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The review “Russian Economy. Trends and Outlooks” has been published by the Gaidar Institute since 1991. This is the 42th issue. This publication provides a detailed analysis of main trends in Russian economy, global trends in social and economic development. The paper contains 6 big sections that highlight different aspects of Russia’s economic development, which allow to monitor all angles of ongoing events over a prolonged period: global economic and political challenges and national responses, economic growth and economic crisis; the monetary and budget spheres; financial markets and institutions; the real sector; social sphere; institutional changes. The paper employs a huge mass of statistical data that forms the basis of original computation and numerous charts confirming the conclusions.

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4.4. Russia's Transportation Industry¹

The transportation industry is not only a key sector of the economy, but also its indispensable glue. The development of transport infrastructure is a major factor of economic growth and a key driver of exit from the economic crisis.

In the past few years, the transportation industry demonstrated upturn dynamic both in terms of the development of infrastructure and the volumes of transportation. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic and the relevant restrictions aimed at fighting the spread thereof led to substantial changes in the supply and demand situation on numerous markets, not only affecting directly freight and passenger traffic, but also making a sizable portion of the population revise their views on the need and required parameters of the infrastructure (not only transport infrastructure, but also social-information and communication ones).

The transportation industry and logistics are among the sectors which were hit the hardest by the pandemic. On the back of restrictions on international traffic introduced early in 2020 and the decline of business activity, the volumes of hauling operations, passenger traffic and freight turnover decreased and logistic chains changed.

As of the end of 2020, the list of the hardest -hit sectors² included motor transportation and air carriage; sea, inland-water, air and other overland passenger services; intercity and international railway passenger services, bus terminals and auto stations, as well as auxiliary activities related to air and space transportation.

At the same time, it is noteworthy that effect of the pandemic on the situation in the transportation industry is not quite homogeneous in terms of the pattern of effects broken down by the sub-sectors and their indicators' dynamics during 2020.

So, the restrictions aimed at fighting the spread of the pandemic, particularly during the period of non-work days and the mandatory stay-at-home regime in April-May 2020, the limitation of international mobility³ and the shift to remote work affected dramatically the volume of passenger traffic by all types of transport. It started to recover, as shown below, only in H2 2020.

1 This section was written by: *Borzykh K.*, Junior Researcher of the Infrastructure and Spatial Studies Department, IAES RANEPА; *Ponomaryev Yu.*, Candidate of Economic Sciences, Head of the Infrastructure and Spatial Studies Department, IAES RANEPА; Senior Researcher of the Center for Real Sector Studies, Gaidar Institute.

2 URL: http://base.garant.ru/73846630/#block_1000

3 RF Government Order No.763-r of March 27, 2020 on Temporary Suspension of Traffic via Russia's State Borders.

At the same time, the impact on freight traffic was also negative, but not so much homogeneous. Fast growth in online sales of goods led to higher demand for freight services (particularly, trucking) on the part of logistics companies, retailers and distributors. To deliver essential goods to some cities, the authorities had to assign the taxi service a new function.¹ Also, a pickup in the online segment of sales increased a load on transport industry-related entities providing warehousing services: in 2020 demand for such services doubled and renewed the record-high level of the busiest period preceding New Year's Day.²

It is noteworthy that the impact of the coronavirus has brought about globally similar trends in transport systems all over the world, specifically, a substantial decline of activities of large international transportation hubs and global cargo and passenger traffic. The volumes of reduction in the transportation industry's activities differ from country to country and depend on the specifics of approach to dealing with the pandemic's implications. However, the common trend consists in switching over freight flows to railways and reorientate the transport system to the domestic market (internal traffic growth).³ For example, China used railways as the main mode of transportation of goods, including medical supplies: railways which operated 24/7 replaced trucking at individual supply chain parts which functioning was disrupted. In the euro area, the introduction of incentives for freight companies (tax breaks and cancellation of rentals owing to a decrease in the volume of intra-European and International freight traffic) failed to prevent the contraction of the market of transport and logistics services (a decrease of over 30% at year-end). According to the OECD's preliminary estimates, a drop in the global freight traffic was equal to 36% in 2020.⁴

A rapid recovery of the transportation industry is largely hindered by international traffic restrictions (albeit eased gradually) which are in effect till the end of the year. On the back of these restrictions, in 2020 the international tourist flow decreased by 74% as compared with the previous year.⁵ According to the UNWTO, an international tourism organization, in December 2020 out of 217 destinations (countries) 27% of countries kept their borders completely closed and 70% of countries eased partially international travelling restrictions.⁶ The International Air Transport Association (IATA) assessed that air traffic decreased by 66% at year-end as compared with 2019. At the same time, the IATA notes that owing to internal air service growth of 3.8% in summer as compared with August 2019, the Russian market was the first one to see growth since the beginning of the pandemic (*Table 15*). Upward dynamics of the air transportation industry's indicators were driven by the reduction in the cost of air flights in combination with growing demand for internal holiday trips.⁷

1 URL: <https://www.vedomosti.ru/partner/articles/2020/06/16/832460-pandemiya-zastavila>
2 URL: <https://www.rzd-partner.ru/logistics/reviews//pandemiya-rasshirila-spros-i-trebovaniya-k-skladam/>
3 URL: <https://www.retail.ru/articles/logisticheskie-trendy-2020-2021-goda-vliyanie-pandemii-covid-19-na-perevozki/>
4 URL: <https://www.itf-oecd.org/sites/default/files/global-freight-covid-19.pdf>
5 URL: <https://www.e-unwto.org/toc/wtobarometereng/19/1>
6 URL: <https://www.unwto.org/covid-19-travel-restrictions>
7 URL: <https://www.iata.org/en/pressroom/pr/2020-09-29-02/>

Table 15

Dynamics of indicators of air traffic on developed countries' internal markets, August 2020 as compared with the corresponding period of 2019, %

	Share in global traffic volume	Revenue passenger kilometers	Passenger load factor (increase)	Passenger load factor (level)
Internal traffic	36.2	-50.9	-21.5	64.2
Australia (internal)	0.8	-91.5	-44.9	37.1
Brazil (internal)	1.1	-67.0	-6.4	76.1
China (internal)	5.1	-19.1	-12.3	75.3
India (internal)	1.3	-73.6	-19.1	66.2
Japan (internal)	6.1	-68.6	-45.6	35.6
Russia (internal)	1.5	3.8	-4.6	86.4
USA (internal)	14.0	-69.3	-37.7	48.9

Source: The International Air Transport Association (IATA).

Below we review in detail the dynamics of the transportation industry's main indicators in 2020.

4.4.1. Transportation dynamic in 2020

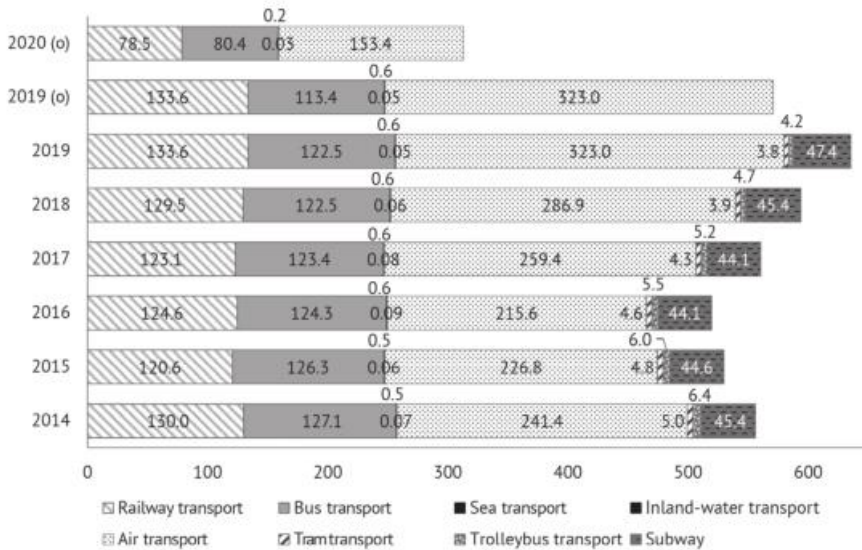
Passenger traffic

The year 2020 saw a huge slump in passenger traffic in Russia: as per the data of the Rosstat it was equal to 45.2% as compared with 2019 and took place largely during the stay-at-home regime in April-May. Passenger traffic decreased substantially as regards inland water service (-59.5%), air service (-52.5%, including international air service (-85.9%) and internal air service (-13.5%)), railway service (-41.3%) and sea service (-39,5%). Bus passenger traffic, mostly intra-city and inter-city bus services, fell by 29%. In summer, passenger traffic by all types of transport increased, but owing to the prevailing restrictions on international traffic and relatively lower demand for transportation services failed to embark on the former trajectory comparable with the previous year.

At the same time, based on the results of four quarters of 2020 it can be stated that the passenger traffic pattern did not undergo serious changes; the share of air traffic is declining, while that of railway and bus traffic is on the rise relative to 2019 (Fig. 16).

In 2020, the overall volume of passenger traffic decreased by 29%. The largest contraction took place in the air transportation industry: air passenger traffic fell by 46%. In particular, passenger traffic of the Moscow Air Cluster decreased by 52.3%.¹ Owing to the restrictions on the international air service between Russia and other countries, in 2020 the volume of regular and occasional flights was equal to 23.8% of the volume seen in 2019. As regards internal flights, this indicator is higher – 76.9%, however it does not exceed the volume of the previous year. In

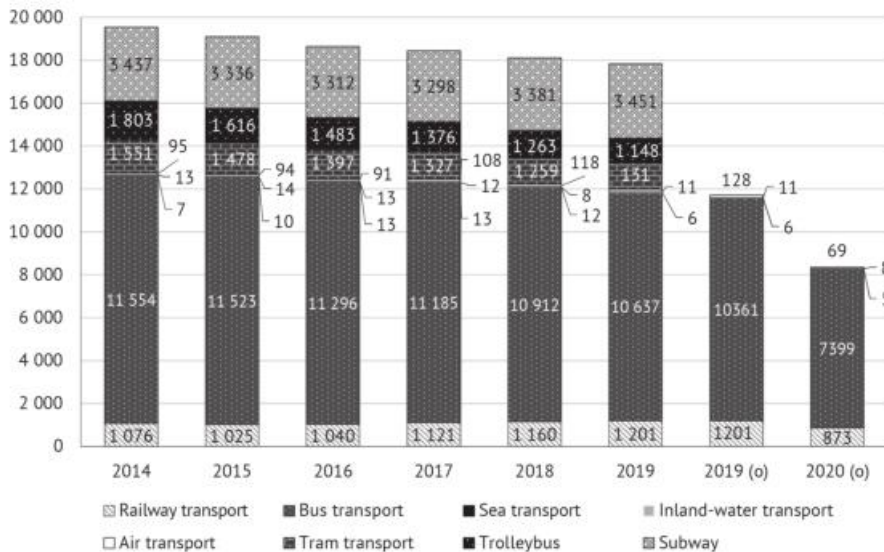
¹ URL: <https://www.aviaport.ru/news/2021/01/26/665055.html>



Note. 2020 and 2019 (for comparison) are represented by the on-line data (“o” next to the year) without taking into account tram and trolleybus traffic and subway.

Fig. 16. Passenger traffic by the type of transport (billion passenger kilometers), 2014–2020

Source: The Rosstat, own calculations.



Note. 2020 and 2019 (for comparison) are represented by the on-line data (“o” next to the year) without taking into account tram and trolleybus traffic and subway.

Fig. 17. Passenger traffic by the type of transport in 2014–2020, million passengers

Source: The Rosstat, own calculations.

addition, passenger load factor in the industry as a whole decreased by 6.7% in 2020 on 2019.¹

There was almost an equal decrease in passenger traffic by sea transport (-23.9%), railway (-27.3%), bus (-28.6%) and inland water transport (-31.8%) (Fig. 17).

Freight traffic

As per the Rosstat's data, in 2020 the share of the transportation industry in gross value added² was equal to 6.5% (a decrease of 0.3 p.p. as compared with 2019). By estimates of the RF Ministry of Economic Development, the cargo traffic dynamic throughout 2020 remained negative. Overall, in 2020 freight turnover fell by 4.9% relative to 2019 with the largest drop of -8.2% based on the results of Q2 2020.³

A decrease in freight turnover and cargo traffic volume in nominal terms based on the results of H1 2020 led to growth in transport cargo capacity⁴ (54.6). However, at year-end a downward trend observed since 2014 was registered and this is evidence of higher efficiency in utilization of transport (Fig. 18).

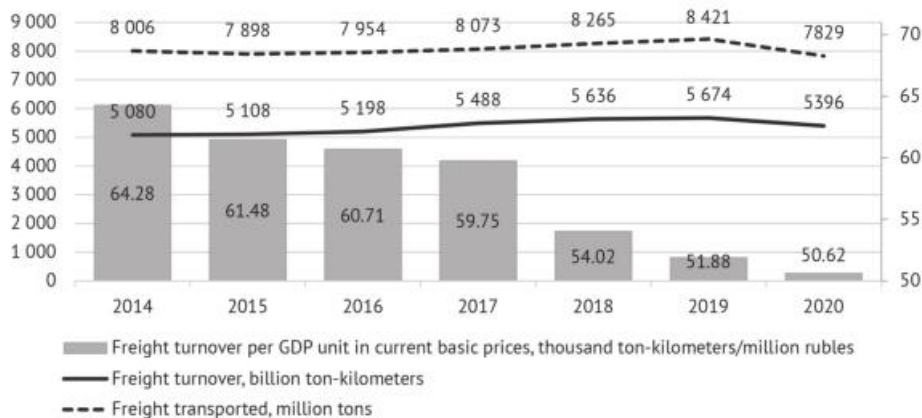


Fig. 18. The dynamic of freight turnover per GDP unit in current prices (thousand ton-kilometers/million rubles), cargo traffic volume (million tons) and transport freight turnover (billion ton-kilometers), 2014–2020

Source: The Rosstat, own calculations.

1 URL: <https://favt.gov.ru/dejatelnost-vozdushnye-perevozki-osnovnye-proizvodstvennyye-pokazateli-ga/>

2 The Rosstat. (GDP produced. The annual data on OKVED 2 (NAC Edition 2) (since 2011) in current prices. URL: <https://rosstat.gov.ru/accounts>; URL: <https://www.gks.ru/storage/mediabank/osn-12-2019.pdf>

3 URL: <https://www.economy.gov.ru/material/file/f6ba6608b92d30df520e89cdf7ec16cf/210128.pdf>

4 Cargo capacity is the value of freight turnover (sum of productions of weight of each freight shipment by a transportation distance) per GDP unit and shows the extent of the “load” on the economy by the work of transport.

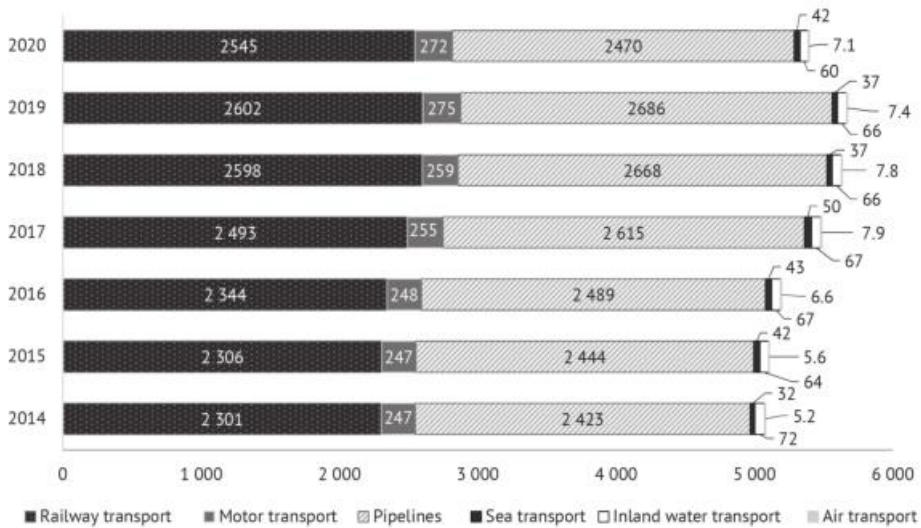


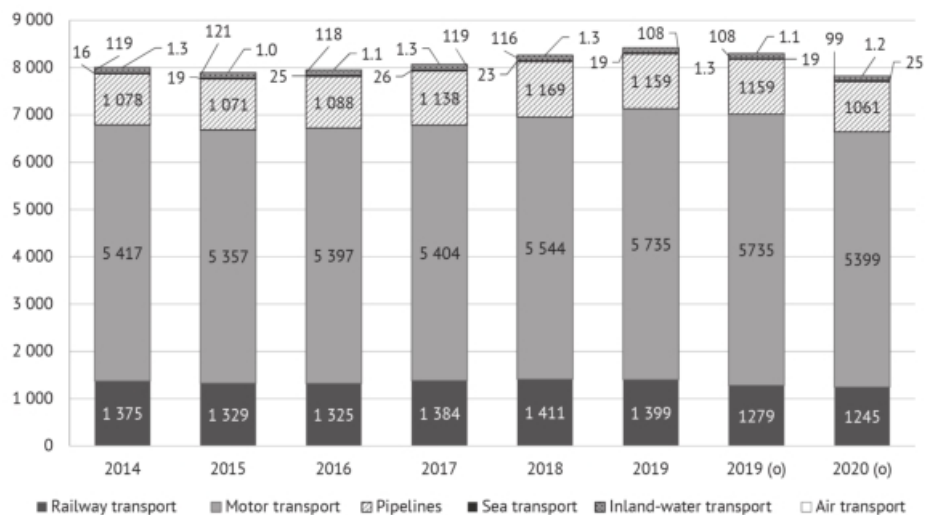
Fig. 19. Freight turnover by the type of transport (billion ton-kilometers), 2014–2020

Source: The Rosstat, own calculations.

As per the Rosstat’s data, in 2020 the monthly dynamic of freight turnover did not surpass the indicators of the previous year. The smallest deviation relative to 2019 was registered in February (99.5%), while the highest gap, in May and June (90.8% and 90.5%, respectively), but it was narrowed considerably based on the results of Q3 and Q4. In terms of the types of transport, freight turnover decreased as follows: inland-water transport (-8.6%), pipelines (-8%), air transport (-3.8%), railways (-2.2%) and motor transport (-1.4%). In November-December, air carriage succeeded in increasing substantially the volume of freight turnover and surpass the relevant indicators of the previous year. The sea transport became the only one which achieved a positive dynamic of freight turnover and surpassed by 16% the volume seen in 2019. In addition, in 2020 air carriage saw upward freight turnover dynamics on Russian internal routes (+10.6%), including local traffic (+29.2%). In freight turnover across the country as a whole, the share of motor transport increased, while that of pipelines became smaller (Fig. 19).

In 2020, the freight traffic volume in nominal terms decreased by 5.7%. Specifically, it concerned all types of transport, except for sea transport (32.9%), which can be explained by growth in transit and the volume of grain shipments which made up for a drop in other components of freight traffic (Fig. 20). In addition, foreign trade which Russian sea carriers are oriented at was hit slightly less by the crisis than other sectors and this could not but influence the dynamic of freight turnover and sea freight.¹ At year-end, air freight increased and embarked

1 URL: <http://www.morvesti.ru/analitika/1691/86483/>



Note. 2020 and 2019 (for comparison) are represented by the on-line data (“o” next to the year).

Fig. 20. Freight traffic dynamic by the type of transport (million tons), 2014–2020

Source: The Rosstat, own calculations.

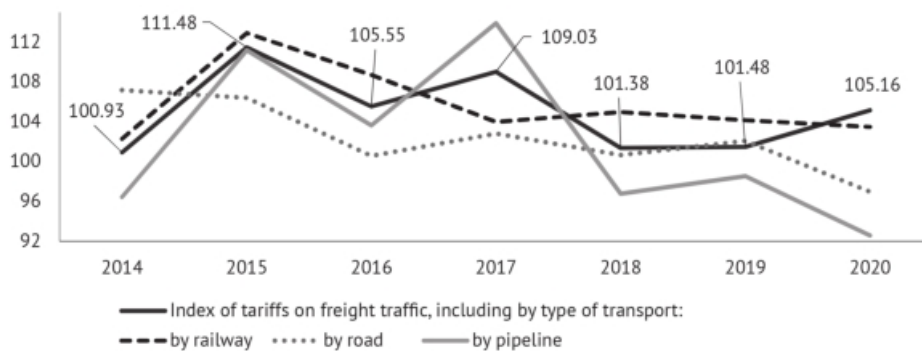


Fig. 21. Growth rates of freight carriage tariffs (aggregate and by the type of transport), December on December of the previous year, %

Source: The Unified Interdepartmental Statistical Information System, own calculations.

on the positive dynamic: 1.9%, while based on the results of January-October it saw negative growth (-1.4%).

The largest decrease in freight traffic was registered with pipelines (-8.5%), inland-water transport (-8.3%) and motor transport (-5.9%). Railways saw a relatively small drop (-2.7%) in freight traffic.

Overall dynamics and changes in the freight traffic pattern were affected to some extent and driven by the dynamics of freight tariffs (*Fig. 21*). Generally, the overall level of freight tariffs on freight carriage has been declining since 2015. Explosive tariffs growth on the back of nearly three-fold increase in tariffs from 105.2% to 288.9% on air freight in November-December 2020 compared with the relevant period of 2019 was an exception. Throughout the entire observation period, the dynamics of tariffs on transportation by pipelines were the most volatile with a dramatic slump registered in 2020. The growth rates of tariffs on freight transportation by road demonstrated a downward trend, while those on freight transportation by railway remained on a consistently high level relative to other types of carriage.

Transportation infrastructure

Apart from limitations and losses caused by the pandemic, there is an acute need of upgrading and replacing nearly one third of the entire rolling stock and bringing the transportation infrastructure in compliance with the relevant standards.

To maintain the rates of development of the transportation infrastructure, the authorities had to take prompt and systemic steps, that is, the optimization of procedures for implementation of projects and provision of additional financing for the sector. With the breakdown into the type of transport, the following trends can be highlighted in 2020. First of all, amid the pandemic the start of implementation of large railway infrastructure projects on external markets (for example, the RZhd's and the Transmashholding's projects in Argentina and Egypt) was postponed. To implement railway infrastructure projects on commissioning 400 kilometers of additional main trunk routes and new railway lines primarily in the Eastern test range and approaches to seaports of the Azov sea and the Black sea, it required to increase the RZhd's investment program by 1.5%.

The year 2020 saw the contraction of shipbuilding activity in Russia: at year-end maximum 60 civil ships are expected to be put into service, a decrease of 20% compared with the previous year.² The development of refueling infrastructure and building of natural gas refueling transport facilities slowed down: the building of 10% of such facilities was postponed from 2020 to the beginning of 2021.³

The road building dynamic is positive: in the current year the volume of road building jobs has increased and surpassed actually the planned targets, including those set in the "Safe and Quality Highways" national project (SQH).

1 Federal Law No.254-FZ of July 31, 2020 "On the Specifics of Regulation of Individual Relations for the Purpose of Upgrading and Expanding the Trunk Infrastructure and Amending Individual Statutory Acts of the Russian Federation." URL: <http://kremlin.ru/acts/bank/45782>

2 Shipbuilding on a High Note // The Kommersant daily. URL: <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4442575>

3 Anton Inyutsyn held a meeting on the ways of speeding up the development of the market of natural gas as petrol // The RF Ministry of Energy. URL: <https://minenergo.gov.ru/node/18661>

As of November, 7,000 road facilities were brought in compliance with relevant standards, that is above the 2020 target indicator of 6,000 road facilities; the area of asphalt cover milling was equal to 142 mn sq. meters (instead of 123 mn sq. meters).¹ Early in December, the annual plan of commissioning roads in Moscow was accomplished ahead of schedule,² while in the Nizhny Novgorod Region the overall area of wearing coat milling was equal to 98.8% of the annual volume.³ Within the framework of the SQH national project, in 12 metropolitan areas the public transport rolling stock was upgraded with 511 transport vehicles provided among other things on preferential terms (with a price discount of 60%).

From among large infrastructure projects in the transportation sector in 2020, the Tavrida Highway project was completed, the building of the bridge across the Zeya river in the city of Blagoveschensk was started ahead of schedule, the period of building of the bridge across the Ob river in the city of Novosibirsk was reduced by a year and the work proceeded on building the bridge across the Sheksna river in the city of Cherepovets, the northern bypass of the city of Kaluga and the M-12 Moscow-Kazan highway.

Port infrastructure saw further development: at year-end production capacities of Russian ports increased by 27 mn tons. In addition, inland-water service launched new cruise routes on the Yenisei river and the Volkhov river; also, the Mustai Karim cruise liner built at the Russian shipyard was put into service.

4.4.2. The transportation industry's losses and state support measures

By estimates⁴, in 2020 the transportation industry's losses owing to the pandemic amounted to Rb1.27trillion or 66% of the overall volume of Russian infrastructure companies' losses.

Among different types of transport, air infrastructure service companies were hit the hardest: airline companies and airports short-received Rb600 bn and Rb113 bn, respectively. In terms of the relative ratio of losses as the share of lost annual revenues, the public transport, particularly, carsharing services, the subway and city overland transport services were hit hard, too (*Fig. 22*).

The transportation industry which is critically important to the economy managed to avoid substantial cuts in personnel and bankruptcies thanks to state support measures worth about Rb200 bn.⁵ Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the complex of anti-crisis measures aimed at maintaining transport companies' operations included primarily the support of systemic companies by means of

1 Road building has surpassed the planned target this year – Marat Khusnullin // Dorinfo. URL: https://dorinfo.ru/star_detail.php?ELEMENT_ID=87667

2 Bochkaryev: Moscow Has Accomplished the Annual Plan of Commissioning of New Roads // The website of the Town-Planning and Construction Complex of the City of Moscow. URL: <https://stroj.mos.ru/news/bochkariov-moskva-vypolnila-ghodovoi-plan-po-vvodu-dorog>

3 Kilometers of roads repaired in the Nizhny Novgorod Region in 2020 // The website of the Strategy of Development of the Nizhny Novgorod Region. URL: <https://2035.government-nnov.ru/ru-RU/news/skolko-kilometrov-dorog-bylo-otremontirovano-v-2020-godu-v-nizegorodskoj-oblasti>

4 InfraOne Research of 01.2021 URL: https://infraone.ru/sites/default/files/analitika/2021/infrastruktura_i_pandemiya_poteri_otrasli_v_2020_infraone_research.pdf

5 URL: <https://regnum.ru/news/economy/3118554.html>

6 URL: <https://www.mintrans.gov.ru/activities/289/291>

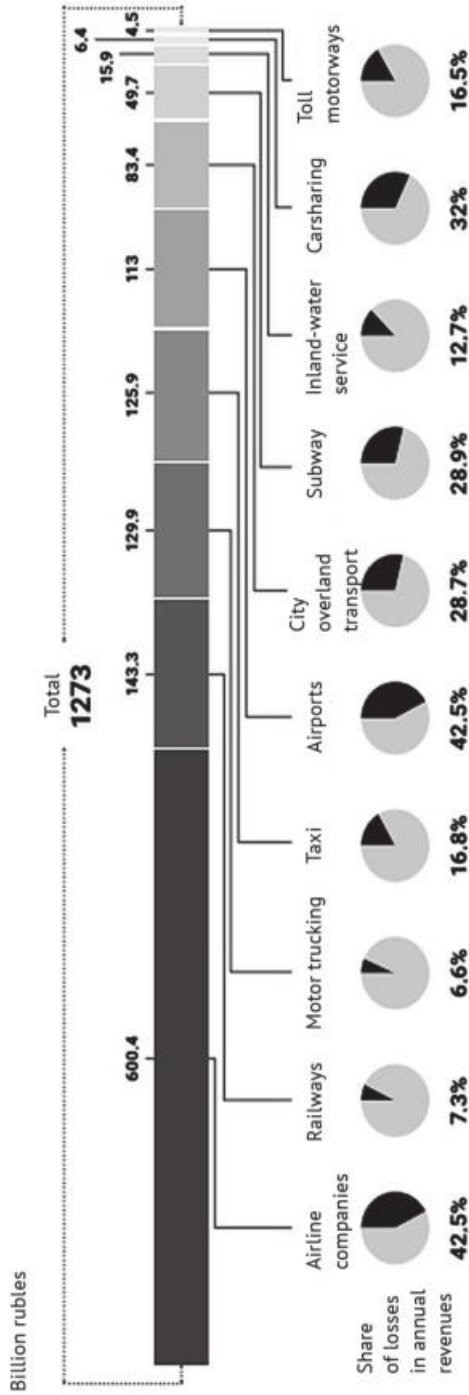


Fig. 22. The transportation industry's revenue losses in 202, billion rubles

Source: InfraOne Research.

subsidies to finance costs, tax deferrals and government loan guarantees.¹ Transport companies were granted extended deadlines for making advance payments and insurance payments, including mandatory social insurance payments provided that the company's revenues decreased by more than 10% or in case of profit tax losses in 2020.² In addition, the government reimbursed airline companies for their costs related to the transportation of RF citizens from countries with an unfavorable epidemiologic situation and provided subsidies to airline companies and airports for partial compensation of transportation expenses to Kaliningrad at special tariffs (in the volume of Rb36.1 bn). River and maritime cruise companies received subsidies to support their operations, preserve jobs and make payments under lease contracts (Rb5 bn). Rb443.7 bn worth financing of railway companies (including the placement of OAO RZhd's irredeemable bonds) is aimed at subsidizing the project on the development of the Tran Siberian and Baikal-Amur railway main lines, transshipments via Far Eastern seaports, lease payments by suburban public transport operators and labor remuneration of the AO FPK personnel, as well as reimbursing of expenses on services related to the utilization of the railway transport infrastructure of the OOO Airoexpress and the AO "Transport Company "Grand Service Express".

Also, to underpin and motivate demand for transportation services in future, it was decided to freeze the AO FPK's ticket prices of railway passenger trips in compartment cars in March 2020 with the number of routes reduced³; large airline companies cut their tariffs on internal flights (this measure facilitated air passenger traffic growth in August)⁴; the reduced tax rate of 10% on Russian internal flights via the Moscow transportation hub was extended till the end of 2021— this measure facilitated affordability of air passenger service amid high prices of jet fuel and airport services and high operating losses of Russian airline companies; the reduced tax rate of 1.6% on the property of entities operating public railway tracks was extended till the end of 2021. The scheme of subsidizing Rb835 mn worth of internal air flight tickets for families with children was developed (from January 1, 2021).⁵ Within the framework of the Nationwide Plan of Activities, it is envisaged to create a "single ticket" for all types of the public transport and uniform standards of payment of fares for passengers from different regions.⁶

4.4.3. The outlook for development and recovery of the transportation industry in 2021–2023

The transportation industry's mid-term dynamic is justified by other sectors' targets and furthermore its recovery depends largely on the scenarios of the

1 RF Government Decree No.651 of May 10, 2020

2 RF Government Decree No.409 of April 2, 2020

3 URL: <https://www.rbc.ru/society/26/03/2020/5e7b8f5d9a794710988ec5c2>

4 URL: <https://www.vedomosti.ru/business/articles/2020/08/21/837295-aviakompanii-iz-zaplohogo-sprosa>

5 URL: <http://www.finmarket.ru/news/5368346>

6 The nationwide plan of activities facilitating the recovery of employment and households' incomes, economic growth and long-term structural economic changes (approved at the RF Government meeting on September 23, 2020 (Record No.36, Section VII) No. P13-60855 of October 2, 2020. URL: <https://www.garant.ru/products/ipo/prime/doc/74678576/>

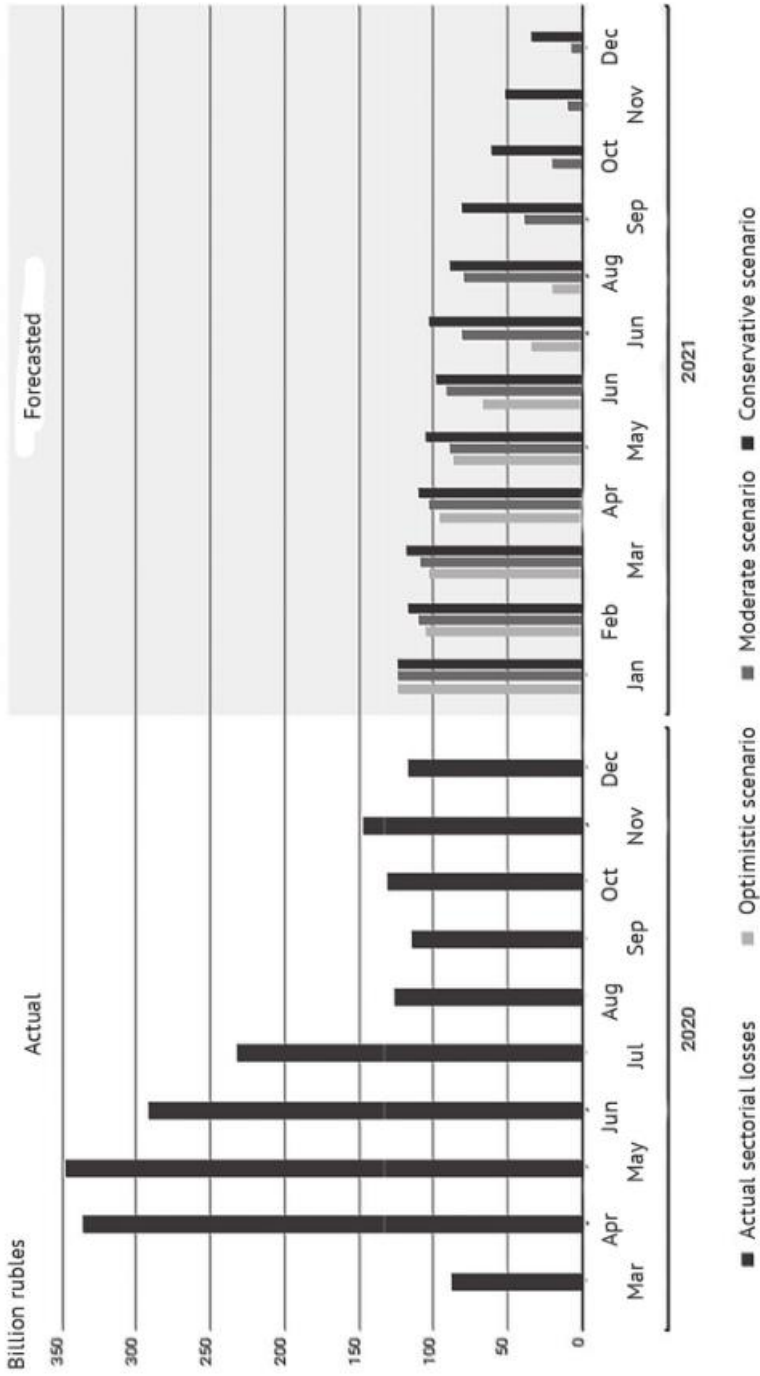


Fig. 2.3. Forecast scenarios of distribution of infrastructure companies' revenues losses

Source: InfraOne Research.

pandemic's growth/decline. In case of worsening of the epidemiologic situation and the repeated introduction of quarantine restrictions, the recovery of the global and national economies will be protracted and this cannot, but slow down the growth rates of various sectors of the economy, including the transportation industry.

According to the forecasts¹ of the RF Ministry of Economic Development, the global economic activity is expected to recover gradually in 2021. The rates of recovery of the transportation industry and its return to the former volume of functioning will depend directly on when quarantine restrictions are lifted completely, herd immunity is effectively formed in different countries and international travelling is renewed. Overall, the indicators are expected to recover to pre-crisis levels by 2022. By estimates, in case of the optimistic scenario,² the transportation industry's overall pandemic-related losses will be minimum. In case of the moderate-pessimistic scenario³ and the critical scenario,⁴ the rates of recovery of infrastructure industries, including the transportation industry will be low (*Fig. 23*).

Though state borders are being gradually opened, lots of countries still require individuals to self-isolate on arrival and/or undergo tests for COVID-19. Tourist trips abroad are still limited, but some countries allow tourists in if they have got complete vaccination. Entry to some "closed" countries is possible for Russian citizens only via third countries.

As per the Rosaviation's orders⁵, Russian airline companies are permitted to make charter and passenger/cargo flights⁶ to "closed" countries which include Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary, Germany, Israel, Spain, Italy, Cyprus, China, Malta, the Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, France and the Czech Republic. In 2021, international air service has renewed with a number of countries (Finland, Vietnam, India, Qatar, Greece and Singapore). European countries' borders are expected to be open for Russian citizens not earlier than August-September 2021.⁷

1 URL: https://www.economy.gov.ru/material/directions/makroec/prognozy_socialno_ekonomicheskogo_razvitiya/prognoz_socialno_ekonomicheskogo_razvitiya_rf_na_2021_god_i_na_planovyy_period_2022_i_2023_godov.html

2 No tough restrictions, such as the shutdown of economic sectors, the start of the nationwide vaccination in Q1 2021 and the number of new coronavirus cases per day not exceeding 6,000 persons.

3 The period of new restrictive measures applied to a half of the population lasts for maximum six weeks and the number of new coronavirus cases per day is in the range of 6,000-12,000 persons.

4 The period of new restrictive measures applied to 85%–95% of the population lasts for over eight weeks and the number of new coronavirus cases per day exceeds 12,000 persons.

5 Order No.1244-P of October 05, 2020 of the Rosaviation "On Granting and Withdrawal of Permit to Air Carriers Having the Relevant License to Carry out International Passenger and (or) Cargo Flights." // URL: <https://favt.gov.ru/deyatelnost-vozdushnye-perevozki-dopusk-perevozchikov-k-vypolneniju-mezhdunarodnyh-perevozok/?id=6964>

6 For certain categories of individuals which are allowed entry to the territory of the recipient country (not for tourism).

7 URL: <https://tourism.interfax.ru/ru/news/articles/75353/>

