

MONTHLY BAROMETER

TRENDS IN ROAD FREIGHT PRICES IN FRANCE



FRANCE:

A SLIGHT FALL OF ROAD TRANSPORT PRICES IN FEBRUARY

Transport prices fell very slightly in February on a month-on-month basis. Economic uncertainty has entered a new dimension, which has reduced transport demand even further.

Last month, we highlighted the political uncertainty that weighed on economic actors in France. But since then, the arrival of the new Trump administration in the United States has relegated all the Franco-French drama to the background: Will the Prime Minister be overthrown, can France reduce its budget deficit, how to balance our pension system? All these questions were pushed out of the limelight.

The uncertainty has now shifted to the international arena, with a [trade war launched](#) on all fronts by the United States of Donald Trump. Combined with less dynamic than expected global demand, the trade battle is just beginning, and it will weigh on French exports this year.

Growth forecasts revised downwards

The Ministry of the Economy is sticking to the goal of a reduction of the public deficit to 5.4% of GDP in 2025. However, due to a possible increase in military spending and lower revenue forecasts, the Bank of France has lowered its growth forecast for 2025, [predicting a GDP increase of 0.7% this year](#), against 0.9% anticipated in December. Yet, it was on this more optimistic hypothesis that the government's budget forecasts were based.

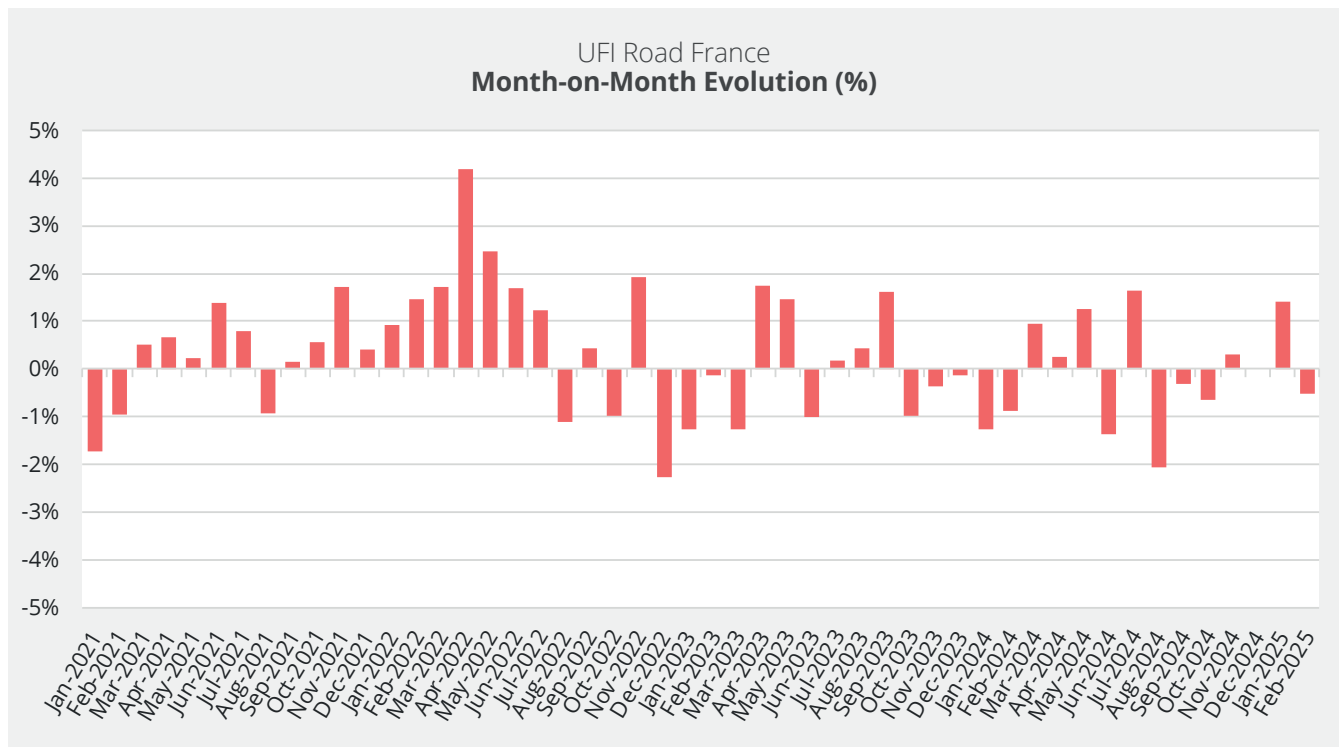
The monetary institution takes note of a slowing down of activity at the end of 2024 and the beginning of 2025, giving little momentum to the French economy. "After the slight downturn in activity observed at the end of last year – a

temporary payback after the positive effect of the Olympic Games in the summer of 2024 – GDP is expected to grow at a still moderate rate in the first half of 2025," explains the Bank of France in its new projections.

Whole parts of the economy are still suffering, such as the [construction sector](#). According to the forecasts of the French Construction Federation (FFB) presented Tuesday, March 11, activity is expected to decline by 2.6% in 2025, after a plunge of 5.5% in 2024. One single piece of good news: The net decline in inflation, limited to 1.3% on average in 2025, should bolster the purchasing power of the French.

Falling oil prices

This maximum level of uncertainty weighed on the road transport market. Road transport prices in France fell by 0.5% in February month-on-month, reflecting the gloom of the sector. For several months, carriers have indeed seen a decrease in volumes to be transported.



Source | [Uapply Freight Index](#) – Road France

In February, the National Road Committee’s (CNR) professional diesel index fell by 0.4% month-on-month, which puts an end to the continuous increase observed over the past 4 months (with a jump of 4.2% in January).

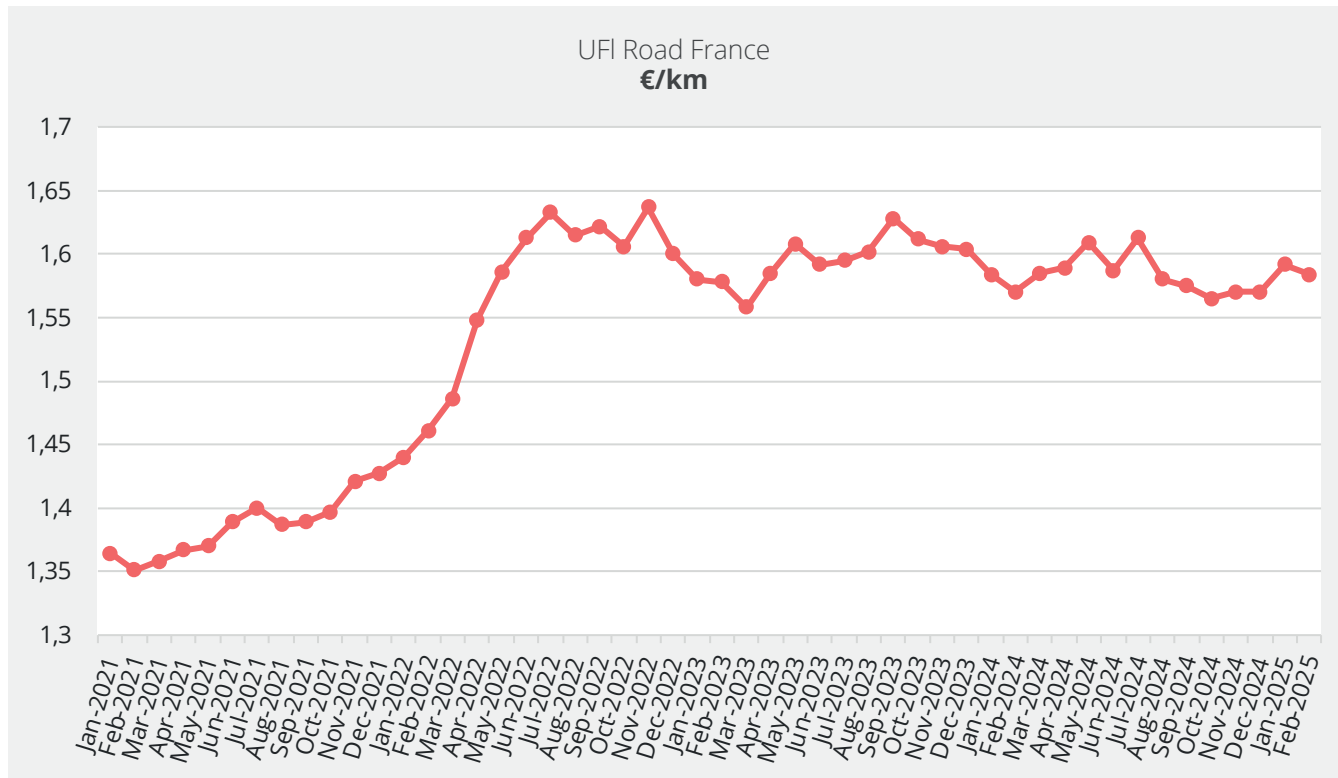
“ Oil prices are under downward pressure due to gloomy economic indicators ”

After the first three weeks of relative stability around \$75/b, crude oil prices significantly decreased at the end of February. On weekly average, the Brent futures contract lost \$2.1/b (-2.8%) to \$73.5/b. “Oil prices are under downward pressure due to gloomy economic indicators in the United States and Europe, uncertainties regarding the evolution of demand and expectations of an increase in global supply,” says IFP Énergies nouvelles (IFPEN). Moreover, President Donald Trump has not hidden his desire to weigh on market prices by playing if necessary on production, strategy summarized in his formula “drill, baby, drill”.

The resumption of oil exports from Iraqi Kurdistan, as well as the announcement of an increase in production in Kazakhstan and, potentially, Russia entering a ceasefire agreement with Ukraine, also supported the oil supply and lowered its price.

Transport prices in a tunnel

The average price of transport per kilometre travelled in France fell slightly in February to reach €1.584, losing less than 1 cent over a month. In recent months, in the French road transport market, the UFI (Upply Freight Index) seems to have entered a tunnel between 2 milestones: a minimum threshold of €1,550 and a maximum threshold of €1,600.



Source | [Upply Freight Index](#) – Road France

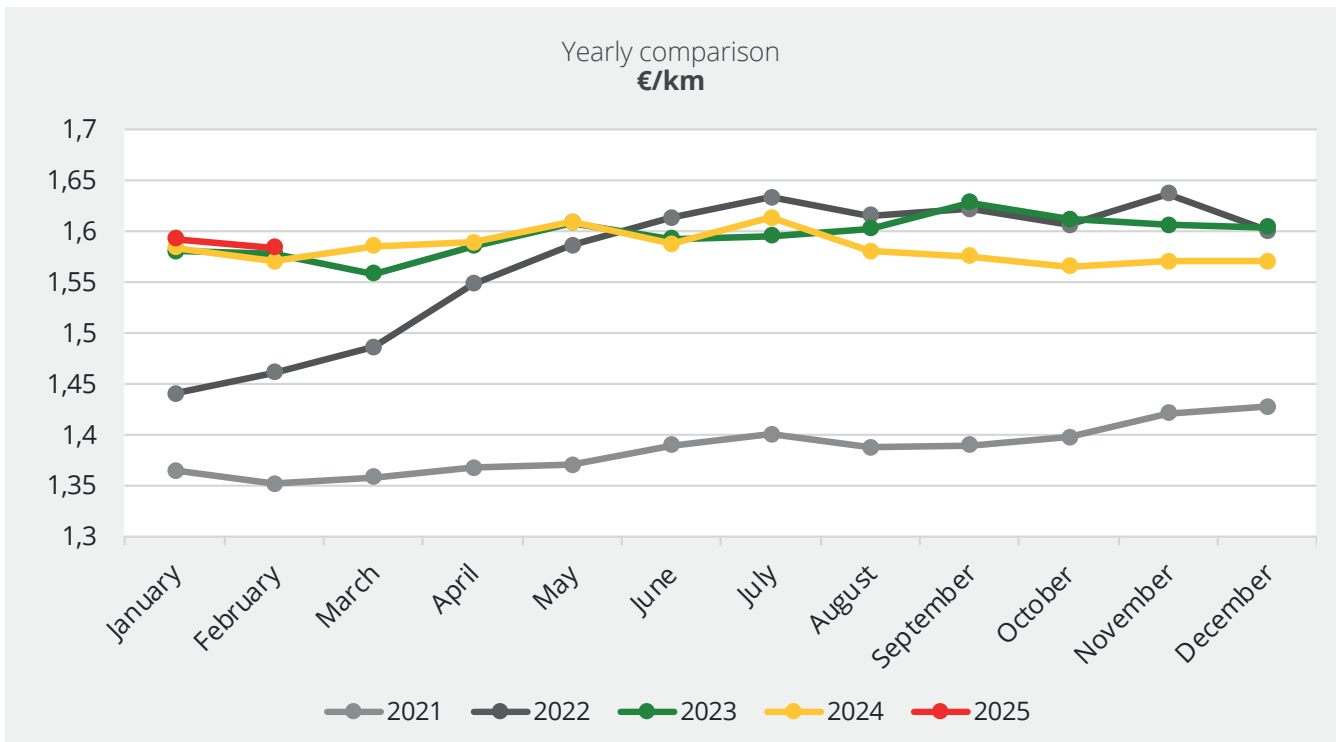
The purpose of the «Long-distance Tractor-Trailer» (LD EA) index is to observe the evolution of the costs of long-distance mixed goods road transport, carried out by means of tractor-trailers up to 44 T, running on diesel fuel. Long-distance, in this context, means national or international transport whose operating constraints make it impossible or unhabitual for the driver to return to their home on a daily basis. The index remained stable in February 2025, as the decline in the diesel component was offset by increases in other cost

items. In particular, we can note the conventional salary revaluations applied to administrative staff, which drive up transport structure costs.

The tunnel effect observed in terms of prices would therefore be the result of reciprocal compensation between changes in inflation, diesel and transport demand.

Margins under pressure

Despite a difficult context, the 2025 price curve is slightly above previous years. This indicates that inflationary effects have penetrated the selling prices of road transport services in France, but in proportions that do not uphold profit margins.



Source | [Upply Freight Index](#) - Road France

Under these conditions, carriers have taken a very strict stance during mandatory annual negotiations (NAO) on conventional wages with social partners. Employers’ organisations refused to grant pay increases to road drivers in 2025. However, a 1.5% increase in travel expenses has been accepted. The agreement was ratified by the employers’ organisations Union TLF and FNTR, but not by the OTRE.

The economic situation of the sector from last November is considered worrying by Florence Dupasquier, President of the National Road Transport Federation (FNTR). “Road transport suffers from a scissors effect, with a drop in volumes (due to the fall in overall economic activity observed over the past two years, particularly in the automotive sector, the construction sector...) and a fairly strong increase in costs,” said the president in an interview with the Dauphiné Libéré.

As a result, the FNTR, like its counterparts, is vigilant about the possibility of new taxes. The employers’ organisations were received on March 13 by the Minister of Transport, Philippe Tabarot, to discuss these issues.

On this occasion, the OTRE also stressed the need for “a fairer distribution of value in road transport”, expressing in particular its desire for action against unfairly low prices, greater transparency of prices offered by digital commercial linking service operators, “decent and fixed” revenues provided to carriers and a cap on undervalued ancillary transport services. French employers’ organisations are also campaigning for stronger controls to enforce the Mobility Package.

KEY INDICATORS

Sources | Insee, CNR

INDICATORS	February 2025	January 2025	Evolution M / M-1	February 2024	Evolution over 12 months
Business climate (base 100)	95.6	94.9	+ 0.7%	98.6	- 3.0%
CNR Commercial Diesel Index	195.67	196.46	- 0.4%	210.21	- 6.9%
CNR's Long Haul semi trailer truck index	165.19	165.13	+ 0.03%	166.82	- 1.0%



William Béguerie

Road Transport Expert for Upply



THE TECHNOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS PLATFORM THAT BOOSTS SUPPLY CHAIN ACTORS' EFFICIENCY

Upply, the Tech Platform serving freight transport professionals, **designs and develops digital solutions** to assist supply chain professionals in leveraging the full potential of digitalization for their business.

© All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any material form, including photocopying or electronic storage, without prior written permission from Upply. This report is based on factual information obtained from several public sources. While every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the information, Upply disclaims any liability for any loss or damage caused by reliance on the information contained in this report. The opinions expressed here are those of the author as of the date of publication and are subject to change without notice.