

Office of Rail Transport

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Rail freight by commodity groups in 3Q 2023

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From January to September 2023 a total of 172.9 m tonnes of goods were carried, while the transport performance was 46.3 bn tonne-km. The group with the largest share by weight was coal, lignite, crude oil and natural gas. Commodities from this group accounted for 30.42% by weight and 21.01% by transport performance. In January-September 2023 a total of 57.7 m tonnes of goods from this commodity group were transported, which is a decrease by 7.1 m tonnes (11%) compared to the same period in 2022. Coal shipments dropped the most.

In 3Q 2023 57.6 m tonnes of goods were transported by rail carriers, while the transport performance amounted to 15.4 bn tonne-km. It is an increase compared to 2Q 2023 by 2.8 m tonnes and 0.7 bn tonne-km respectively, while at the same time, compared to 3Q 2022, it is a decrease by 4.7 m tonnes of goods carried (7.5%) and by 0.6 bn tonne-km in the transport performance (3.5%). In 2Q 2023 54.8 m tonnes of goods were carried (an increase by 2.8 m tonnes).

In 3Q 2023 the weight of goods in the largest of the commodity groups, i.e. coal, lignite, oil and natural gas, was 17.5 m tonnes and the transport performance was 3.2 bn tonne-km. In comparison, in 3Q 2022 20.1 m tonnes of goods from this group were transported and the transport performance was 3.9 bn tonne-km. It is a year-on-year decrease by 13.0% in the weight carried and 17.1% in the transport performance. The market share of goods from this group in 3Q 2023 is 30.42% in the total weight carried and 21.01% in the transport performance. The main product in this commodity group is coal and the decrease in the carriage of this commodity caused the overall drop as compared to the previous year.

Metal ores and other mining and quarrying products were the second largest commodity group transported by rail operators. In 3Q 2023 16.8 m tonnes of goods from this group were carried and the transport performance was 4.2 bn tonne-km. In 3Q 2022 the weight of goods transported from this commodity group amounted to 17.6 m tonnes and the transport performance reached 4.4 bn tonne-km. There was also a decrease by 4.9% in the weight carried and by 4.1% in the transport performance. The market share of this commodity group in

3Q 2023 was 29.14% in the total weight and 27.39% in the transport performance.

The third largest commodity group was coke, briquettes, refined petroleum products, industrially produced gases with a share of 13.86% in the total weight carried and 19.13% in the transport performance. The fourth group was unidentifiable goods with a share of 9.31% % in the weight carried and 12.72% in the transport performance.

Nearly 0.7 m tonnes of food, beverages and tobacco products were transported, which is one of the highest results for this commodity group since 2016.

When we look at rail freight data for 3Q 2023, the most important is a decline in coal shipments compared to previous years. The lower demand for carriage of this commodity is due to slow but steady decline in mining and the stock of coal which was imported to Poland after the outbreak of war in Ukraine in 2022. However, it is worth noting that coal is now being transported over longer distances than in previous years. The second trend is an increase in transport of agriculture, hunting, forestry, fishing and fisheries products. For almost two years the share of grain in this commodity group is rising - in earlier years it was about 15-25% of the transport within the whole group and in 2022-2023 this share is already approx. 60%-75% - comments Ignacy Góra, President of the Office of Rail Transport. The data for 3Q 2023 and for the first nine months of this year show that the carriage of goods by rail is lower. However, 3Q 2023 was better than 2Q 2023, as both the weight of goods carried and the transport performance rose - he adds.

Compared to 3Q 2022, only in the following commodity groups:

- food products, beverages and tobacco products,
- coke, briquettes, refined petroleum products, industrially produced gases,
- chemicals, chemical products, man-made fibres, rubber and plastic products, nuclear fuel,
- other non-metallic mineral products,

there was an increase in the total weight carried, as well as in the transport performance.

In the following commodity the groups:

- products of agriculture, hunting, forestry, fishing and fisheries,
- machinery, appliances, electrical and electronic equipment,
- transport equipment,
- furniture, other manufactured goods,

- secondary raw materials, municipal waste,
- mixed goods, non-food,
- unidentifiable goods,

there was an increase in the transport performance and a decrease in the weight transported, which indicates that smaller loads are being transported over longer distances (i.e. the average transport distance per tonne of goods rose).

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