

IRELAND TRANSPORT AND TRADE

Ireland has transformed in recent years from a country with an agricultural focus to one dependent on trade, industry and investment. Economic growth in Ireland has been relatively high, with exports having an important role in growth, but there has also been a rise in consumer spending, construction projects and business investment. In 2005, the World Bank measured Ireland's GNI per head of population at \$44 830 which ranked the country the tenth highest in the world.



Dublin is a trade and transport hub within Ireland. It has a major port and an international airport, and is also a focal point for much of the main road network.

TRANSPORT

Overall sea passenger numbers to the Irish Republic fell between 1999 and 2006. The main reason for the change is the decrease in passengers to and from Great Britain, where the majority of ferry routes operate. By contrast, air passenger numbers rose over the same time period, suggesting that travellers have changed their preferred mode of transport. Dublin and Cork airports both show total passenger numbers – arrivals and departures – more or less doubling between 1999 and 2006, while Shannon airport, which handles long-haul Atlantic flights is not far behind them.

As Dublin is a busy city, commuting and travelling around can be time-consuming. A light rail system was first suggested in 1994 and construction work began in 2001. There are now two lines in operation, covering 25 km (15 miles) of track, which were opened in 2004. This allows around 80 000 people each day to travel between 36 stations on the routes. Extensions to the existing lines are under construction and there are other projects in the planning stage.

TRADE

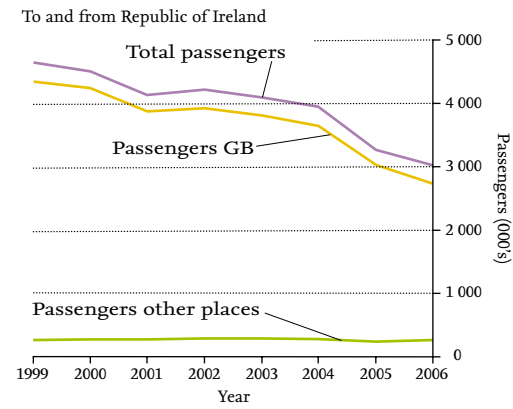
Exports are very important for Ireland, with the USA, Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands being the main export partners. Irish industry now exports machinery and other equipment, computers, pharmaceuticals and chemicals, as well as live animals and other animal products. The balance of trade surplus reached a peak in 2002 but a slower rate of growth since then is reflected in more recent figures.

The tertiary sector is the largest employer in Ireland and is very important to Irish economic growth. It covers finance and call centres, as well as tourism and legal services. The young, well-educated and English speaking workforce is very attractive to many companies who have located their customer service operations in Ireland.

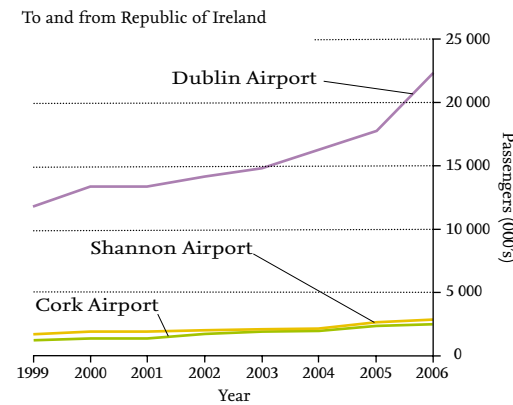


The silver trams which run on the Dublin light railway can reach a top speed of 70 km per hour on the off-street sections which may explain the use of the name 'Luas' which is Irish for 'speed'.

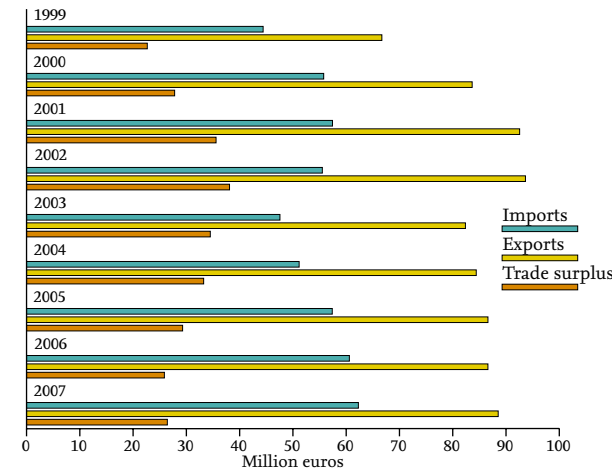
SEA PASSENGERS 1999–2006



AIR PASSENGERS 1999–2006



REPUBLIC OF IRELAND, BALANCE OF TRADE 1999–2007



Ireland has several busy ferry ports all down the east coast with connections to Britain and mainland Europe. This image shows Rosslare Ferryport in Wexford.

TRANSPORT AND TRADE



REPUBLIC OF IRELAND TRADING PARTNERS 2007

