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Economic Commission for Europe**Inland Transport Committee****Working Party on Transport Statistics****Seventy-second session**

Geneva, 9–11 June 2021

Item 8 of the provisional agenda

Traffic censuses in the Economic Commission for Europe region:**2020 E-Rail traffic censuses****Reminder on the 2020 E-Rail census, and additional information****Note by the secretariat****I. Background**

1. At its sixty-ninth session the Working Party on Transport Statistics (WP.6) adopted ECE/TRANS/WP.6/2018/8, setting out recommendations to Governments on the 2020 E-Rail census. This was adopted as a resolution of the Inland Transport Committee at its session in February 2019. This document is a reminder to WP.6 delegates of the need to conduct this census in 2020, and also aims to highlight its value as a tool for visualizing traffic volumes.

II. Proposal for the 2020 round

2. The E-Rail traffic census allows an assessment of train traffic levels, measured in number of passenger and goods trains per year, on specific segments of the rail network defined by the European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines (AGC). This is a useful geospatial complement to rail statistics on a national level, which allow mapping of traffic volumes thus taking into account population centres, important commercial locations and international borders. The E-Rail census has since 2005 been conducted in coordination with Eurostat, for whom the collection is covered under Annex V of its 2018/643 regulation governing the collection of rail statistics¹ (called Annex G in a previous legal act).

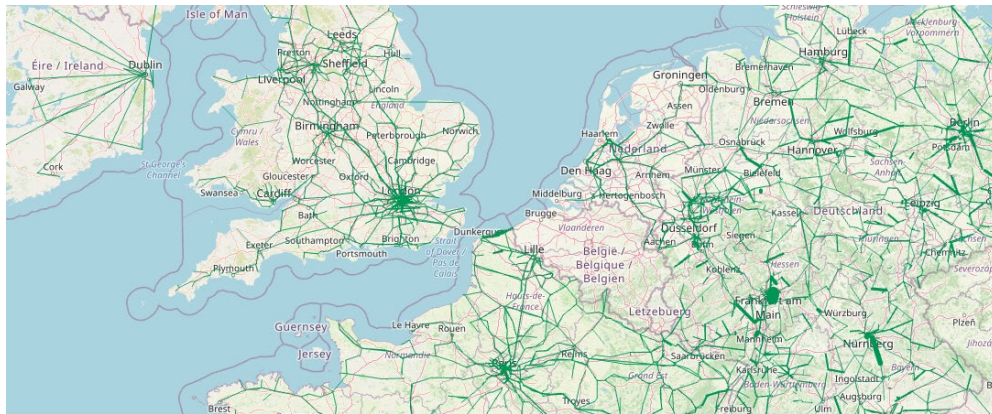
¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32018R0643>.

3. Data would typically only be requested for 2020 as compared to the 2015 figures. However, given the exceptional events of 2020 relating to COVID-19 and subsequent lockdowns or reductions in travel activity, traffic levels in 2020 are likely to be exceptionally reduced in most if not all member States. This would make any comparison with traffic levels in 2015 much less relevant. The secretariat therefore proposes to ask for data for 2019 as well, if available, in order to have a better idea of how traffic levels have changed since 2015 in a more typical year. This would allow a better assessment of typical usage patterns on the infrastructure concerned, while the 2020 data will allow the impact of COVID-19 to be measured as well.

III. Visualisation of the data

4. Member States are once again encouraged to provide Shapefiles when available for the E-Rail census and transmit them directly to the secretariat if possible (as the Eurostat legislation does not request them). If Shapefiles are unavailable, then data providers are encouraged to provide accurate labels and coordinates for the start and end points of each segment, as these have not always been provided in the past and cause inaccuracies in the final map.

Figure
Screenshot of 2015 E-Rail Census Map



5. In previous sessions delegates have been updated on the efforts made by the secretariat to visualise these traffic volumes. In addition, the secretariat has also tried to visualise other rail datasets collected by Eurostat. These are described in more detail in a document produced for the Working Party on Rail Transport (ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2020/5)² in the context of tracking international rail passenger transport. Finally, delegates may wish to share views on how traffic monitoring on a more frequent basis can be used as an analytical tool for tracking transport volumes more generally, especially within the context of the COVID-19 virus lockdowns.

² <https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trans/doc/2020/sc2/ECE-TRANS-SC2-2020-05e.pdf>.