International Transport Forum

Statistics Brief

Investment in transport infrastructure: Latest global data comparison

In this Edition

Investment is highest where transport networks are expanding

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Investment is highest where transport networks are expanding

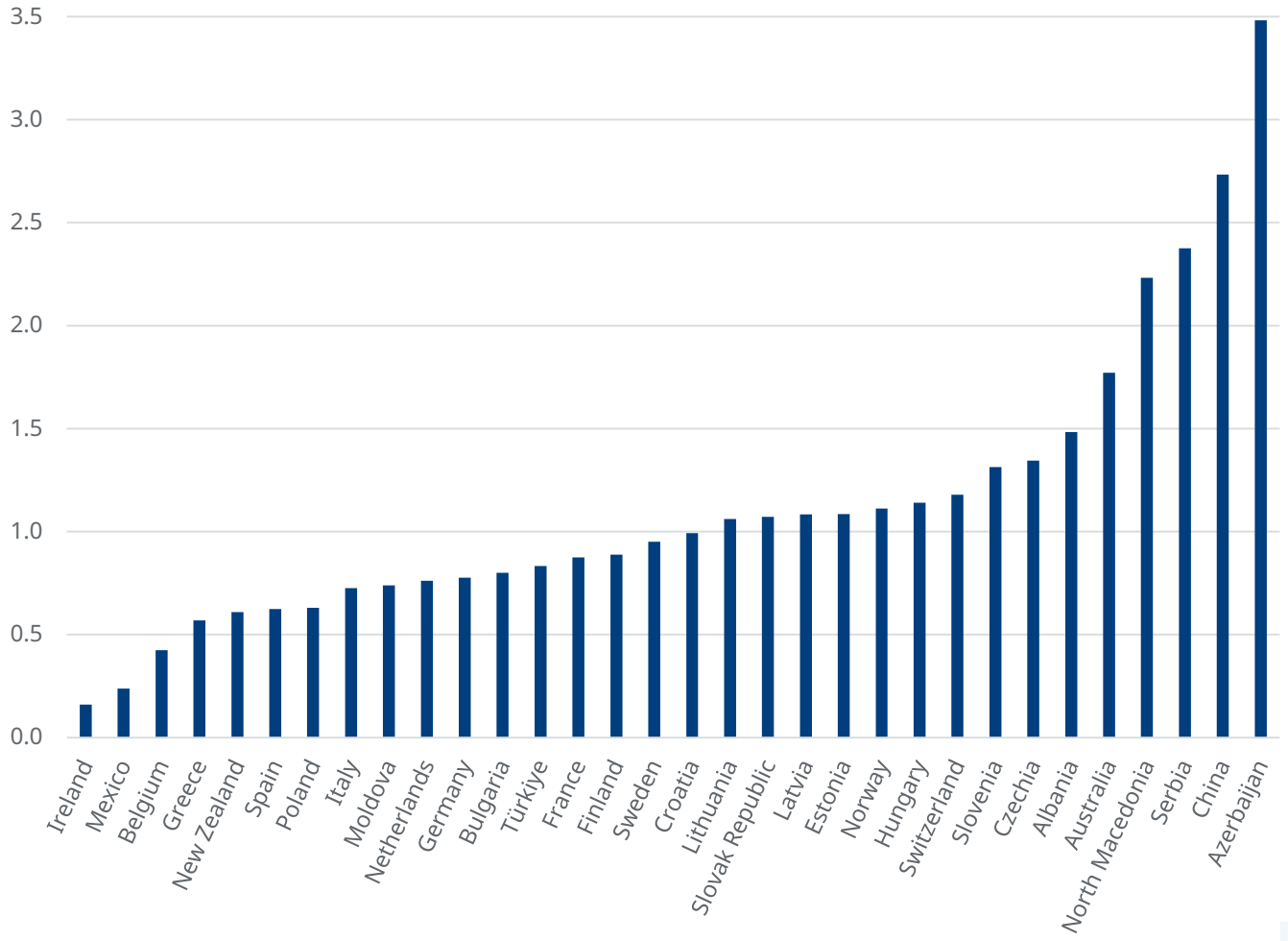
Investment spending on inland transport infrastructure ranged from between 0.2% of GDP in Ireland to 3.5% in Azerbaijan on average between 2022 and 2024, according to the latest data collected by the ITF.

Half of countries with available data spent less than 1% of their GDP on building new inland transport infrastructure. This group are mainly developed countries with mature transport infrastructure systems, where demand for new infrastructure is relatively low. Countries spending more than 2% of GDP on transport infrastructure investment, such as North Macedonia, Serbia, China and Azerbaijan, are still expanding their infrastructure networks to reach international standards.

Among the most developed countries, Australia stands out for having invested around 2% of its GDP in transport infrastructure on average in 2022–24. This relatively high level reflects the country's Infrastructure Investment Program, a 10-year pipeline of land transport projects, delivered in partnership with states and territories. Recent commitments include the development of high-speed rail, with the Sydney-Newcastle corridor identified as the first stage of a proposed east coast network.

Compare how countries invest in inland transport infrastructure

Investment spending as a percentage of GDP, 2022–24 average



Slovenia sustained investment through long-term infrastructure planning

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Slovenia sustained investment through long-term infrastructure planning

Between 2014 and 2024, Slovenia invested an average of 1.1% of its GDP in transport infrastructure, peaking at 1.6% in 2023.

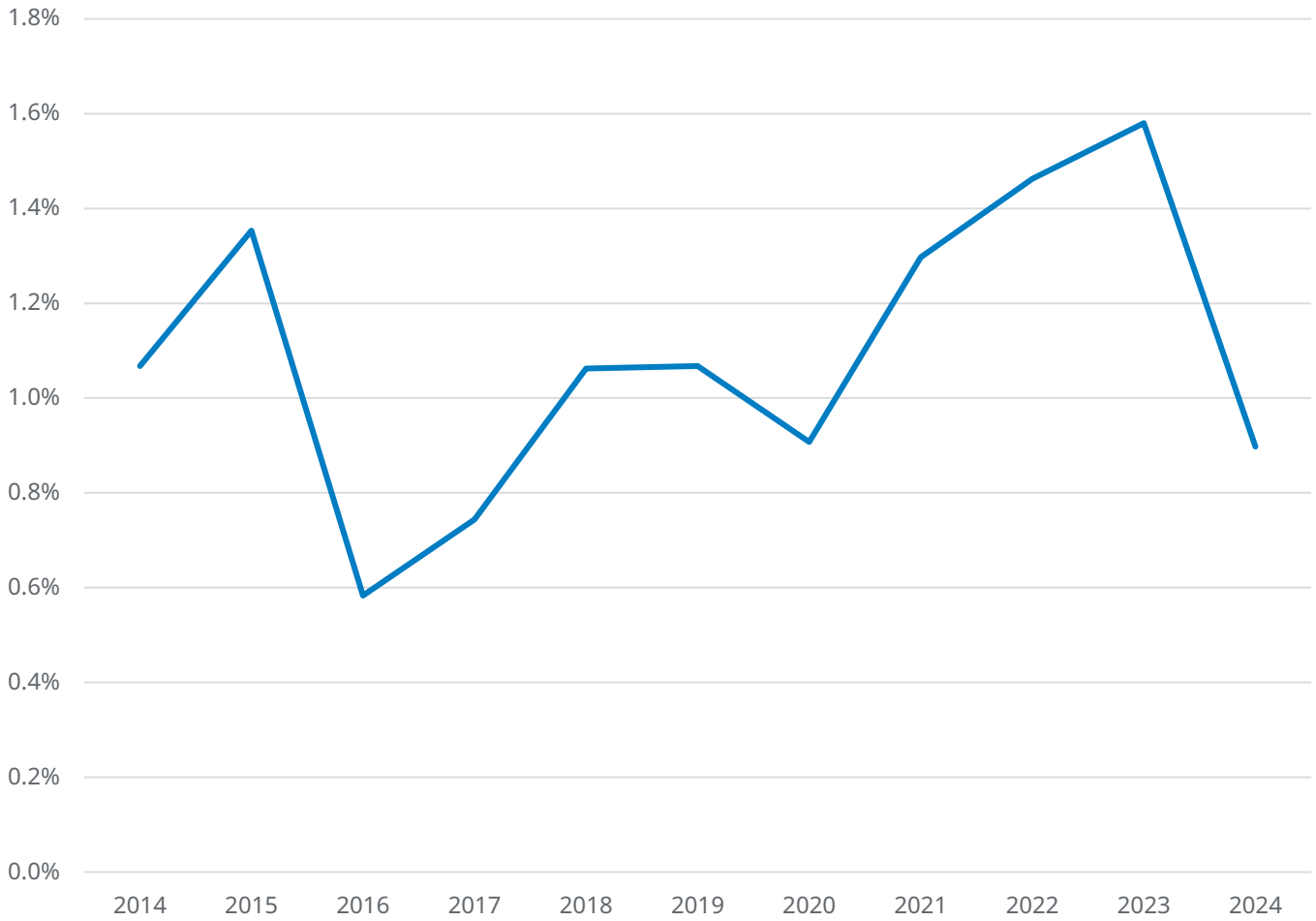
In 2015, the Slovenian government adopted the Resolution on the National Programme for the Development of Transport Infrastructure until 2020, with a vision to 2030. Based on forecasts of traffic flows, traffic safety, environmental impact and social acceptability, the Resolution defined a set of measures across transport modes: 29 for railways, 37 for roads, 22 for public passenger transport and sustainable mobility, 14 for waterborne transport and six for air transport.

By setting out a pipeline of projects across transport modes, the Resolution provided a framework for continued infrastructure investment. It includes reconstructions, renovations, and selected new construction projects on the national road network, such as the Draženci-Gruškovje motorway section and the second tube of the Karavanke Tunnel.

For the rail network, the main objective was to align it with the EU's Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) Regulation standards on speed and axle load.

Slovenia's investment vision provides a decade of steady investment

Investment spending in inland transport infrastructure as a percentage of GDP, 2014–24



Transport infrastructure investment declined in most countries over the last decade

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Transport infrastructure investment declined in most countries over the last decade

The overall trend in investment in downwards over the last 10 years, despite variations across the countries studied. In recent years, Serbia recorded the largest increase in transport infrastructure investment as a share of GDP, rising by 1.5 percentage points between 2012–14 and 2022–24, based on three-year averages. Around three-quarters of this investment was directed to road infrastructure.

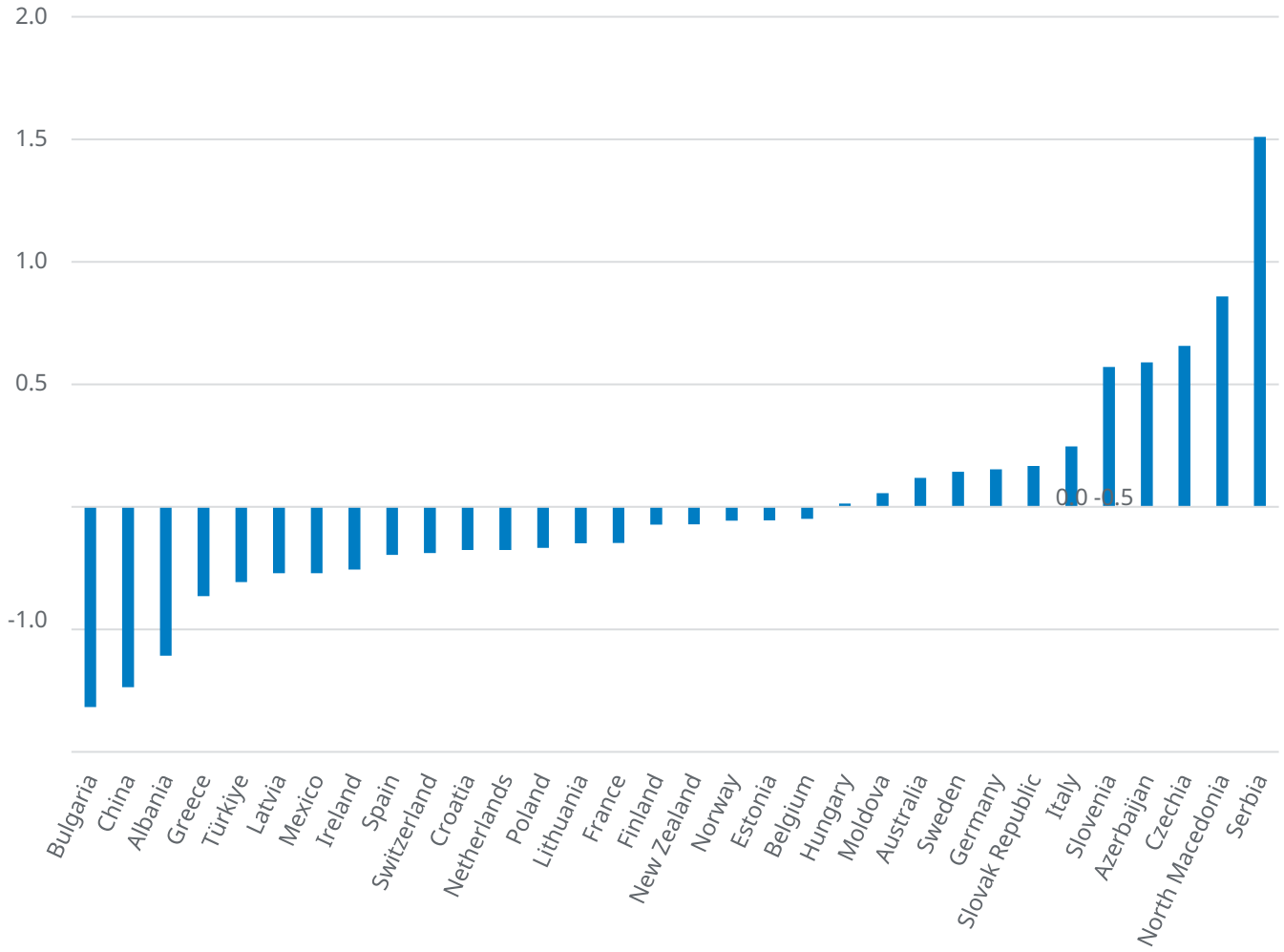
Other countries with sustained growth in transport infrastructure investment included Slovenia (+0.6 percentage points), Azerbaijan (+0.6 pp), Czechia (+0.7 pp) and North Macedonia (+0.9 pp). In all four countries, most investment spending was devoted to road infrastructure. In most other countries, changes were more modest, with investment levels either broadly stable or shifting by less than half a percentage point over the decade.

At the other end of the scale, Bulgaria's investment spending decreased by 0.8 percentage points over the last decade, mainly reflecting the end of the 2007–13 programming cycle of the European Regional Development Fund and the European Union's Cohesion Fund.

Investment spending also decreased over the last decade in China, Albania and Ireland, by 0.7, 0.6 and 0.5 percentage points, respectively.

Countries differ in investment levels over 10 years, but most decline

Difference in inland transport infrastructure spending as a share of GDP, 2022-24 average compared with 2012-14 average, percentage points



Ireland's transport investment declines since 2000s but rail gains share

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Ireland's transport investment declines since 2000s but rail gains share

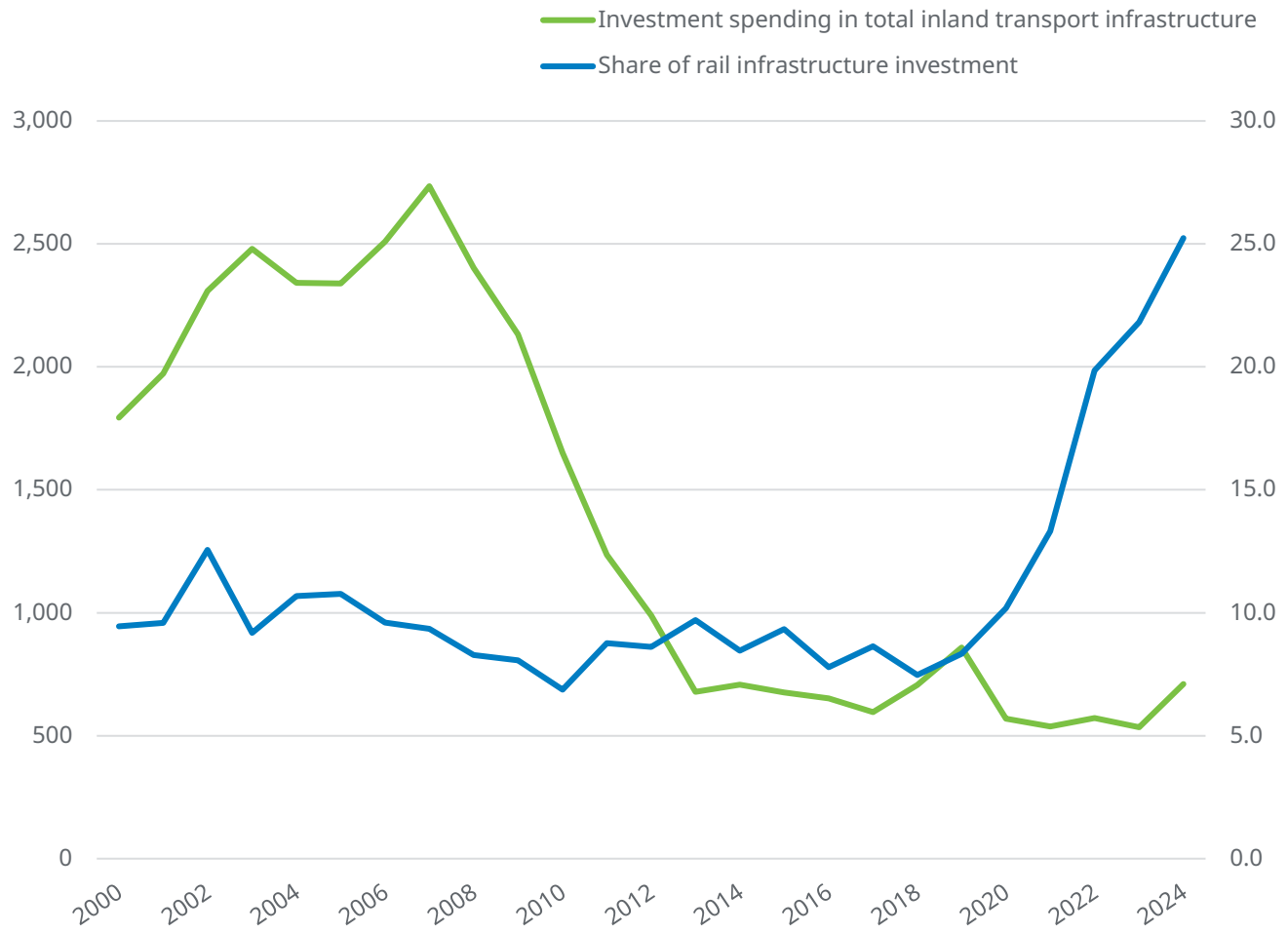
Investment spending on inland transport infrastructure in Ireland peaked in 2007, when it reached 1.2% of GDP. Since 2012, investment spending has remained much lower, ranging between 0.1% and 0.4% of GDP.

The peak speaking was largely associated with major road investment programmes. In 2000, the Irish government developed the National Development Plan, which aimed to invest EUR 57 billion over seven years, including significant investment to improve the road network. Transport 21, Ireland's infrastructure plan announced in November 2005, set out a comprehensive development programme for national primary and secondary roads. In 2007, the government published a new National Development Plan, including EUR 13.3 billion for the national road network.

Since 2020, although overall investment spending has remained low compared with the early 2000s, rail has accounted for a growing share of inland transport infrastructure investment. In 2019, the government approved a EUR 1 billion five-year investment programme in heavy rail infrastructure, focused on rail civil engineering works, including track relaying, signalling improvements and safety-related initiatives.

Ireland's shifting priorities for infrastructure investment

Total inland transport infrastructure investment in constant EUR million and rail's share of investment, three-year average, 2000–24



Rail's investment share increases while road still dominates

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Rail's investment share increases while road still dominates

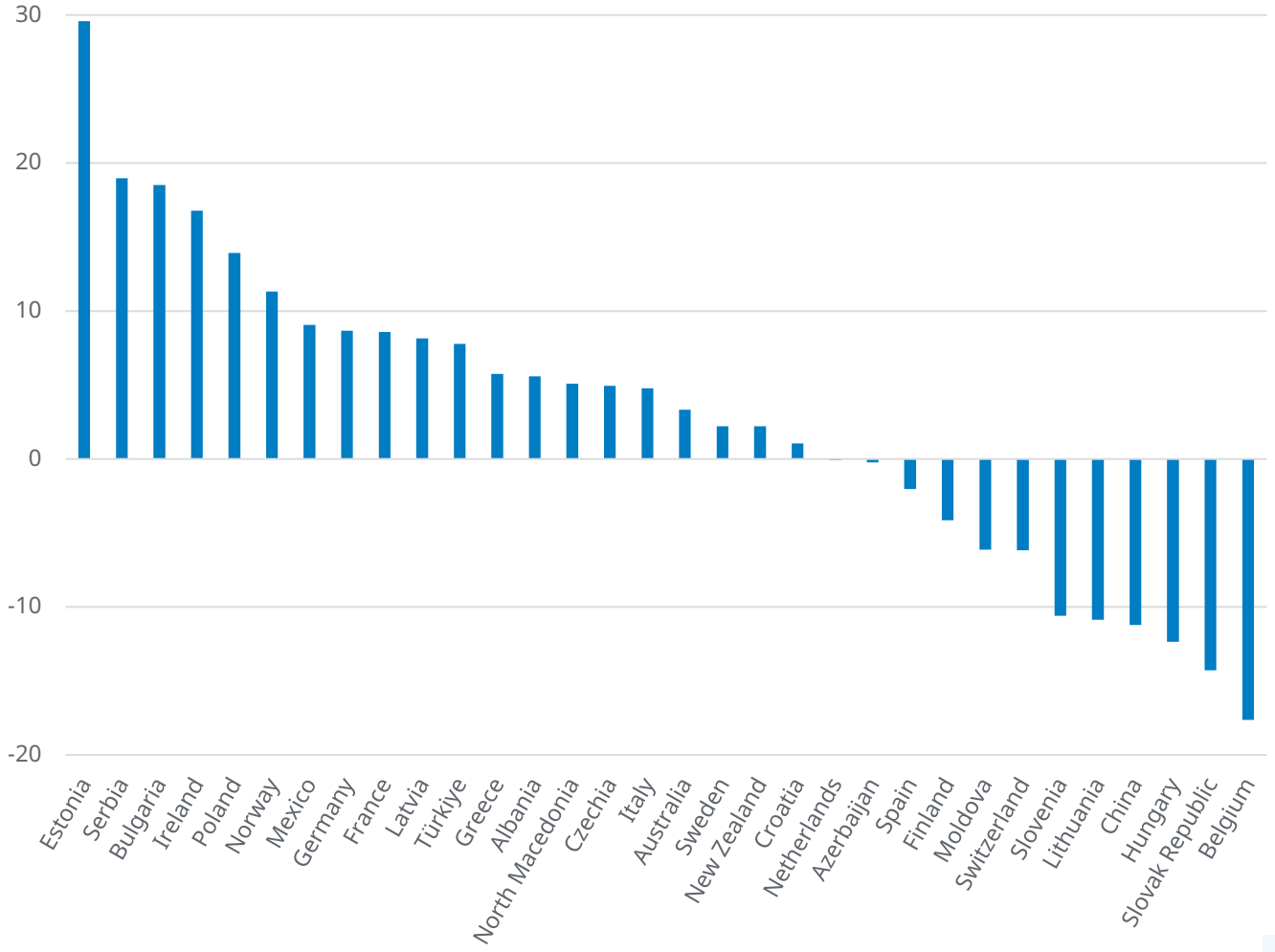
In 2024, all countries except Belgium and France allocated more than half of their transport infrastructure investment to the road sector, showing that road infrastructure still dominates investment spending.

However, over the last decade, 20 of the 32 countries with available data increased the share of investment spending directed to rail infrastructure. In six countries, the rail share increased by more than 10 percentage points: Estonia (+30 pp), Serbia (+19 pp), Bulgaria (+19 pp), Ireland (+17 pp), Poland (+14 pp) and Norway (+11 pp). By contrast, in Slovenia, Lithuania, China, Hungary, the Slovak Republic and Belgium, the share of investment spending directed to rail infrastructure decreased by more than 10 percentage points.

Bulgaria illustrates this shift towards rail investment. Under the European Commission's Connecting Europe Facility for 2021–27, Bulgaria is set to invest EUR 321 million in three major infrastructure projects, two of which involve rail infrastructure. The first concerns the development of a multimodal logistics platform at a rail-road terminal west of Sofia, while the second involves improvements to the electrified rail line connecting Sofia with Vidin, in north-western Bulgaria.

Leaders in the shift to rail

Change in rail's share of inland transport infrastructure investment, 2022–24 average compared with 2012–14 average, percentage points



Estonia prioritises rail infrastructure modernisation

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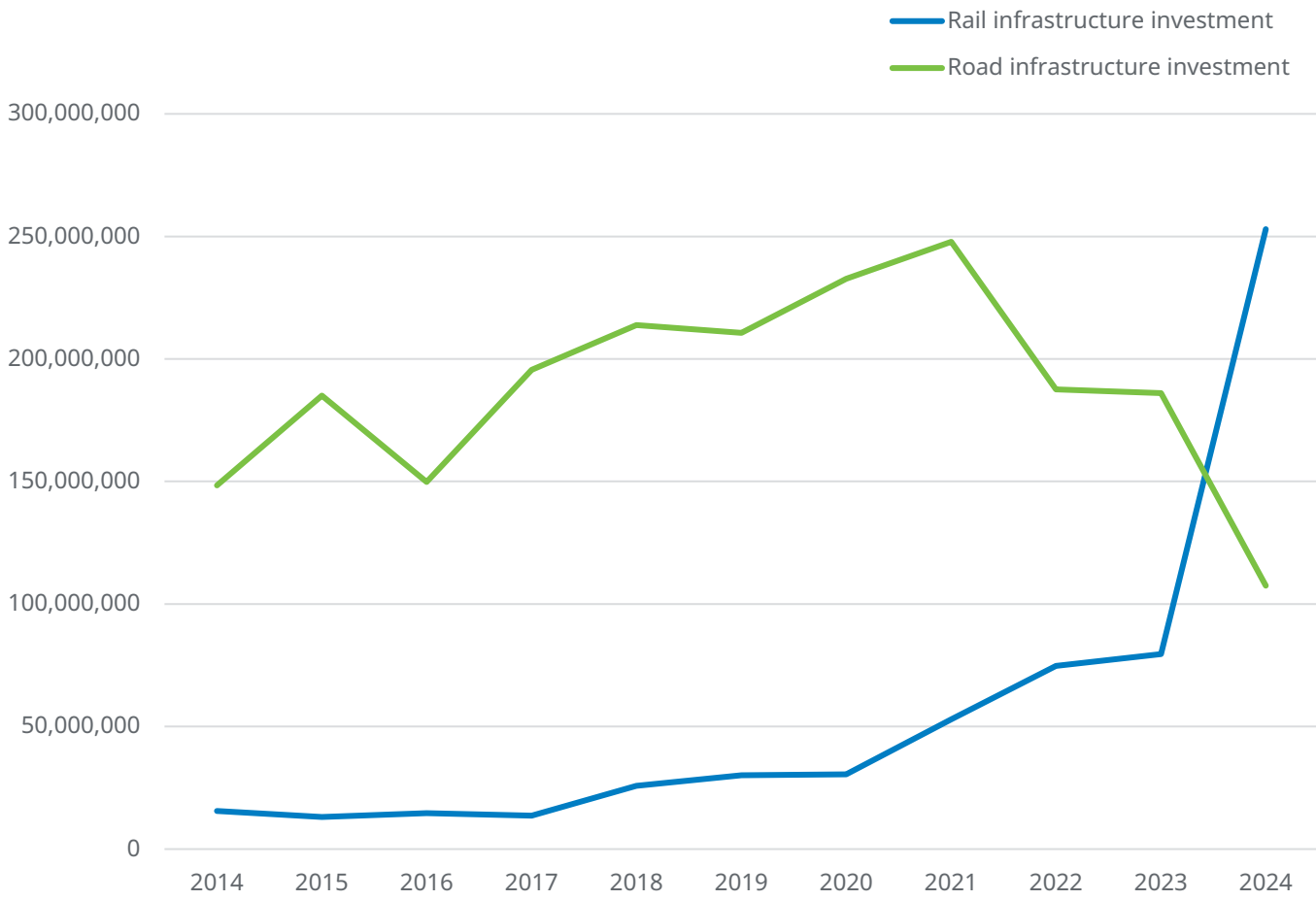
Estonia prioritises rail infrastructure modernisation

Estonia is focusing on modernising its rail infrastructure through a series of major investment programmes. Between 2021 and 2026, Estonian Railways will invest EUR 500 million in the national rail network to update infrastructure, enable electric trains to operate at speeds of up to 160 km/h between Tallinn and Tartu by 2026, and reduce transport emissions as part of Estonia's long-term climate goals. The funds will support electrification, safety systems and level crossings, track upgrades and traffic automation.

This focus on rail is expected to continue in the coming years. In 2025, Estonia concluded a loan agreement with the European Investment Bank for the renewal and upgrading of railway infrastructure. The project includes the electrification of the Tallinn–Muuga section, the renewal of railway infrastructure, tracks and buildings, and the development of a Wagon Management System. With only 12% of rail lines electrified, one of the lowest shares in Europe, these investments address a significant modernisation need.

Estonia boosts rail capacity

Investment spending on rail and road infrastructure, constant EUR, 2014–24



About the Statistics

The ITF statistics on investment, maintenance expenditure and capital value of transport infrastructure for 1995-2024 are based on a survey sent to current ITF member countries. The survey covers total gross investment (defined as new construction, extensions, reconstruction, renewal and major repair) in road, rail, inland waterways, maritime ports and airports, including all sources of financing. It also covers maintenance expenditures financed by public administrations and the capital value of transport infrastructure. Inland infrastructure investment covers rail, road and inland waterways transport modes.

The ITF Secretariat collects data from member countries in national currencies, which are then converted to current prices and constant euros. Significant efforts have been devoted to collecting relevant deflators needed to calculate the constant Euro equivalent of data provided, since no purchasing power parity corrected general index exists for transport infrastructure investment.

Where available, a cost index for construction on land and water is used. Where these indices are not available, a manufacturing cost index or a GDP deflator is used.

Detailed country data for inland modes, maritime ports and airports, more detailed data descriptions and notes on the methodologies are available on the OECD Data Explorer website.

The data in this Statistics Brief are as of 15 May 2026. Online datasets can be updated following countries' revisions.

Disclaimer

The opinions expressed and arguments employed herein do not necessarily reflect the official views of the member countries of the ITF. This document, as well as any data and map included herein, are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries, and to the name of any territory, city or area.

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