THE ROLE OF TRANSPORT SECTOR IN SHAPING THE ECONOMIC SECURITY OF COUNTRIES ON THE EXAMPLES OF RUSSIA AND MOLDOVA

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Abstract: *The article is devoted to the economic security of the state in the context of transport infrastructure. The components of the transport infrastructure of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Moldova, the performance indicators of the transport systems use of these countries are considered. An analysis of the problems of economic security of the Republic of Moldova in connection with the insufficient development of its transport communications has been carried out.*

Keywords*: transport infrastructure, transport sector, railway transport, economic security.*

Classification JEL*: F52, L91, L92, L93, O18, O52, R42.*

UDC: *338.47:338.246(470+478)* ***DOI:*** *https://doi.org/10.53486/ser2026.19*

1. Introduction

The economic security of any country is directly related to the level of development of transport systems. This level in one of the main conditions for preserving the unity of the economic space and stabilizing the socio-economic situation in the state. The development of transport systems increases the connectivity of the regions and ensures timely delivery of goods. The accessibility of transport and the growth of the average transportation distance indicates the expansion of the scope of transport activities and a factor of economic growth in the countries. Transport investments contribute to the formation of a unified network for the delivery of goods from supplier to consumer.

The development of transportation networks is contributing to positive effects:

- -increasing the level of development of the regions;
- -increasing the number of jobs and employment of the population;
- -increasing the accessibility of production to material and natural resources;
- -reducing the cost of production and, consequently, the cost and final total costs of the produced goods for the consumer.

The efficient use of all types of transportation ensures high quality and competitiveness of the transport industry as a whole. Competition between transport companies and modes of transport gives a great impetus to economic development both domestically and abroad. Due to the emergence of new threats to economic security in transport, companies and the state should work on the sustainable and safe functioning of the transport complex, namely:

- rational construction of the corporate organizational and production structure;
- implementation of innovative activities;
- the monitoring of potential threats;

- the provision of the enterprise with the necessary labor resources and their rational use;
- assessment of the work of management structures.

Freight transport is an important part of the functioning of any modern society. Thanks to them, goods are delivered from the manufacturer to the end consumer. The relationship between supply and demand for transportation can be considered as the basis for building a strategy for the development and scaling of supply chains.

The transport complex includes railway, air, sea, inland waterway, pipeline and automobile transport. Each type has its own peculiarities in the transportation of goods.

2. Literature review

In the modern literature, there is no single and universally accepted definition of economic security. Researchers interpret it as a state of sustainable economic development, as the ability of the economy to confront internal and external threats, as a system of protecting national economic interests. Modern authors emphasize that economic security is a key element of national security and a necessary condition for the stable development of the state, especially in conditions of crises (pandemic, war, etc.).

Several key trends can be identified in the literature. At the macroeconomic level, research focuses on the sustainability of economic growth, the role of the state in protecting the economy, and the university of technology. At the level of regional security, researchers analyze differences in the level of security of regions, as well as the influence of institutional factors. At the enterprise level, the main focus on financial stability, risk management, and overall enterprise performance.

In the scientific literature one can find different interpretations of the category “economic security”. Thus, L. Abalkin defines economic security as “a set of conditions and factors that ensure the independence of the national economy, its stability and sustainability, the ability for constant renewal and self-improvement” (Abalkin, 1994).

A. Arkhipov, A. Gorodetsky and B. Mikhailov believe that “economic security is the ability of the economy to ensure the effective satisfaction of social needs at the national and international levels, … a set of internal and external conditions conductive to the effective dynakic growth of the national economy, its ability to satisfy the needs of society, the state, the individual, to ensure competitiveness in foreign markets, guaranteeing against various types of threats and losses” (Arkhipov, Gorodetsky & Mikhailov, 1994).

The team of authors under the leadership of academician V.K. Senchagov put forward the idea that the basic state strategy of economic and overall national security should be an ideology of development that takes into account strategic priorities, national interests, as a result of which security threats are minimized. Without the ideology of development, without the cultivation of industrial and scientific and technical development, it is impossible to solve such problems of economic security as increasing budget revenues, ensuring an acceptable level of employment of the population, improving the quality of life and social protection of the population. Therefore, the main goal of the economic strategy is to restore economic growth in Russia” (Senchagov, 1998)

In addition, V.K. Senchagov in his work puts forward the opinion that “security is the state of an object in the system of its connections from the point of view of the ability for self-

survival and development in conditions of internal and external threats, as well as the action of unpredictable and difficult to predict factors" (Senchagov, 1998).

According to V.L. Tambovtsev, "…the economic security of a particular system must be understood as a set of properties of the state of its production subsystem, which ensures the possibility of achieving the goals of the entire system" (Tambovtsev, 1995). This authors also examines the activities of the enterprise in an unstable economic environment. He comes to the conclusion that "by economic security we will understand such a state of the subject in which the probability of undesirable change in any f the qualities of the subject itself, the parameters of its property and the external environment affecting it is small (less than a certain limit)" (Tambovtsev, 1995).

In the studies of D. Kovalev, the economic security of an enterprise is defined as 10 "the security of its activities from the negative influences of the external environment, as well as the ability to quickly eliminate various threats or adapt to existing conditions that do not negatively affect its activities" (Kovalev, 1998). A number of other researchers and economists have a similar position.

Thus, V.V. Shlykov considers economic security as "the state of protecting the vital interests of an enterprise from real and potential sources of danger or economic threats" (Shlykov, 1999). An interesting position on the issue under study is also taken by a number of other authors, who relate the concept of economic security not only to an economic entity, but also to other institutions and the state as a whole.

V.I. Yarochkin notes that "security is the state of protecting the vital interests of an individual, enterprise, state from internal and external threats, and the general goal of economic security is to evaluate the results achieved and to identify reserves for increasing the production efficiency of an economic entity" (Yarochkin, 2005). Some researchers narrow the range of issues when considering this problem of economic security and focus on a certain number of problems.

So, B.A. Raizberg believes that "economic security is the prevention of leakage of confidential economic information from a company, violation of trade secrets, and economic sabotage" (Raizberg, 1996). This position has now become very relevant for business entities and the state as a whole when ensuring economic security, which is due to the rapid development of information technology and the emergence of the need to preserve confidential information. The concept of economic security now needs to include such a component as information security.

Thus, based on the considered approaches and points of view on the category of economic security, it follows that today a unified approach to revealing its essence has not been formed and its economic content has not been clearly defined. Each of the listed approaches complements each other, and different criteria to a certain extent may dominate in determining the essence of economic security. Such a change in the significance of the criteria and components of economic security depends on the specifics of specific companies, that is, the characteristics of their activities, the industry in which they operate and other factors.

Taking into account the considered scientific points of view regarding the phenomenon of economic security and the category of economic sustainability, the category "economic security of an economic entity" should be defined as an inherent characteristic of the

functioning of an organization, ensuring economic independence, sustainability, development with the efficient use of resources, minimizing threats to the main components of the stability of an economic entity.

A number of works emphasize the important role of the transport industry in ensuring economic security. In particular, it is emphasized that transport ensures the connectivity of the economy and the functioning of markets, and the sustainability of transport directly affect the economic security of the state. At the same time, disruptions in the transport system can lead to significant economic losses. There is also a close connection between the economic and financial security of transport enterprises, which makes them a key element of the overall economic system.

3. Methodology

When conducting a statistical study of the contribution of transport to the economic security of the country, it is reasonable to consider the following as the main tasks: determining the key indicators of the transport sector, assessing the impact of transport on macroeconomic parameters, identifying risks in the transport sector, conducting a comparative analysis of the dynamics of the indicators.

To analyze the problems of economic security, it is necessary to use the following groups of indicators: economic (share of transport in GDP, volume of cargo and passenger turnover, investments in transport infrastructure), safety indicators (level of accidents, degree of deterioration of infrastructure, dependence on external supplies), external economic indicators (the role of transport in export and import, the country's transit potential).

National statistical services, in particular those of Moldova, reports of transport companies, in particular the Russian Railways, data from articles are used as data sources for this study.

Methods of research on this topic include calculation of average values, growth rates, dynamics of indicators, inter-country analysis, qualitative assessment of the dependence between the development of transport and economic security, and expert assessments.

4. Results and discussion

Development of the transport sector in the Russian Federation

The current statistics of Russian transport are presented in Tables 1 and 2. Railway transport occupies one of the leading places in the system of transport communications in Russia, since the main flow of transportation for the principal industries is carried out using this type of transport.

Railway transport is in demand due to the efficiency of long distance transportation (typical for Russian logistics, where the places of manufacturing of many goods are far from the places of mass consumption), as well as due to financial benefits. In Russia, the delivery of goods by railway is of particular importance in economic development. This method of transportation is suitable both for sending large-sized products from one client and for assembled goods of different sizes from several customers. (Zhakov, 2018).

Table 1. Freight turnover in the Russian Federation by mode of transport (billion ton-kilometers)

	1992	2000	2010	2015	2020	2022	2023	2024	2025
Transport total	4913	3638	4676	4752	5108	5198	5488	5678	5401
Including by type:									
Railway	1967	1373	1858	2011	2306	2344	2493	2602	2545
Automotive	257	153	194	199	247	248	255	275	272
Pipeline	2146	1916	2474	2382	2444	2489	2615	2686	2470
Water transportation	541	193	147	154	106	110	117	107	107
Air transportation	1,8	2,5	2,8	4,7	5,6	6,6	7,9	7,4	7,1

***Source**: Korisheva, 2018, pp. 241-250.*

Table 2. Freight turnover in the Russian Federation by mode of transport (as a percentage of the total)

	1992	2000	2010	2015	2020	2022	2023	2024	2025
Transport total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Including by type:									
Railway	40,04	37,74	39,73	42,32	45,14	45,09	45,43	45,83	47,12
Automotive	5,23	4,21	4,15	4,19	4,84	4,77	4,65	4,84	5,04
Pipeline	43,68	52,67	52,91	50,13	47,85	47,88	47,65	47,31	45,73
Water transportation	11	5,3	3,14	3,24	2,07	2,12	2,13	1,88	1,98
Air transportation	0,04	0,07	0,06	0,1	0,11	0,13	0,14	0,13	0,13

***Source**: Korisheva, 2018, pp.241-250.*

Transportation by rail is multifunctional and is used for transporting raw materials and goods with virtually any characteristics, such as, volume-mass indicators, requirements for containers and packaging of cargo, temperature conditions, etc. Also, the advantages are low costs compared to the use of other modes of transport, high carrying capacity of wagons, independence from weather conditions, delivery of goods at the right time.

The main negative environmental factors inherent in railway transport are:

- solid waste;
- thermal radiation;
- strong vibrations.

Taken together, the last two have a detrimental effect on living beings. At the same time, railway transport is one of the most environmentally friendly modes of transport. However, the long-term development program of the Russian Railways (RZD) plans for large-scale electrification of routes that still operate using diesel fuel. This trend will reduce diesel consumption by 440 thousand tons per year and, as a result, reduce gas emissions to the atmosphere by 1,5 million tons. It is also planned to switch to natural gas, because according

to statistics, gas-powered locomotives emit 5 times less harmful substances into the atmosphere. (Bryk & Golikova, 2018).

In general, the share of freight turnover of railway transport in Russia is very significant. As can be seen from Table 2, in 1992 it was 40% and by 2025 it has increased by 7%.

The growth in cargo turnover over the past decade is associated with the following factors:

- modernization of the railway infrastructure, including the Trans-Siberian and Baikal-Amur roads;
- development of transportation and throughout capacities;
- transfer of the infrastructure of Sakhalin Island to the all-Russian track of 1520 mm;
- the start of work on the construction of the northern latitudinal railway;
- renewal of freight and passenger trains.

An increase in transportation distance not only indicates greater accessibility for transportation, but also savings on freight charges, as well as the consolidation of factories and a reduction in the cost of cargo. All of these factors have a positive effect on the economic security of the country.

The main competitor of railway transport is pipeline transport. Its share has hardly increased during the period under review. The development of pipeline transport is inseparable from the development of the oil and gas industry, and, consequently, from the development of the country's economy. A significant part of the Russian state budget is provided by revenues from the extraction and export of minerals. Pipeline transport has great development prospects associated with growing demand for oil and gas resources. The advantage of this type of transport is minimal investment in cargo transportation, minimal human resources, creation of the shortest delivery route and less time for pumping products.

Automobile transport in Russia takes only the third place in terms of cargo turnover, and with a tenfold gap from the leading types of transport. This backwardness is characterized by the underdevelopment of the road network typical for the northern and eastern regions of Russia. This directly affects the economic security of these regions, depriving them of the echeloning of freight and passenger transport. In many regions or important points in the north and east of Russia, goods have to be delivered by air, which significantly affects the availability of goods for the local population and business.

At the same time, it is obvious that the main advantage of this type of transport is its accessibility to places of delivery of goods, as well as its convenience in the delivery of oversized goods over short distances.

Air transport has a negative impact on the environment due to the combustion products of aviation fuel, as well as high noise levels. These are undoubtedly factors reducing economic security. Developers in the world's most technologically advanced countries are working on electric planes, but only small private passenger planes have been built so far. Electric aircraft is not considered to be completely environmentally friendly, as the production and disposal of batteries pollutes the environment.

Airbus company presented the Smart Sky aviation development project. According to forecasts, by 2050 aircraft with mixed engines will be used. Airports will stop using internal

combustion engines, even on the ground. All this will help to reduce emissions into the atmosphere. (Tereshina & Sokolov, 2019).

The state of aviation transport in Russia in 2025-2026 cannot be considered satisfactory. The Russian aircraft fleet largely consists of foreign equipment and, accordingly, depends on imported components – about 80% of aircraft in Russia are foreign-made, helicopters – more than 10%. In February 2022, Russian air carriers were prohibited from buying foreign vessels and spare parts. Foreign leasing companies demanded the return of aircraft that were under operating lease. This poses serious risks to flight safety and reduces the economic efficiency of air transport.

Russia's own aircraft production is very insignificant (Businesstat, 2025). In particular, according to the "Analysis of the aircraft manufacturing market in Russia", prepared by BusinesStat in 2025, the production of civil aviation equipment in Russia amounted to 166 aircraft and helicopters, which is 13% lower than the previous year. Aircraft production in the country has been declining throughout 2023-2024 (see Figure 1).

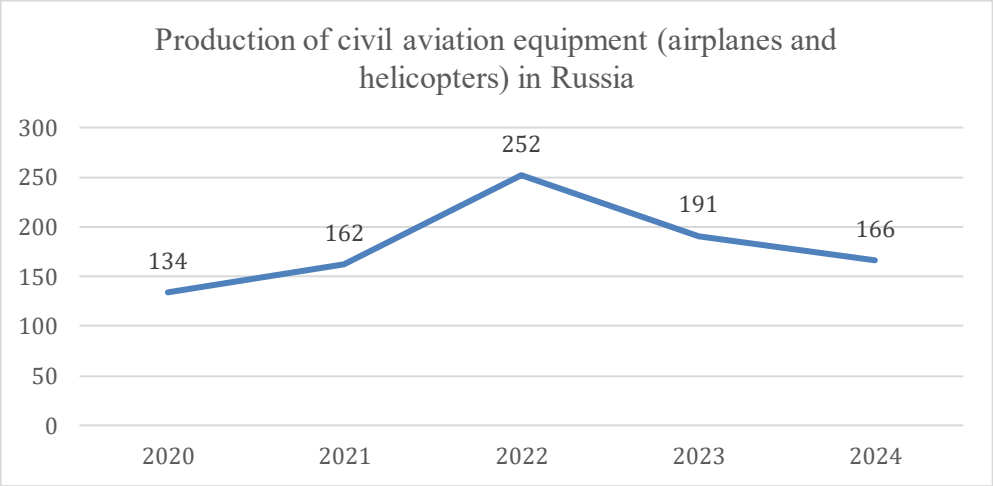

Figure 1. Production of civil aviation equipment in Russia, 2020-2024

Source: *https://marketing.rbc.ru/articles/15857/*

Consequently, the contribution of aviation to Russia's economic security is now extremely insignificant. Water transport (sea and inland waterways) provides transportation of goods in the areas directly gravitating to internal water routes, as well as mixed transportation of foreign trade goods. The use of hybrid transportation in many cases contributes to savings in transportation costs of the national economy and in foreign currency for foreign trade transportation.

River transport in the modern Russian economy accounts for less than 2% of the volume of transportation, which is significantly lower than in the planned economy in the USSR. This type of transportation is used in the case of transporting goods that do not require rapid delivery: construction materials (sand, gravel, etc.), coal, grain, etc. This is due to the fact that the speed of river vessels is limited to 10-20 km/h.

The duration of navigation on most Russian waterways is about six months, so cargo owners have to adjust the logistics of cargo transportation. Infrastructure constraints and declining water levels in recent years have led to a record drop in Russia's river freight traffic. In addition, the situation is getting worse every year, which leads to an urgent need to update the fleet.

This situation indicates a critically low level of economic security in regions of Russia located along waterways and at the same time with poor transport accessibility of railways and roads (Krasnoyarsk Territory, Khanty-Mansiysk District, Perm Territory, Irkutsk Region, Yakutia, many others).

Development of the transport sector in the Republic of Moldova

If, when analyzing the development of the transport systems in the Russian Federation, we were dealing with the largest country in terms of territory, then when analyzing a similar situation in the Republic of Moldova, we must take into account both the modest size of the country (approximately 34 thousand sq.km.) and only 2,5 million population.

Table 3. Freight transportation in the Republic of Moldova

Freight transportation	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
Freight transported, mln.tons	**19,8**	**20,2**	**20,6**
Including by types of transport:			
By railway	1,55	2,5	2,3
By automotive	18,1	17,6	18,3
By water	0,1	0,1	0,1
By air	0,01	0,01	0,01
Freight transportation, mln. ton-kilometers	**5844**	**5964,7**	**5150**
Including by types of transport:			
By railway	660	503,6	492
By automotive	5183	5459,7	4657
By water	0,3	0,3	0,3
By air	1,1	1,1	1,3

***Source**: National bureau of statistics of the Republic of Moldova. https://statistica.gov.md/*

Data from the National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova (Table 3) indicate that the main type of freight transport in the Republic of Moldova is automotive transport. And this is despite the presence of 1156 kilometers of railway tracks connecting most of the country's industrial centers! (National bureau of statistics of the Republic of Moldova, 2026)

The reasons for such poor use of railways are:

- outdated infrastructure powered exclusively by diesel locomotives (electrification of a small number of kilometers on the border with Romania started only at the end of 2025);
- the need for reconstruction;
- low speeds.

It is characteristic that in passenger traffic the railways have an extremely low indicator from year to year. For example, in 2024 they carried only 5% of the total intercity passenger traffic (see Table 4).

From the data in Tables 3 and 4, it is obvious that almost the entire burden of both freight and passenger transportation in the Republic of Moldova currently falls on automotive transport. This imbalance in transportation is an obvious threat to economic security for the

Republic of Moldova. For example, under unfavorable weather conditions, road transport is unsafe or completely impossible, and railway transport, which is much less sensitive to weather conditions, is virtually inactive.

Table 4. Passengers turnover in Republic of Moldova by means of transport [6]

	Turnover, million passenger-kilometers				
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total, including:	166,6	159,9	213,5	288,6	364,0
railway	29,2	23,3	32,0	58,9	51,0
buses	137,0	136,3	181,2	229,4	312,7
river	0,4	0,3	0,3	0,3	0,3

***Source**: National bureau of statistics of the Republic of Moldova. https://statistica.gov.md/*

This state of transport in the Republic of Moldova threatens the entire economic and logistics chain of the country and hinders economic growth, which, by the way, is only 0,1% for 2024 and 1,3% for 2025 (Monitorul fiscal, 2025). Due to the underdevelopment of transport infrastructure, various risks arise, for example, the weather and climatic risks already mentioned above, when freight or passenger transportation is provided by only one type of transport. Economic security is ensured by *echeloning* of transportation, that is, the presence of at least two modes of transport in each principal economic point. In the Republic of Moldova, this has not been implemented primarily due to the underdevelopment of railway transport.

Obviously, the intensive development of railway transport in the Republic of Moldova requires significant investments. In current economic conditions, this can only be external investment, primarily from European partners. Such investment is actually implemented (Trading Economics, 2026). In particular, the Republic of Moldova is taking an unprecedented step in modernizing its railway infrastructure by building the first electrified railway with European gauge (1435 mm) on the Chișinău-Ungheni section (104 km). This line will run parallel to the existing 1520 gauge line using diesel locomotive traction.
The implementation of this project will provide a direct connection between Moldova and the modern European railway network. Advantages of this investment project:

- faster (maximum speed planned to be up to 140 kilometers per hour) and safer trips for passengers in modern comfortable conditions;
- stimulating cross-border trade and transport links by simplifying the transport of goods to the European Union;
- integration of the Republic of Moldova into the main network of the European Union TEN-T, which will increase economic competitiveness and investment attractiveness.

The feasibility study for the project is supported by the Eastern Partnership Investment Fund (EPIC), an initiative promoting the development of sustainable infrastructure and the expansion of the European transport network.

The new Chișinău-Ungheni line will not only be a technical innovation for the national railway infrastructure, but also a strategic project that will bring the Republic of Moldova closer to European transport standards. Thanks to this investment, the country will benefit

from direct and efficient connections with European Union member states, which will improve both citizen mobility and long-term economic prospects (Moldpress.md, 2026).

5. Conclusions

Economic development directly depends on the degree of transport development. By connecting regions, delivering various goods and carrying passengers, transport improves the quality of life of the country's population. By ensuring transport accessibility to production sites, it increases the efficiency of their use, creates opportunities to increase the volume of goods produced and reduce additional transportation costs, and, consequently, creates the basis for reducing the cost of goods for consumers.

The main specificity of the transport complex of almost any country is the leading role of mainline railway in serving the real sector of the economy, which determines its role and significance in the formation of national economic security.

Within the country, the development of the transport system indicates the level of accessibility of various regions of the country, the provision of resources to them, and the feasibility of developing production capacities. And on the basis of this, we can analyze and forecast economic activity and the further organization of freight transport. Also, improving transport infrastructure helps to expand trade and develop cooperation between countries and their competitiveness.

Considering the importance of the transport system presented above, and especially the railway industry, we can reasonably talk about the decisive role of transport in the formation of national economic security and economic development. The importance of railway transport in the transport market is due to factors such as: versatility, carrying capacity, safety and technical equipment level.

These factors determine the importance of railway transport for any country: large like Russia or small like Moldova. In each country, this type of transport creates the basis of the transport system, providing, more or less qualitatively, the needs of citizens, companies and the state in transporting passengers and goods. Modern transport in general is a socially significant sector of the economy, which is a necessary element of the infrastructure of modern society.

The effective functioning of transport systems is the basis for the integrity of national security and the defense capability of the state. In addition, by modernizing them, the country significantly increases sustainability and stimulates economic growth, which directly affects the standard of living of the population.

Taken together, all types of transport, fulfilling their function, form the "blood supply system" of the economy, the general foundation for economic development, thereby ensuring and increasing economic security.

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