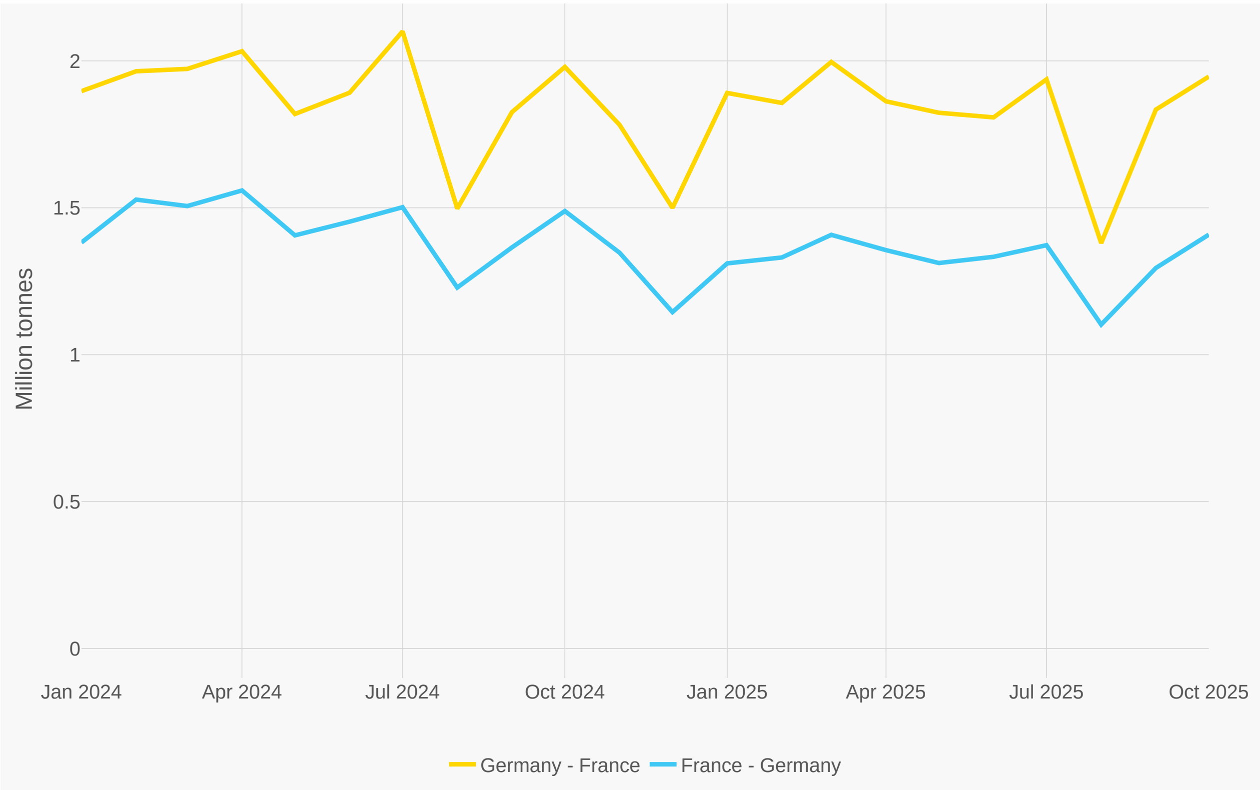
ROAD FREIGHT VOLUME

Market Story

The latest data shows that road trade (in tonnes) for major EU economies has rebounded from its August low, particularly on the Germany–France corridor, reaching levels comparable to 2024. All corridors connecting to Poland are also showing recovery from a weak Q3 2025 and resilience throughout 2025.

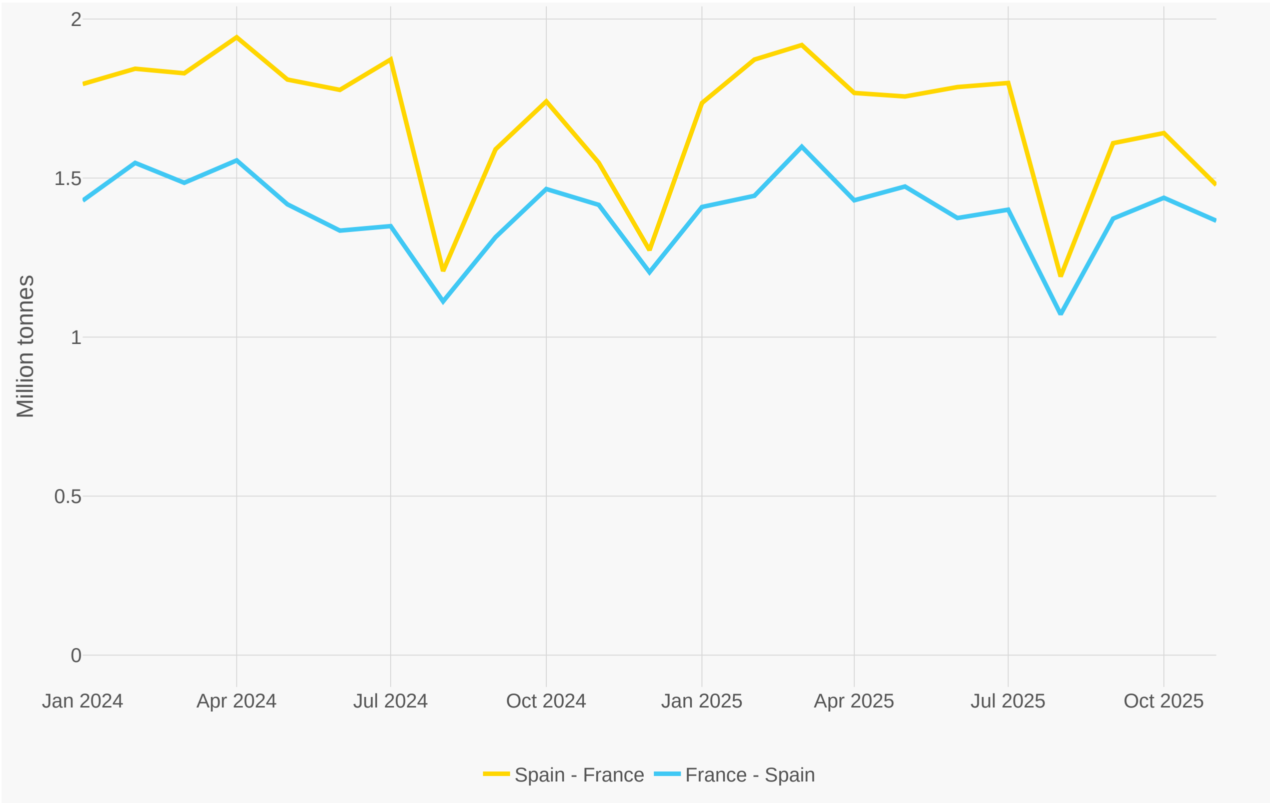
Household saving rates began to fall, with the latest data showing a decrease from 15.4 to 15.1%. This decline occurred as consumption rose more (+0.9%) than gross disposable income (+0.6%) in the same period. Services, retail, construction, and industrial production all grew during Q4 2025 compared to Q4 2024. Germany is rebounding from a historic low last August, while Poland and France continue their positive trends — as does the Euro zone (excluding Bulgaria, which entered the Euro zone in Q1 2026).

Trade by road between Germany and France



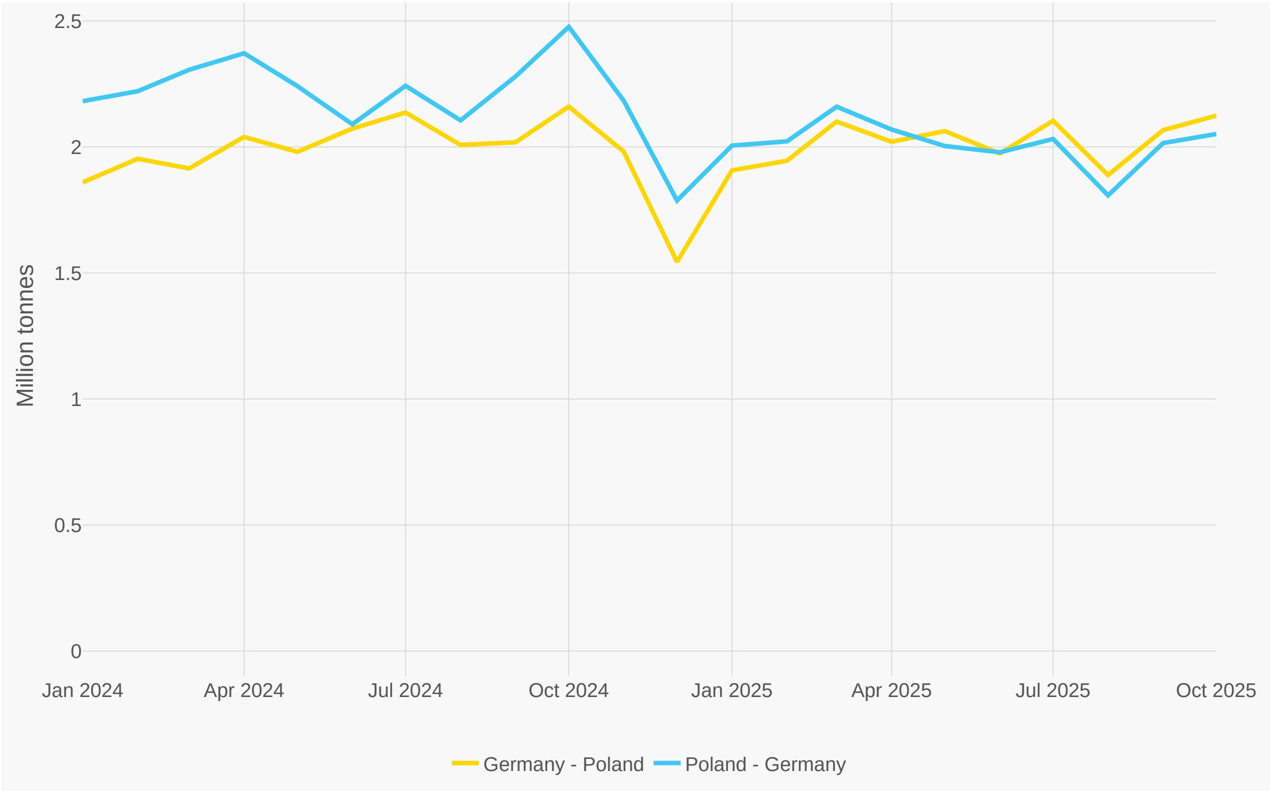
Source: EUROSTAT (DS-059318)

Trade by road between Spain and France



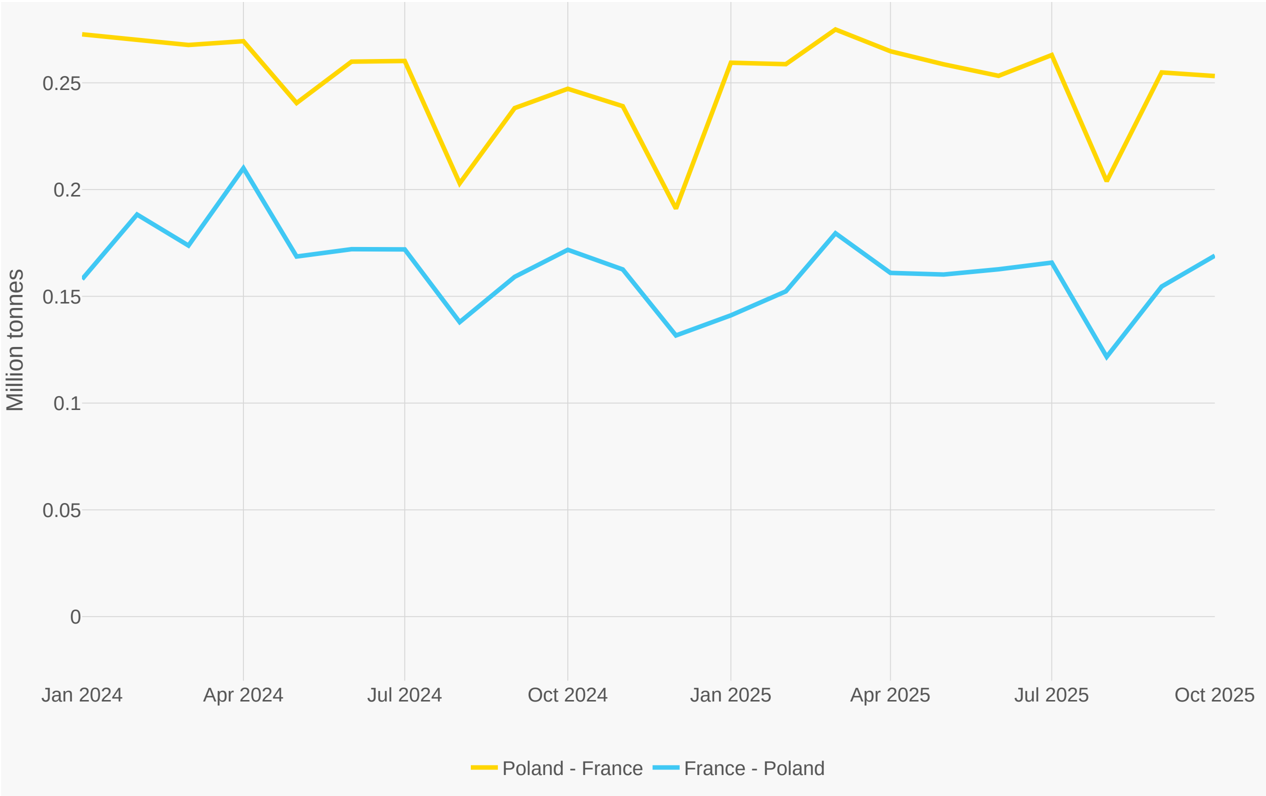
Source: EUROSTAT (DS-059318)

Trade by road between Germany and Poland



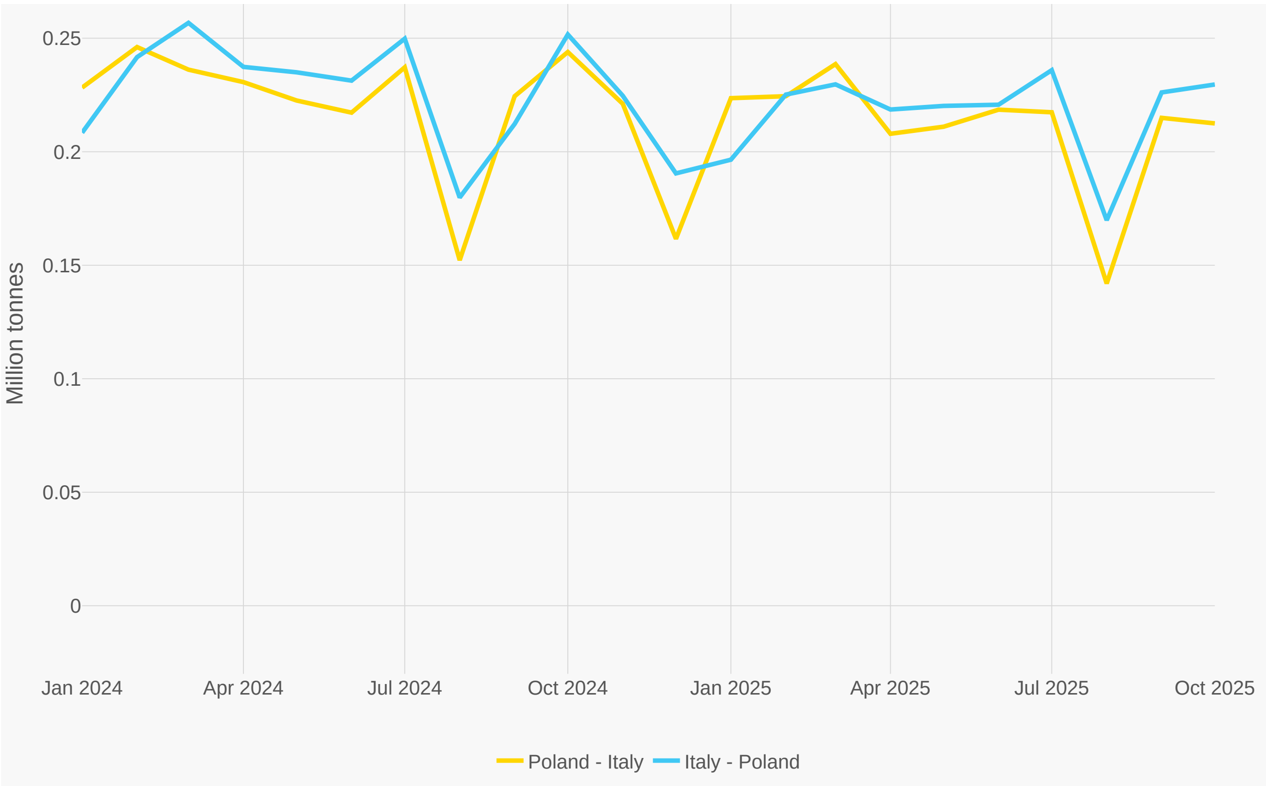
Source: EUROSTAT (DS-059318)

Trade by road between Poland and France



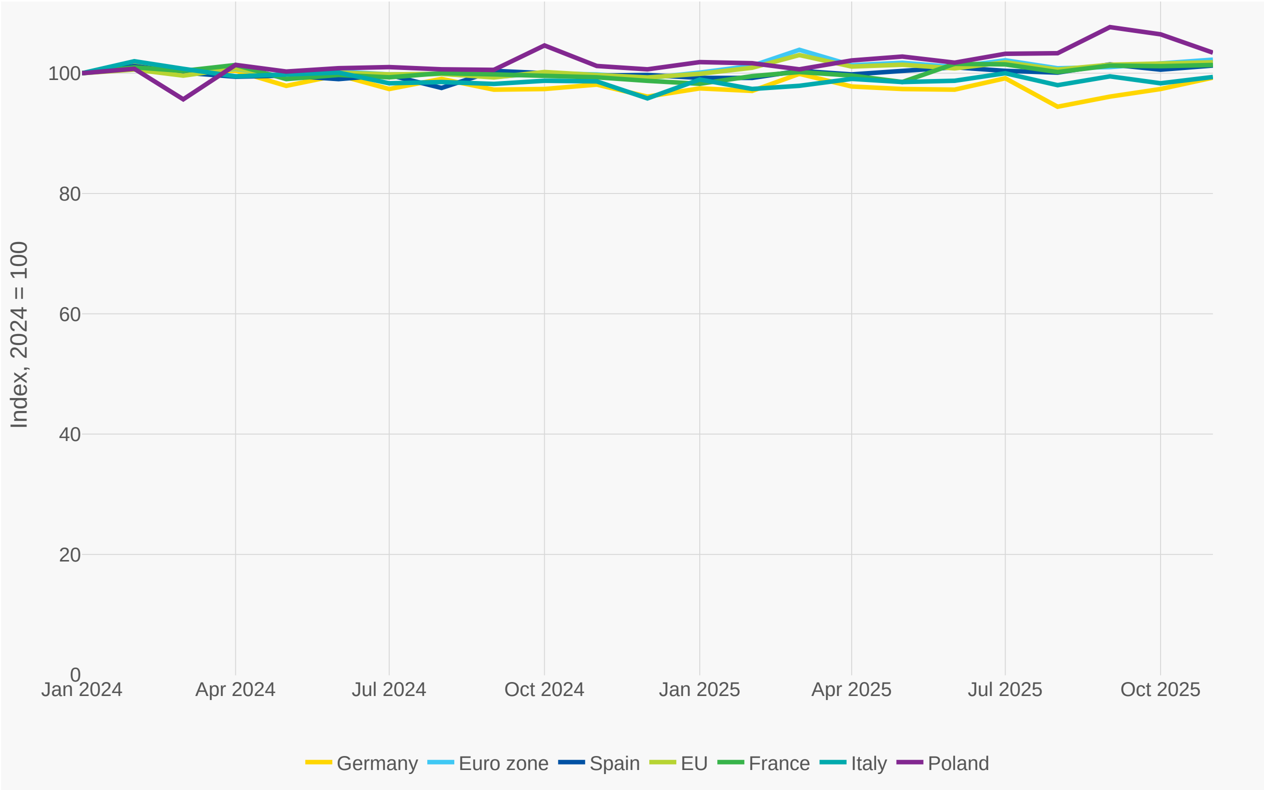
Source: EUROSTAT (DS-059318)

Trade by road between Poland and Italy



Source: EUROSTAT (DS-059318)

Activity of mining, quarrying and manufacturing by country



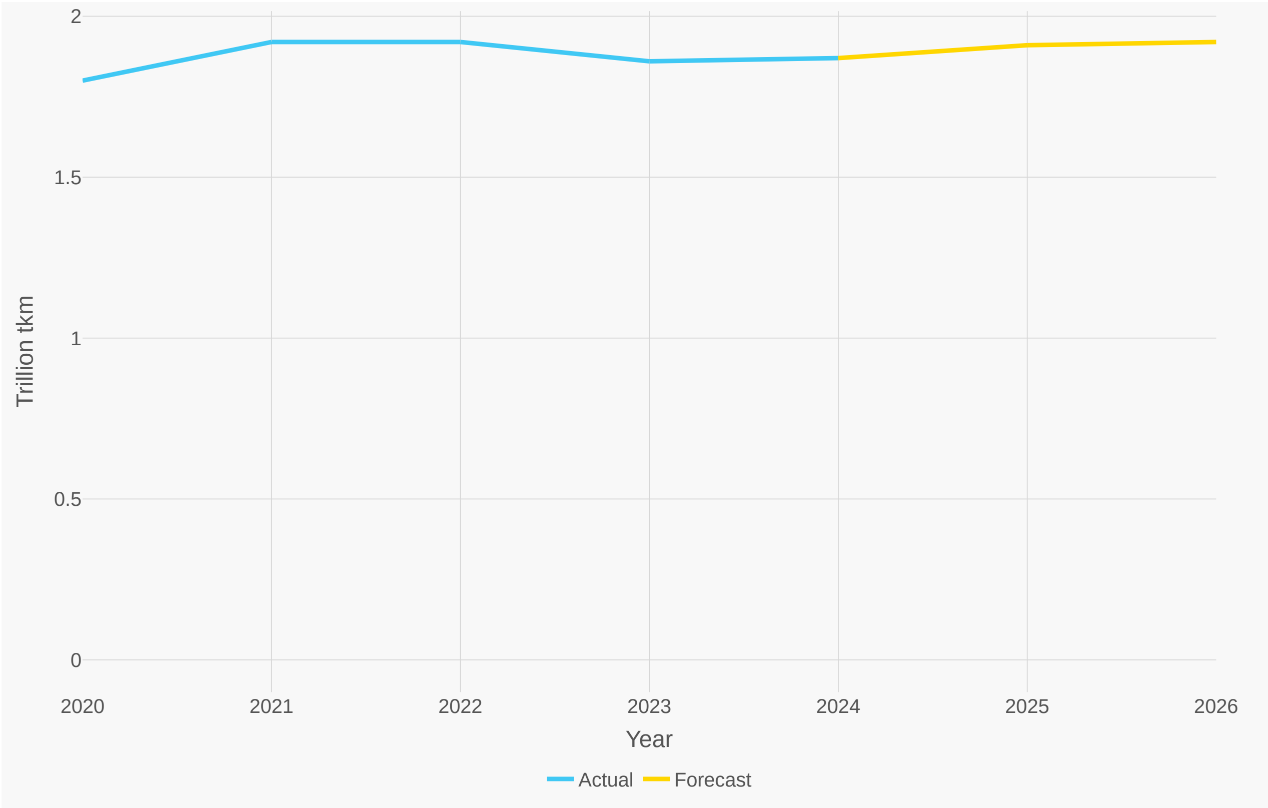
Source: EUROSTAT (DS-059318)

Outlook

Inflation reached 2.5% during Q4 2025, up 0.1 percentage point from Q3 2025. This brought the 2025 annual inflation rate to 2.5%, down from 2.6% in 2024. First official data suggests that 2025 road freight volumes slightly outperformed 2024 by 2%. Meanwhile, the IRU forecast for 2026 suggests a 0.6% increase in freight volumes (tonne-kilometer) on roads. While growth for next year is modest, road freight volumes should reach the 2021 record levels.

Large uncertainties remain, as geopolitical tensions and related tariff changes might jeopardize goods flow between major economies. However, the recently signed EU–Mercosur agreement might boost trade flows between the EU and South America. The treaty greatly reduces tariffs between the two regions, which, combined with greater goods flow between China and the EU, could increase transport demand for EU carriers.

EU road freight volumes over time



Source: Eurostat (road_go_ta_tott) extracted on 2026-01-21 & IRU forecast ***[1]***

[1] Download the IRU Intelligence Briefing, A breakdown of the latest EU road freight volumes and forecast to 2030, here

03.

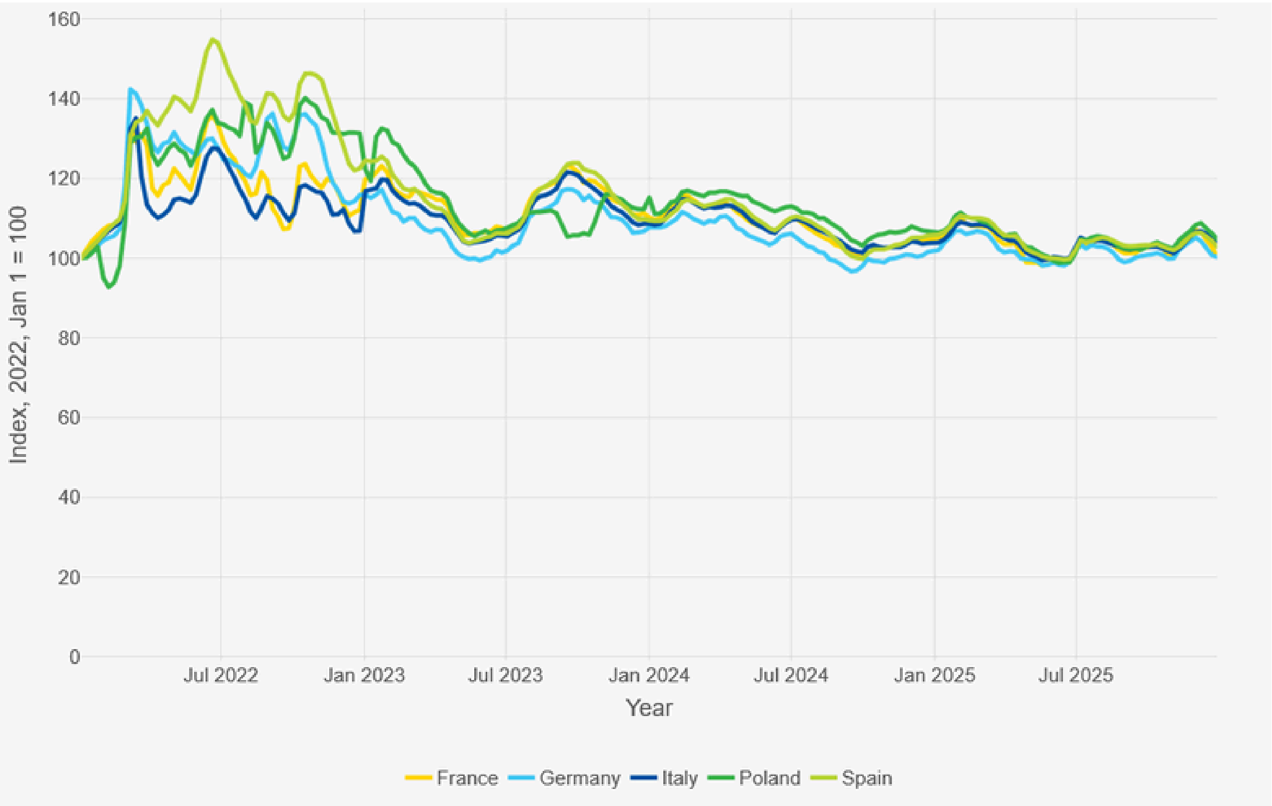
SUPPLY SIDE ISSUES

ROAD TRANSPORTATION COSTS

1. Fuel prices

Global crude oil prices fell in 2025 as production exceeded consumption by 2.5 million barrels per day in Q4-2025, a 2.4% gap. The price per barrel dropped to $63 in Q4-2025 and averaged $69 for the year, the lowest levels since 2020. Germany saw the steepest decline, becoming the only nation with a Q4-2025 diesel price below the 2022 baseline. Looking ahead to 2026, the EIA projects that production will continue to outpace consumption. With stockpiles are being replenished, particularly in China, the barrel price could fall to $56 in 2026 (down 9% year-over-year) and $54 in 2027 (down 4% year-over-year). However, significant uncertainties cloud the outlook for fuel prices. ETS2 is scheduled to take effect in 2027, though recent discussions suggest a possible delay until 2028. The EIA's forecast assumes no changes to sanctions on Venezuelan oil, sanctions that the US administration could lift in the near future. Finally, recent IEA analysis indicates that investments in oil supply are insufficient to meet rising energy demand. With 90% of annual investment going toward offsetting production declines, supply tensions could emerge over the next decade. Additionally, oil production is becoming concentrated in fewer countries, which could push prices upward.

Index of diesel prices at pump

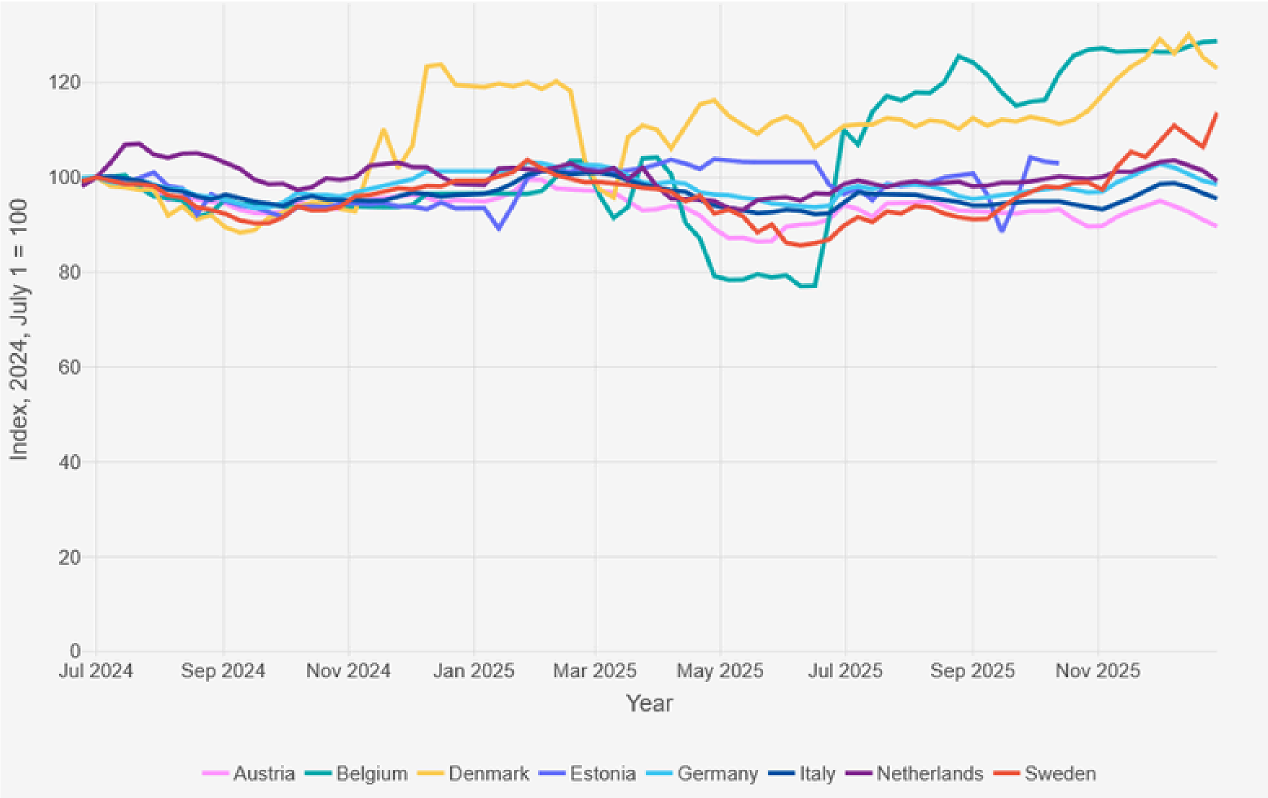


Source: IRU fuel prices service ***[2]***

[2] Access weekly price updates for diesel and alternative fuels in more than 65 countries and a one-week forecast IRU Intelligence, Fuel live prices

HVO prices at public pumps increased in Q4 across most EU countries, particularly in Belgium, Denmark, and Sweden, where the fuel is popular among transport operators. The Netherlands was the only exception, with HVO prices remaining stable. Looking ahead, Argus Media projects that EU HVO demand could rise by 8% in 2026, driven by the rollout of RED III by member states and growing voluntary adoption by transport operators seeking to decarbonise their operations. Limited feedstock availability could create an EU HVO deficit as early as 2030, potentially driving prices higher during that period.

Index of HVO prices at pump

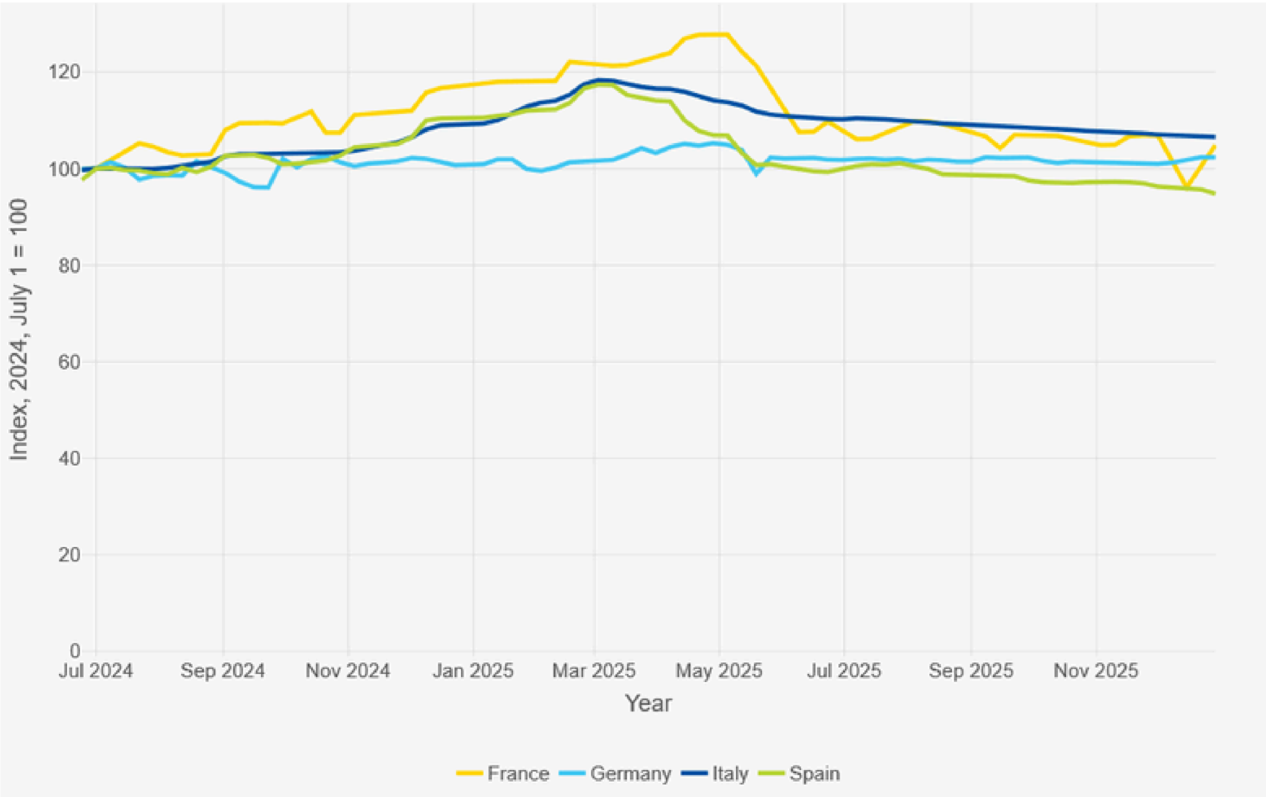


Source: IRU fuel prices service ***[3]***

[3] Access weekly price updates for diesel and alternative fuels in more than 65 countries and a one-week forecast IRU Intelligence, Fuel live prices

CNG prices continued to fall in Q4 2025, with the exception of Germany, which saw a slight increase. The EU Dutch TTF benchmark fluctuated between €27 and €33/MWh during Q4 2025—lower than Q3 2025. While prices are among the lowest in recent history, they remain higher than pre-COVID levels. Prices have ramped up since, already hitting €36/MWh in January, with expectations of high prices in the coming quarter. National stockpiles in the EU are lower than normal for this period, and Asian countries are expecting a cold wave that will push consumption up.

Index of CNG prices at pump



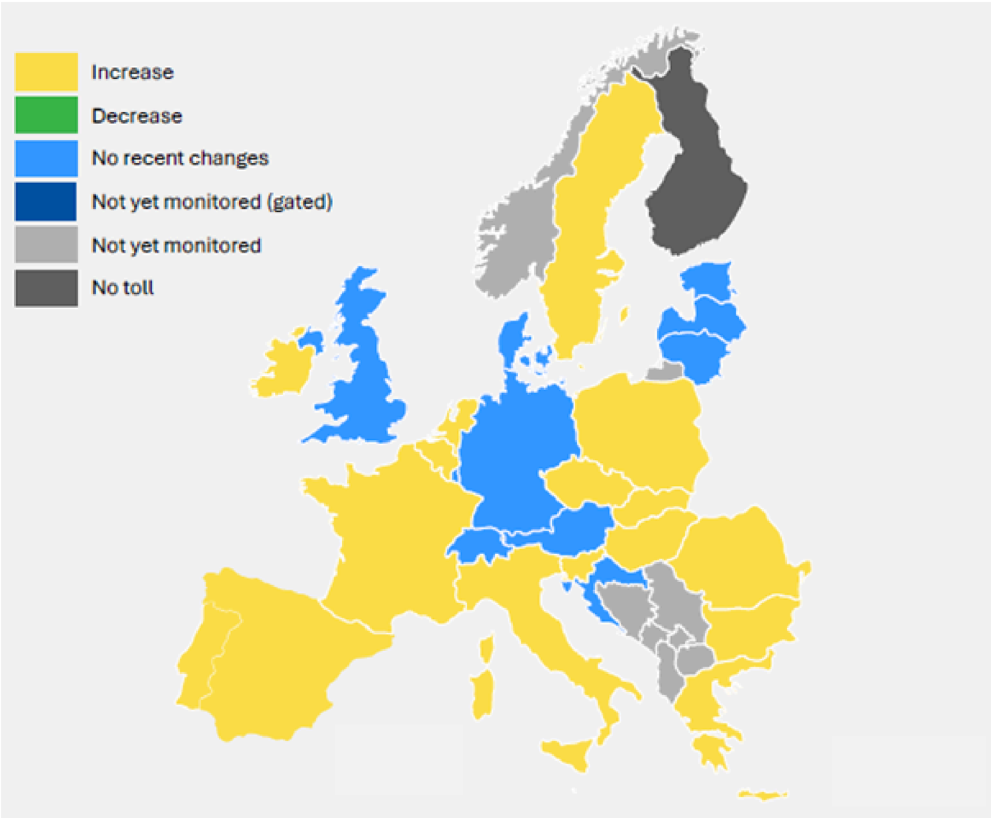
Source: IRU fuel prices service ***[4]***

[4] Access weekly price updates for diesel and alternative fuels in more than 65 countries and a one-week forecast IRU Intelligence, Fuel live prices

2. Tolling costs

Tolling is becoming a larger component of trucks' total cost of ownership. In some countries, such as Austria and Hungary, tolling costs per kilometre now exceed fuel costs. Most countries raised their tolling rates at the end of Q4 2025, ranging from 1.1% in Slovenia to 7.7% in Austria for highways, and reaching 14.4% for expressways (primary roads) in Czechia. Poland increased its rates by 5%, with another 40% increase expected in February 2026 to align with the Eurovignette directive. The Netherlands is also preparing to shift from a time-based to a distance-based tolling scheme in July 2026, with toll costs varying based on highway mileage.

European Union latest tolling prices trend

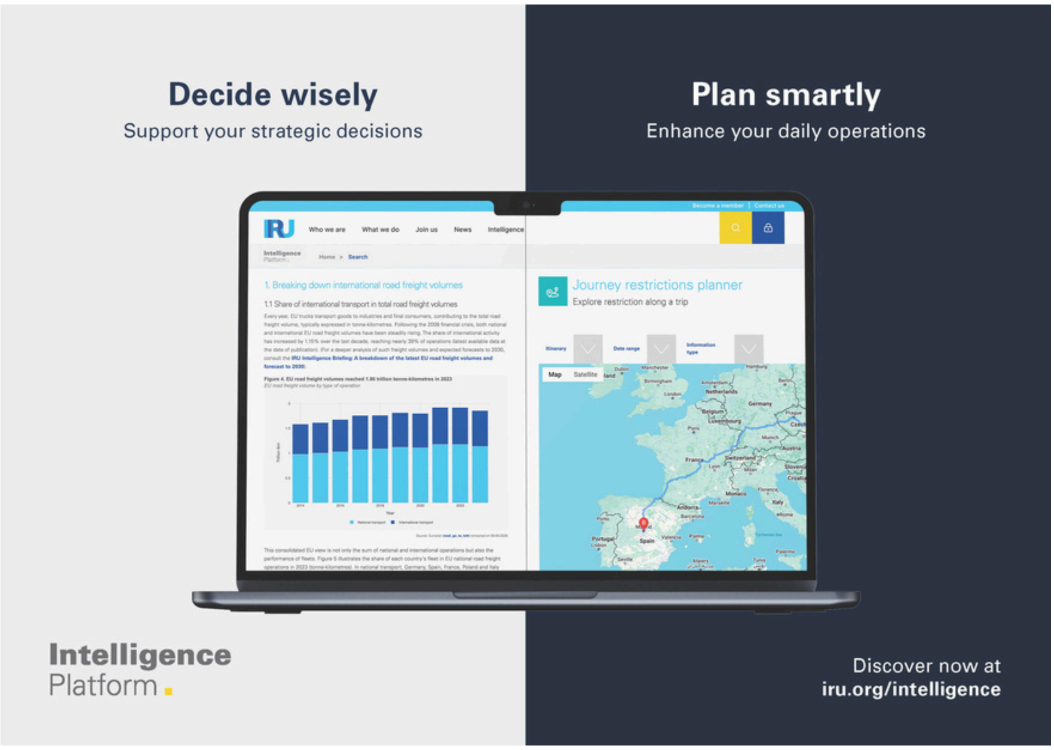


Source: IRU Intelligence Monitoring ***[5]***

[5] Download the IRU Intelligence Monitoring, January 2026

CAPACITY OUTLOOK

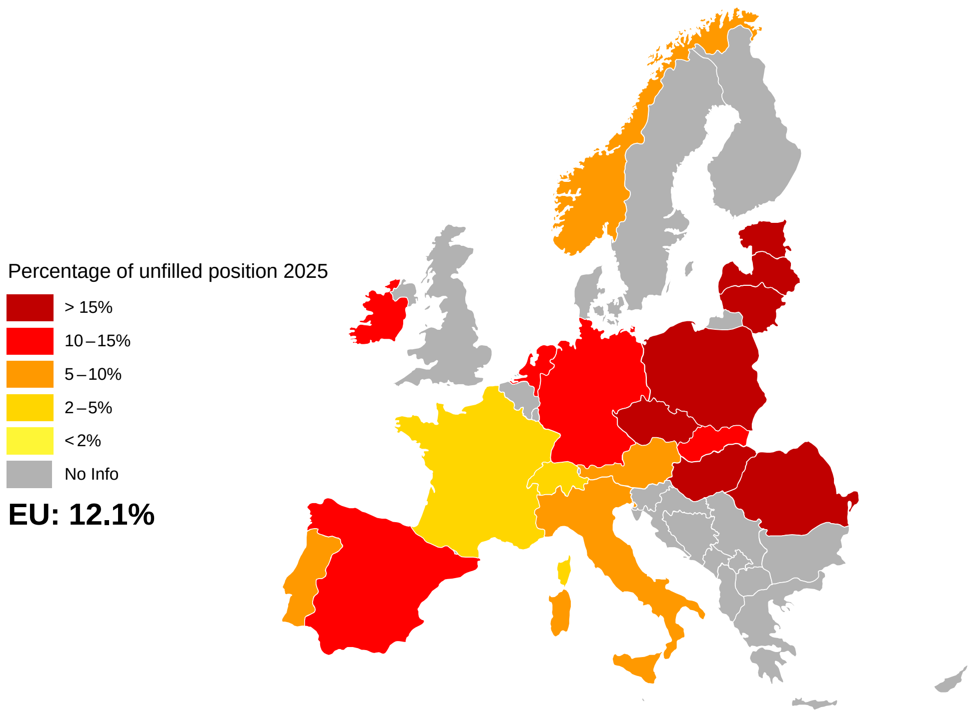
While updates show a year-long delay, the latest data on transport companies reveal an increase in both transport operators and people employed by the industry in 2024 versus 2023, 0.8 percent and 0.3 percent respectively, with significant national discrepancies. The Netherlands and Czechia, for instance, saw a 7 percent increase in the number of companies, whereas Denmark continued its decline with 5 percent fewer companies in 2024 versus 2023.



DRIVER SHORTAGE

Every year, IRU surveys transport operators worldwide regarding their difficulties finding drivers. Latest preliminary results suggest that the situation is worsening in Europe, with an increasing level of missing drivers in 2025 compared to 2024. The shortage increased by 18'000 drivers missing, for a total of 444'000 unfilled positions in 2025 for the EU. The shortage is notably acute for Eastern operators and for Spanish operators, fleets covering a great share of international operations in the EU. German operators are also facing high level of unfilled position, another difficulty for the industry as Germany is the first market in terms of road freight volumes.

Driver Shortage Survey 2025
Preliminary results



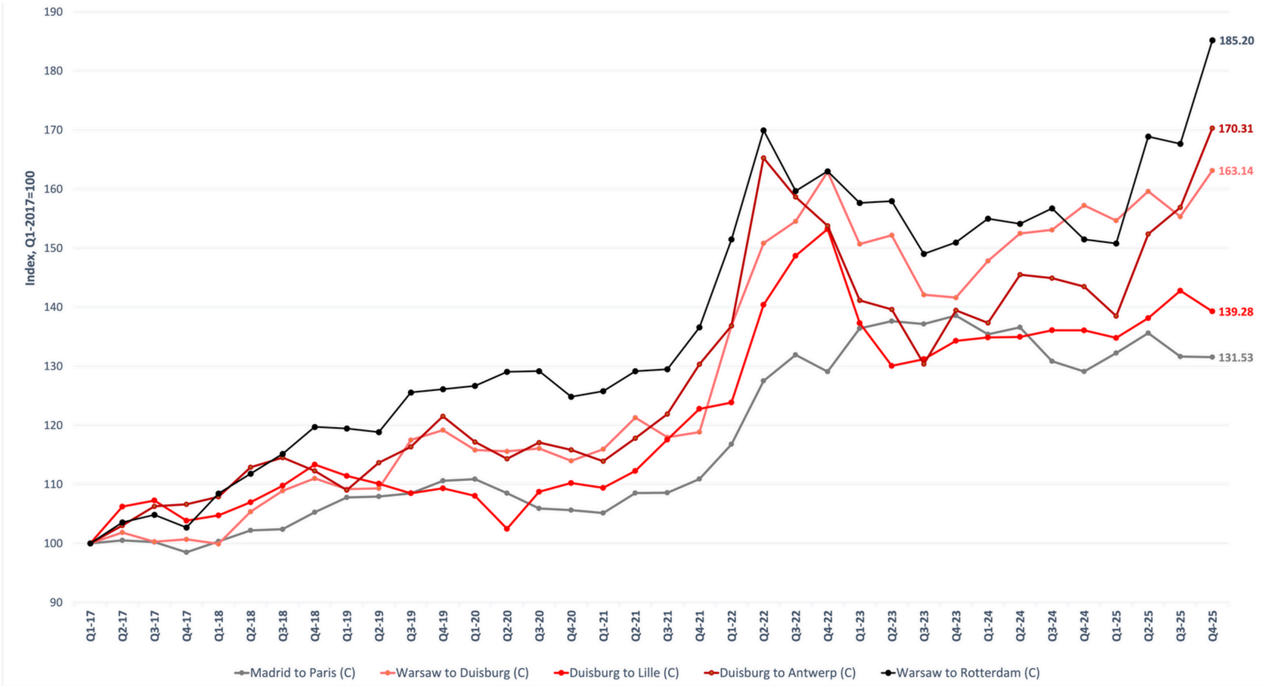
Source: IRU Annual Driver Shortage survey 2025, preliminary results

04.

COMPARISON OF INTERNATIONAL LANES

CITY PAIRS - CONTRACT

Headhaul Contract Rates



Source: Upply

Rates Data

The contract rates from Madrid to Paris stand at 131.5 index points, equivalent to €1.23/km. This represents a marginal decline of 0.1 points QoQ, though rates remain up 2.4 points YoY.

The contract rates from Warsaw to Duisburg stand at 163.1 index points, or €1.37/km. This route posted impressive gains of 7.8 points QoQ and 5.9 points YoY.

The contract rates from Duisburg to Lille stand at 139.3 index points, down 3.5 points QoQ, equivalent to €2.22/km. This marks an increase of 3.2 points YoY.

The contract rates from Duisburg to Antwerp stand at 170.3 index points, or €3.09/km. This route experienced remarkable growth of 13.4 points QoQ and a substantial 26.8 points YoY.

The contract rates from Warsaw to Rotterdam stand at 185.2 index points, equivalent to €1.87/km. This route showed strong momentum with gains of 17.6 points QoQ and 33.7 points YoY.

Market Story

Poland's chemical production climbed 3.4% QoQ, while wearing apparel manufacturing increased 10.3%, according to Eurostat. One major retailer reported Q3 sales of PLN 6,141 million (€1,458 million) versus PLN 5,212 million a year ago, posting a 17.8% increase. That kind of growth should keep demand strong for Polish head haul routes and push contract rates higher.

The rate jumps we have observed on the Warsaw to Rotterdam route, with rates increasing 17.6 points QoQ, and the Warsaw to Duisburg, with rates increasing 7.8 points QoQ, also reflects this rise in demand within the Polish industrial space. The rise in demand from the aforementioned vertical sectors is a testament to the increased demand for contracts, therefore causing upwards pressure on rates with Poland at the head haul.

After months of uncertainty, German manufacturing is finally turning a corner. A much-awaited recovery in German manufacturing has brought cautious relief, with production in the high-tech sector rising 4.4% QoQ, while pharmaceutical production rose 6.3%.

Motor vehicle production volume also increased by 6.0%, according to adjusted figures from Eurostat. This is evidenced by a recovery in performance for German auto manufactures, as BMW delivered 2,463,715 vehicles globally in 2025, up 0.5% YoY, including 642,087 electrified vehicles, an 8.3% increase. European sales also rose 4.0%, with domestic German orders up a notable 14.4%.

Volkswagen sold 6.6 million vehicles in the nine months ended October 2025, up from 6.52 million the previous year. Growth in South America and Europe offset weaker demand from the US and China. Western European order intake jumped 17% in some categories.

This automotive recovery, combined with pharmaceutical and tech sector growth, is driving demand for outbound orders from Germany's industrial hubs. The Duisburg to Antwerp route grew 13.4 points QoQ, as component suppliers and manufacturers of finished goods secure capacity for an anticipated resurgence in demand. Meanwhile, Duisburg to Lille rates increased 3.2 points YoY, supported by increased manufacturing activity putting upward pressure on contract rates out of Germany.

Outlook

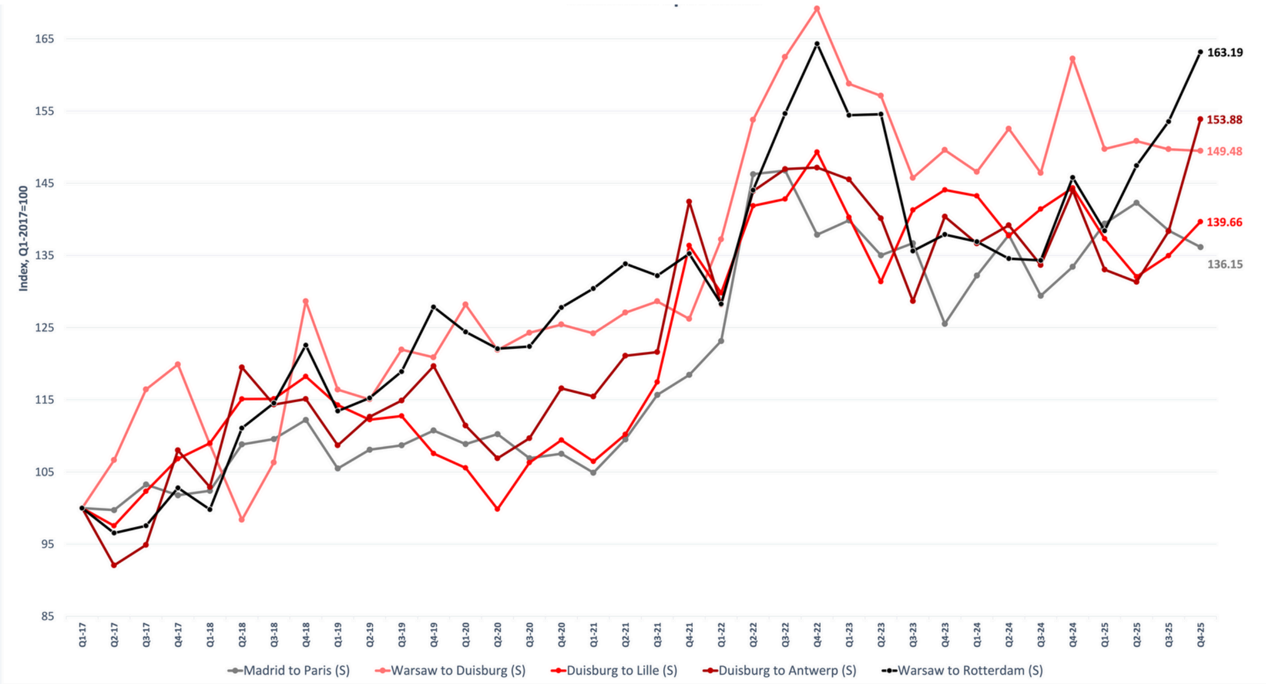
The Polish economy had performed relatively well in 2025, although as of the end of Q4 2025 Poland's manufacturing momentum is slowing. The S&P Global Manufacturing PMI fell to 48.5 in December from 49.1 in November, the eighth straight month of contraction and the fastest decline since August. Output dropped as new orders weakened, particularly from Germany and France, while export orders also declined. If this trend continues, demand for contract capacity out of Poland could plateau, easing upward pressure on rates.

German manufacturing's recovery has us breathing a sigh of relief, though optimism remains guarded. That is a factor that would push rates up in the coming quarters.

The outlook for 2025-26 is mixed. Tariffs and global uncertainty will weigh on German investment and exports, but higher public spending should support consumption and investment, particularly in 2026-27. However, the first signs of recovery of the industrial sector still look promising. Contract rates on German routes will be pushed slightly upwards by the manufacturing industry, with additional support from fiscal stimulus and stronger retail activity propping rates up.

CITY PAIRS - SPOT

Headhaul Spot Rates



Source: Upply

Rates Data

The spot rates from Madrid to Paris stand at 136.2 index points, equivalent to €1.30/km. This represents a decline of 2.3 points QoQ, though rates increased by a nearly offsetting 2.7 points YoY.

The spot rates from Warsaw to Duisburg stand at 149.5 index points, or €1.30/km. This route experienced a marginal decrease of 0.2 points QoQ and a substantial drop of 12.8 points YoY.

The spot rates from Duisburg to Lille stand at 139.7 index points, equivalent to €2.33/km. This marks an increase of 4.7 points QoQ, offset by an equal decline of 4.7 points YoY.

The spot rates from Duisburg to Antwerp stand at 153.9 index points, or €3.23/km. This route climbed 15.5 points QoQ and 9.9 points YoY.

The spot rates from Warsaw to Rotterdam stand at 163.2 index points, equivalent to €1.85/km. The rates on this route saw the strongest increase of the observed routes this past quarter, by 9.6 points QoQ and 17.4 points YoY.

Market Story

In the nine months ended October 2025, Polish exports climbed by 4.2% to an all-time high of EUR 32.4 billion, mainly on the back of other consumer goods, especially clothing, footwear, and video game consoles.

This export momentum is directly reflected in spot market pricing, with Warsaw to Rotterdam rates climbing 9.6 points QoQ. There was a significant increase in rates out of Warsaw to the port bound routes of Antwerp and Rotterdam, reflecting demand of export lanes out of the EU and putting upwards pressure on spot prices.

While Spain was a European top performer throughout the year, the final month brought a slow end to 2025. The HCOB Spain Manufacturing PMI dropped to 49.6 in December 2025 signalling a contraction, down from 51.5 in November and below market expectations of an expansion at 51.0 PMI points, according to S&P. This marked the first contraction since April, mainly due to a decrease in both output and new orders. Survey data indicated a deterioration in demand, particularly from international clients, with new export orders falling at the steepest pace since April due to intensified price competition. This induced a quick reaction in the spot rates market, where rates from Madrid to Paris dropped 2.3 points QoQ to 136.2 index points, as subdued Spanish manufacturing output and export activity had a downward pull on spot rates.

Outlook

Despite the slowdown in Spanish manufacturing and exports, confidence rose to an 18-month high on expectations of stronger demand and order books returning in 2026, therefore even though demand towards the end of Q4 2025 was subdued, we expect a slight upwards pressure on spot rates out of Spain to return in the coming quarters, and for rates to experience a slight increase.

If Polish exports maintain upwards momentum, we expect capacity to tighten out of Poland, especially to port bound routes, therefore pushing spot rates upwards.

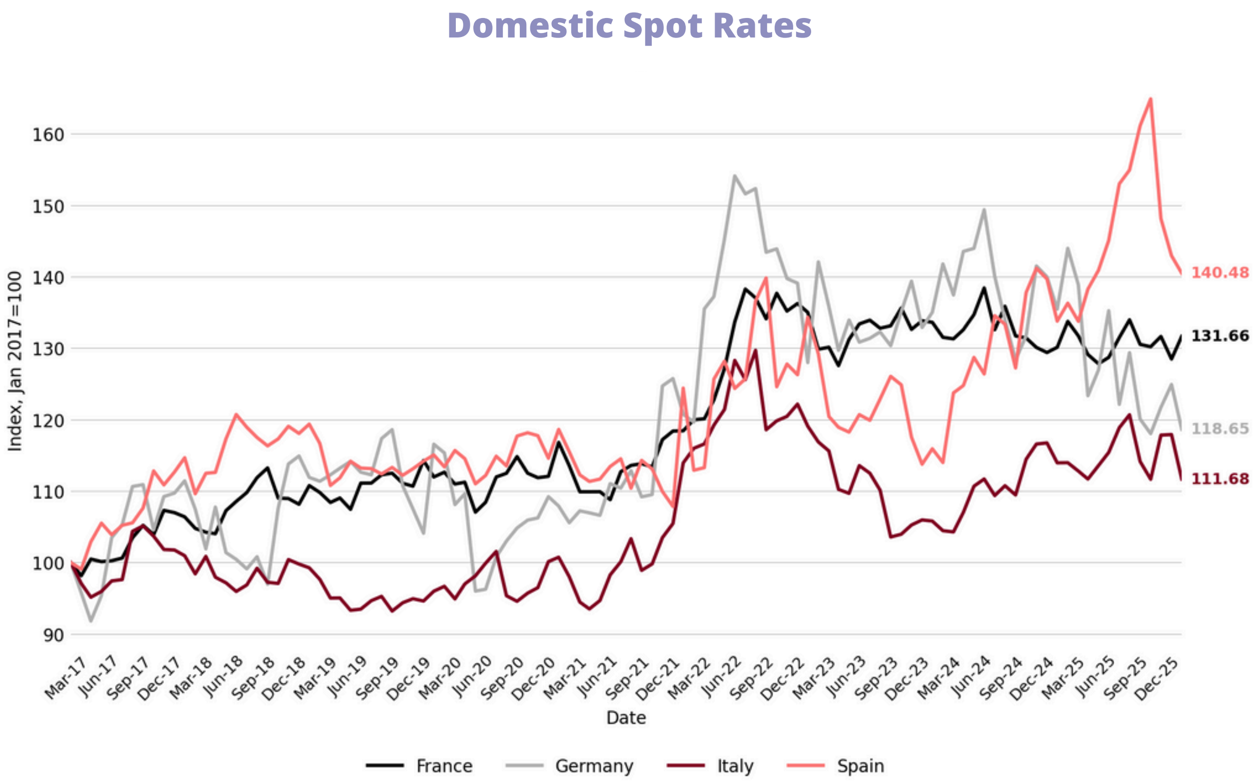
However, it’s not going to be smooth sailing. EU export market growth is expected to slow in 2026 due to high global tariffs, weighing on goods exports. A rebound may come in 2027, partly from the EU's tariff advantage in the US versus other trading partners. Meanwhile, goods imports are projected to grow dynamically, driven by trade diversion, Chinese exports blocked from the US market will likely flow to Europe instead.

Net exports are expected to drag on EU GDP in 2025-26 before turning neutral in 2027. For road freight, this means limited upside for spot rates in southern Europe as export volumes remain under downward pressure, even as domestic consumption provides some support.

05.

COMPARISON OF DOMESTIC LANES

DOMESTIC LANES - SPOT



Source: Upply

Rates Data

Domestic spot rates in Spain are down significantly QoQ, by 16.5 points. YoY they are up 5.63 vs the same quarter last year, as last minute seasonal demand coupled with economic growth throughout the year propped rates up. In December vs November rates are down 2.5 points, after being on an upward trajectory since February 2025.

In Italy rates stand at 111.7 index points as of December. That is down 6.2 points MoM, however the index rose slightly QoQ (rising by 0.3 points) and is stable YoY, as it rose only approximately 0.1 index points.

France is the only country with a MoM increase in the spot rates index in December, rising by 3.2 index points. QoQ rates fell slightly by 1 index point, in addition, rising slightly by 0.7 points on a YoY basis, overall stable rates development.

German domestic spot rates stand at 118.7 index points, falling MoM by 6.3 index points. It remained stable QoQ falling by only 0.7 index points, however observing a dramatic drop of 17.2 points YoY.

Market Story

Spain's economy has been the eurozone's star performer, growing 3.5% in 2024 and 2.9% in 2025. While domestic spot rates rose MoM almost all year, they fell 16.5 points QoQ, driven by subdued seasonal demand especially in December.

While there is still growth, the economy is cooling naturally. Spanish consumer confidence dropped to 76.0 in November 2025 from 78.7 the previous month, the lowest score since October 2023. There is reluctance to spend as households are more pessimistic about both current conditions and the near-term outlook. Industrial production of consumer goods fell 0.2% MoM in November, while capital goods production dropped 0.7%. Inflation ticked up to 3.0% in December. All of which are factors in decreasing consumer demand and dragging rates downwards.

Car sales, a key durable goods indicator, show mixed signals. Between January and October 2025, passenger car registrations jumped 14.9% to 951,516 units. Sales could hit 1.15 million this year and exceed 1.2 million in 2026. But for October and November 2025, adjusted Spanish passenger manufacturing declined 7.2% vs Q3 2025. The Q4 slowdown suggests momentum may be fading, removing some demand from spot rates, therefore pushing rates downward.

According to BBVA research, Spanish total exports fell 0.6% QoQ. Goods exports dropped 1.1% (versus expectations of +1.5% growth). This export slowdown could dampen domestic demand for intermediate goods, putting a downward pressure on rates.

Italian domestic spot rates declined 6.2 points MoM and remained almost flat QoQ. The Italian economy stagnated in Q3 against expectations of 0.1% growth, though GDP still managed 0.4% YoY growth.

Production declined across key verticals, high-tech production fell 2.7% QoQ, according to adjusted Eurostat figures, pharmaceuticals preparation manufacture dropped 5.6%, and chemicals productions also declined by 5.4% vs quarter Q3 2025. Manufacture of motor vehicles, trailers, semi-trailers took a particularly hard hit, declining by 4.4% QoQ.

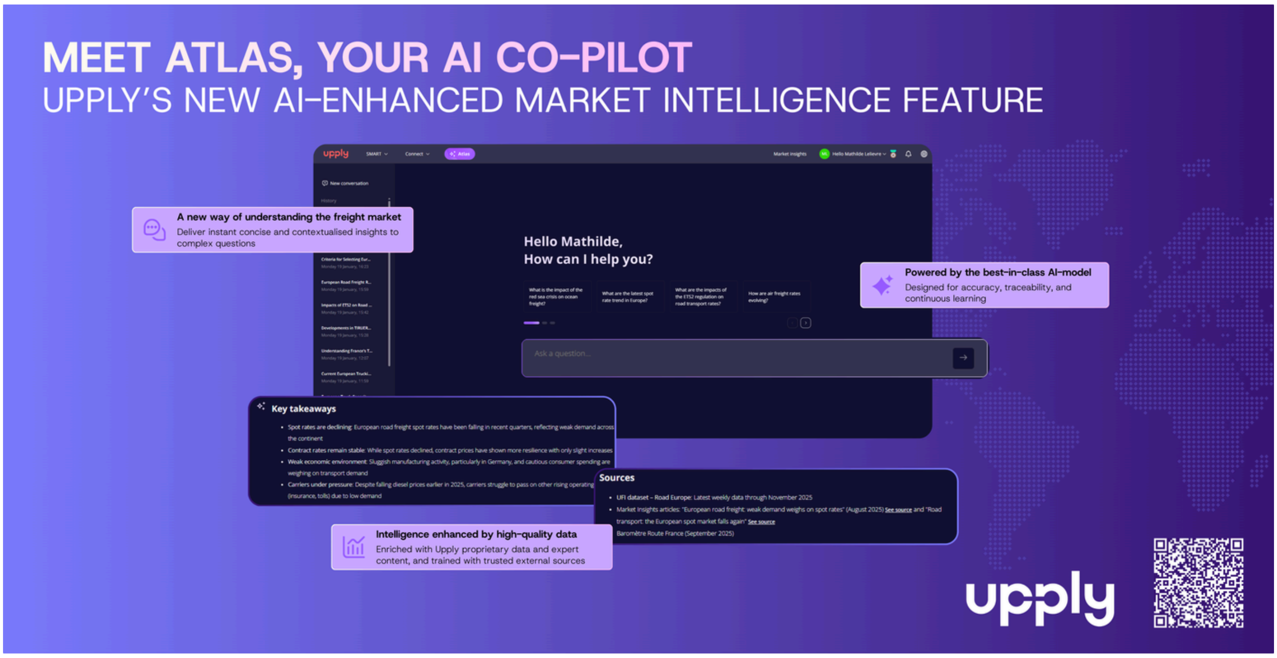
Stellantis' Italian production dropped 20% YoY to 379,706 vehicles in 2025, the lowest in 71 years. Versalis, Eni's chemical division, saw sales decline 13% YoY in Q3. The decline in industrial demand removes the need for time sensitive volume procured on a spot basis from the market, putting downwards pressure on domestic spot rates. A decrease in industrial demand hit spot rates earlier and harder than contract rates because the spot market absorbs marginal demand first.

Outlook

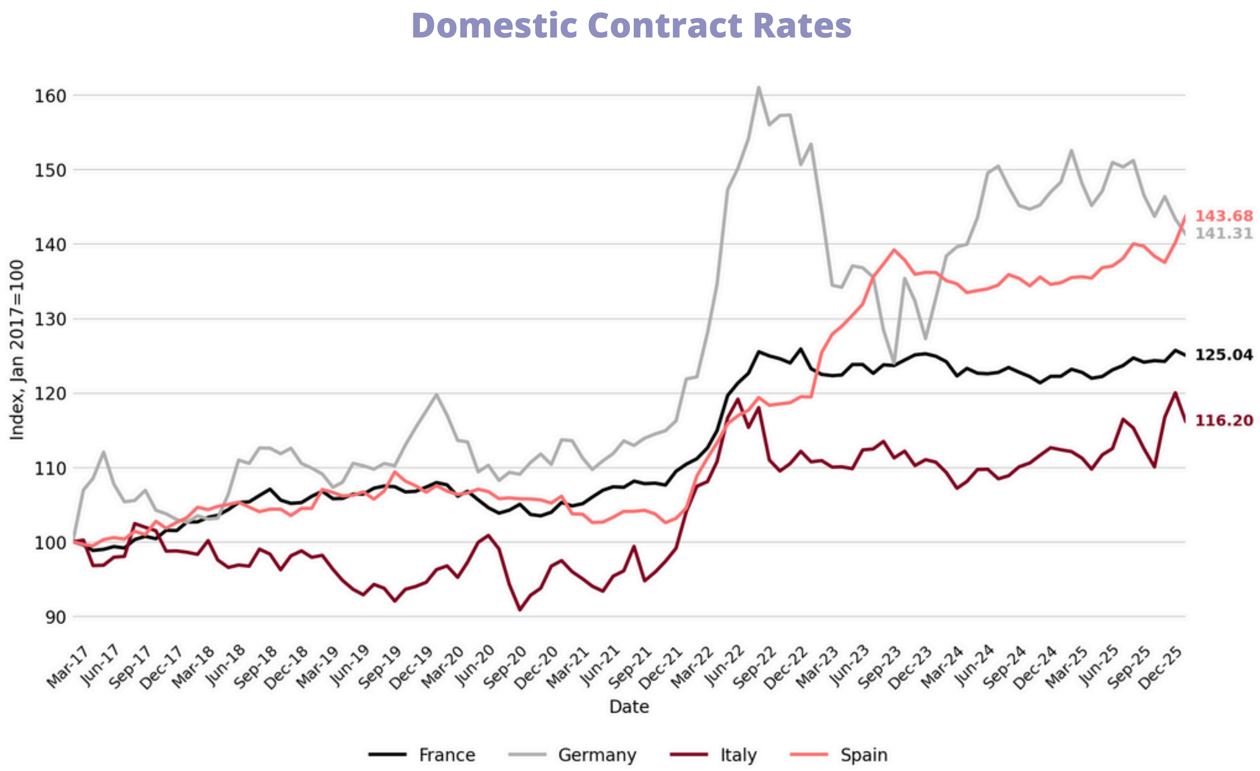
The outlook going into 2026 is more optimistic. For Spain, BBVA Research projects GDP growth at 2.4% for 2026, after 2.9% in 2025. Domestic demand contributed 1.3 percentage points to Q3 GDP growth. However, net external demand subtracted 0.7 percentage points from growth.

The growing economy and revitalised domestic demand could spell a recovery for rates very early on in the year, exerting upwards pressure on domestic and international lanes alike.

But broader uncertainty remains a drag, especially in France, where drawn-out budget negotiations are dampening consumer confidence. The household savings rate declined in Q3-25 (18.4 vs 18.7) but remains very high. I would say that consumer spending is more limited by a lack of confidence and visibility than by purchasing power. This cautious consumer behaviour will likely continue to have downward pressure on rates in the short to medium term.



DOMESTIC LANES - CONTRACT



Source: Upply

Rates Data

On the contract rates front, indices are much more stable than the volatile movements observed on the spot rates front, with Spanish domestic contract rising 3.5 points MoM, 1.1 points QoQ and 5.5 points YoY.

The Italian index stands at 116.2 points in December 2025, falling 3.8 points MoM, but rising around 5 points QoQ and YoY.

German Contract rates fell MoM, reaching 141.3 index points. They declined 2 points MoM, 3.5 points QoQ and 3.2 points YoY.

The most stable rates observation remains France, holding steady MoM, only falling 0.7 points, rising even less by 0.61 QoQ, and rising 3.1 index points vs Q4 last year.

Market Story

Italy's economy grew 0.1% in Q3 2025 after months of flatlining. Services and agriculture improved while industry contracted. Net exports contributed 0.5 percentage points. Household spending and investment each added 0.1 points, but inventory drawdowns shaved off 0.5 points, according to figures from ISTAT.

Italian contract rates reflect this modest recovery. They rose around 5 points both QoQ and YoY despite dropping 3.8 points in December alone. The YoY growth shows some sustained demand for capacity even though uncertainty.

Despite the growth in some German industrial sectors, Germany's manufacturing PMI hit a 10-month low in December 2025. New orders fell at the fastest pace in nearly a year. Export demand dropped at the sharpest rate in 11 months. Italy and Spain’s PMIs are also now in contraction territory.
German contract rates fell across every timeframe, down 2 points MoM, 3.5 points QoQ, and 3.2 points YoY. Weak factory output and declining orders through this year, have had downwards pressure on capacity, therefore pushing contract rates down as well since businesses were not expecting strong enough demand to secure contracts.

France’s manufacturing PMI on the other hand, jumped to a 42 month high, with the latest reading being in slight expansion territory, at 50.7 points. French contract rates stayed rock-solid, up 3.1 points YoY and nearly flat QoQ. Strong industrial activity is keeping demand firm and propping contract rates up. At year-end, contract negotiations may have been influenced by strong momentum in certain sectors, such as aerospace and the manufacture of electrical equipment, as well as by the need to secure capacity in France amid tighter conditions. Cumulatively through the end of September, registrations of new vehicles over 3.5 tonnes were down 13.7% compared with the same period in 2024 on the French market.

Spain also defied expectations. Despite slipping into manufacturing contraction, Spanish domestic contract rates climbed 5.5 points YoY and 1.1 points QoQ. This suggests an anticipation among business for strong domestic demand going into 2026. Access to capacity remains a key issue, as road freight companies remain cautious about investment.

Outlook

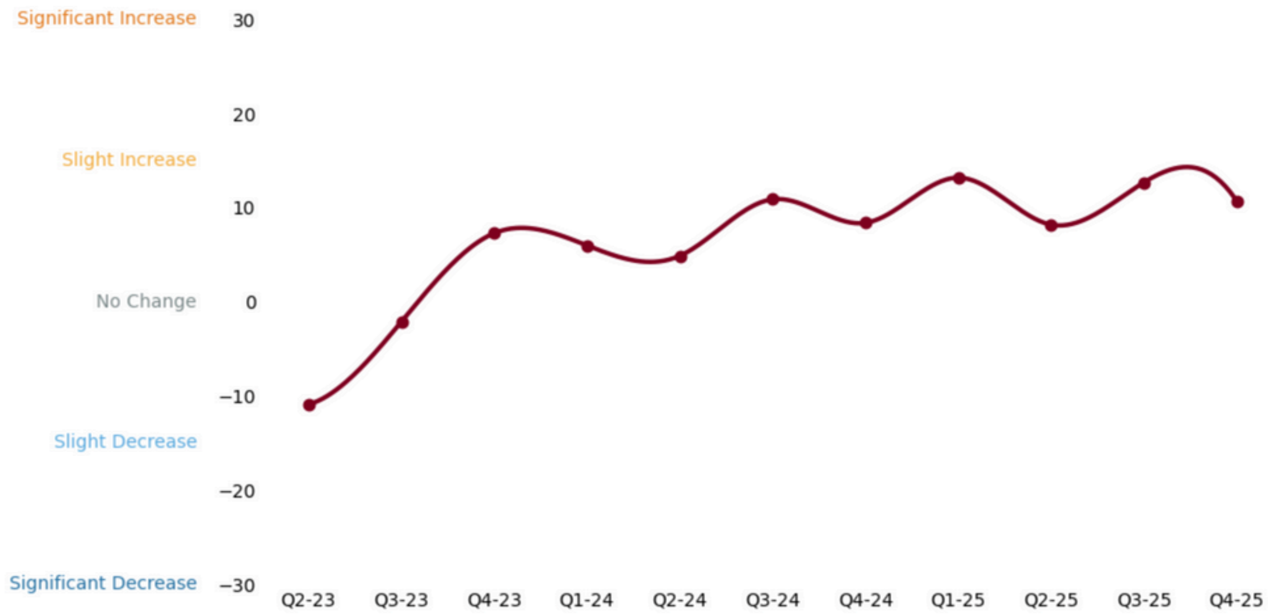
Italy's recovery remains fragile. Business confidence improved slightly in Q4, but US tariff threats loom over exports, which will potentially weigh down domestic demand for intermediate goods, therefore keeping rates low. A moderate upward pressure on rates is expected in France in the short to medium term, as momentum in industry is set to slow. Demand in Germany will likely have a slow start to 2026, keeping rates under downwards pressure. Spain is expected to stand out again for its dynamism, as manufacturing expectations heading into 2026 are strong, which will sustain upward pressure on rates.

Overall, the EU-US trade deal brought lower tariffs for Europe compared to China and India. That improves EU competitiveness in the US market. But there's a flip side. Chinese goods are flooding into Europe with falling prices throughout 2025, potentially slowing both domestic and outbound demand. Over the last 12 months through October, the price of Chinese imported goods has declined by an average of 20%. These imports directly influence prices in roughly 23% of the euro zone's inflation basket, according to Reuters. Germany and Italy for instance will be hit hard, since their export products overlap with China's.

06.

EUROPEAN ROAD FREIGHT RATES SENTIMENT INDEX

European Road Freight Rates Sentiment Index



Source: Transport Intelligence

The Ti x Upply x IRU European Road Freight Sentiment Index declined by 2.0 index points to 10.7 in Q4-25, indicating that bullish expectations for European road freight rates moderated slightly towards the end of the year, though the overall sentiment is still leaning towards an increase in rates.

Despite the QoQ decline in the sentiment index, the majority of respondents continued to expect higher rates: “slight increase” remained the most common response, accounting for 38.2% of all answers, while expectations of a “substantial increase” rose to 11.2%. Flat rate expectations increased to 36.0%, suggesting limited growth in the first quarter of 2026.

Only 14.6% of respondents anticipated a decline in rates, with expectations of a “substantial decrease” remaining very limited at 3.4%. Taken together, the results suggest that while expectations of higher road freight rates cooled slightly after Q3-25, expectations remain that rates will likely increase slightly.

METHODOLOGY

The rates are the result of Upply's own econometric and statistical modelling, which is based on the analysis of more than 1 billion prices.

Upply provides Truck Load (LTL & FTL) weekly rates estimations based on observed transactions for each major European trade lanes, associated with a confidence index.

These rates are computed from Upply's key partners and users data.

To complete the analysis presented here, Ti selected a representative sample of the largest European road freight corridors by volume.

Ti then used the median rates provided by Upply on each corridor, averaging weekly rates over each quarter. Ti's team of senior analysts provide additional insight into the drivers and trends behind price movements with support from Upply.

Note that data is subject to re-statements and that new lane samples can be chosen from one quarter to the next.

ABOUT US

Ti is one of the world's leading providers of expert research and analysis dedicated to the global logistics industry. Utilising the expertise of professionals with many years of experience in the mail, express and logistics industries, Transport Intelligence has developed a range of market leading web-based products, reports, profiles and services used by many of the world's leading logistics suppliers, consultancies, banks and users of logistics.

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ti-insight.com

Upply, tech platform revolutionizing freight transport management. Its mission: to simplify the analysis, decision-making, and execution of freight operations through data and tech.

With unique technology DNA and over 1 billion data points, Upply designs solutions driving operational efficiency for shippers, carriers, and freight forwarders. Price analysis, sourcing, tracking, administrative management, CO2 assessment: the platform boosts the performance and sustainability of the supply chain.

Based in Paris, the company now brings together more than 50 dedicated team members, committed to making freight transport more accessible, transparent, and efficient for thousands of industry players.

For further information, please contact customer.service@upply.com.
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IRU, the world road transport organisation, has more than 75 years of on-the-ground experience via a network of 175 members from around the world. We represent the entire industry – bus, coach, truck and taxi – driving the sustainable mobility of people and goods.

IRU provides strategic and operational services to mobility and logistics companies, ranging from advocacy representation at European and international levels; trade and transit tools; driver skills assessments, training, certification and monitoring; comprehensive research and practical data tools; and workshops and roundtables on key issues that bring all industry stakeholders together. For more information, please contact information@iru.org
www.iru.org

THANK YOU.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU AGAIN IN MAY FOR OUR NEXT EUROPEAN ROAD FREIGHT RATE DEVELOPMENT BENCHMARK

Q1 2026.

WE STAY IN TOUCH.