

Summary:

Transport Performance in Norway 1946-1999

General Comments

The growth in passenger transport work in 1999 is calculated at 1.1 per cent, whereas the corresponding figure in the previous year was 2.9 per cent. The growth came in the public transportation sector, while the transport work for passenger cars remained at the same level in 1999 as in the previous year. Around 88 per cent of all passenger transport in Norway is by road. Air transport accounted for seven per cent of the transport work and rail transport (railroads and tramways) accounted for about 5.5 per cent.

Preliminary figures from the national accounts show that the gross domestic product (GDP) and consumption in private households rose by 0.9 and 2.4 per cent respectively in 1999. This entails a considerably lower growth in GDP in 1999 than in the average over the last five years. The growth in private consumption is also lower in 1999 than the average for the last five year period. The annual population growth varies little from year to year and has been about 0.6 per cent in recent years.

Private Transport

In the period 1990-1999 the stock of vehicles that are used for private transport has increased by 13 per cent, whereas the increase in traffic for this category of vehicles was 10 per cent. Due to a trend toward a somewhat lower number of passengers per car, the growth in transport work was somewhat lower in the same period, namely about seven per cent. The average annual mileage per car is calculated at 14,100 kilometres in 1990 and 13,500 kilometres in 1999.

The sale of motor petrol has declined by seven per cent in the period 1990-1999. The most important reason for this is that the average petrol consumption per car decreased by four per cent in this period. A lower number of passengers per car, better road quality and a modest growth in the number of petrol-powered cars (7 per cent) have also contributed to lower petrol sales.

The number of diesel-powered cars has nearly doubled in the 1990s. This growth has come in private cars and other cars that are primarily used for passenger transport, such as vans, multi-purpose vehicles, and minibuses. Seven per cent of the private cars are now diesel-powered, compared with three per cent in 1990. The growth in the stock of diesel-powered cars is reflected in the sale of auto-diesel fuel, which doubled in the five year period 1994-1999.

About 124,000 private cars were registered for the first time in 1999, a decline of 17,000 cars from the previous year. Roughly 101,000 of these private cars were new, while the remaining 23,000 were imported used. Around 84,000 private cars were scrapped for a deposit in 1999, and this was the highest number ever after the car scrapping deposit was introduced, with the exception of 1996 when the car scrapping deposit was higher. The average age of private cars was 9.9 years at the close of last year, exactly the same as for the three previous years.

Both the number of traffic accidents and the number of injuries in traffic decreased by six per cent in 1999 compared with the previous year. The number of traffic fatalities varies considerably from year to year. In 1999 304 persons were killed in traffic accidents; the corresponding figures in the three previous years were 252 in 1996, 303 in 1997 and 352 in 1998.

Public Transportation

1999 was the first year that the Airport Express Train was in operation, and this is part of the reason why the total railroad traffic increased by almost nine per cent in that year, when measured in transport work. The Norwegian State Railway's (NSB) ordinary traffic increased by two per cent last year, and most of this growth occurred in local traffic and Inter-city trains. Oslo Municipal Transport Company (Oslo sporveier) also reported an increase in rail traffic in 1999, when a total of 35 million trips were taken on tramways and 70 million trips were taken on suburban railways that year. Tramways and suburban railways in Oslo have had a continuous growth in traffic in the last ten years. This trend must be considered on the basis of the rapid growth in the number of workplaces and residents in Oslo during the 1990s. Outside of the Oslo area, buses handle most of the local public transportation. So far in the 1990s, however, the increase in passenger transport by bus has been more modest than the increase in transport by rail.

The growth in domestic air traffic, measured in transport work, amounted to three per cent in 1999. This is a more moderate growth compared with the average growth in the 1990s, which has been about six per cent.

Trips abroad

In 1999 there has also been a rapid growth in the number of trips abroad from Norway. This is especially true of road traffic, which has increased by almost 11 per cent in 1999 over the previous year. Short shopping trips by Norwegians account for most of this increase. Based on statistics from the Directorate of Public Roads, the Institute of Transport Economics has calculated that about 16.6 million people travelled out of or into Norway by road in 1999. Four out of five vehicles that crossed the border were registered in Norway.

Almost eight million air trips and a little over six million ferry trips were taken between Norway and foreign countries in 1999, while the number of train trips across the border was modest. About 76 per cent of the ferry passengers were Norwegians, and the corresponding percentage of flight passengers was about 60.

Freight Transport

There was also an increase in transport work on Norwegian territory in 1999, but the growth was much lower than in the three previous years. There was an increase in sea transport and transport on roads, but a decline in freight transport by rail. Almost half of the transport work (49 %) now occurs on roads, sea transport accounts for 44 per cent, while rail transport takes the remaining seven per cent.

Ships completely dominate the scene with respect to shipments to and from abroad, 88 per cent of the quantity of freight to and from the mainland is carried by ship. The figures in the last two years show only small changes in the quantity of freight compared with the level in 1997.

In the last four years there have been small changes in oil and gas exports (measured by weight) that are transported directly from the Norwegian continental shelf to foreign countries. About one-third of the export of oil and gas goes by ship while the rest is piped. In 1999 167 million tonnes of oil and gas were exported directly from the Norwegian continental shelf, whereas the record amount (in 1997) is about 172 million tonnes.