

Office of Rail Transport

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New rail carriers in Poland

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Poland is at the forefront of European countries with highest number of issued licences for carriage of goods. Germany is the only country where more licences than in Poland were issued. The Office of Rail Transport published a new report "Rail Carriers. Study on licenced freight carriers in Poland". In this study you can find information on new companies which started operating on rail market, opportunities and problems which they are facing, as well as new freight statistics.

110 licences for carriage of goods were issued by the end of 2020 in Poland. In 2013-2020 58 companies applied for a licence for carriage of goods and provision of traction services. It means that more than a half of the licences were issued during the last 8 years. In 2020 11 new licences were issued.

The Office of Rail Transport conducted a market study on rail carriers which obtained a license in 2013-2020. The study also covers new operational data of these carries (August/September 2020).

- The growing number of rail carriers in Poland in recent years is a phenomenon which we decided to study closer. Some of these companies saw an opportunity in market niches, i.e. transporting goods on selected routes or transporting specific commodity groups. Other companies decided to improve logistics processes, mainly distribution of their own products or supplying raw materials necessary for their production - says Ignacy Góra, President of the Office of Rail Transport. - The reasons for these actions are different: they want to increase profits from transport services which are company's core activity, or they want to improve and increase efficiency of their supply chain - he adds.

The new report presents the results of a survey conducted among companies which recently obtained rail carrier license. 67% of companies answered that railway activity is or will be their dominant activity. For companies with rail transport as their dominant activity, over 57% indicated that the motivation to start to operate on rail market was their experience in rail industry, and 35.7% indicated both access to technical resources and attractiveness of rail

sector. Among companies where rail transport was not their main activity, frequently indicated reasons (45%) were willingness to expand activities to rail transport and optimisation of supply chain in terms of costs and management.

In the survey companies indicated that main barriers in rail operator's activity are: competition with road transport (56% of answers), capacity of railway lines, lack of staff and high costs of access to railway infrastructure. 40% of the respondents also indicated that sector's regulations are a barrier, and 32% indicated high costs of purchasing traction energy. According to the respondents, access to rolling stock and capacity of sidings and terminals are not significant barriers.

As for the forecasts and trends in sector, the surveyed companies predict that the rail freight market will grow (56%), almost half (40%) say that it will remain at a similar level, and only 4% expect drops.

- It must be clearly stated that the Polish rail market is liberalized. Forwarders and manufacturers ordering rail transport services can choose from various options offered by different carriers and optimize their costs. The Office of Rail Transport plays an important role in this process - issuing of carrier's license is preceded by a thorough check of applicant company - their solvency, liability and also meeting of high safety standards - says Ignacy Góra.

You can download "Rail Carriers. Study on licenced freight carriers in Poland" [here](#).