

Marseilles Fos targets northern ports with Pagny deal

Leading French cargo port Marseilles Fos is boosting its hinterland links with northern Europe by taking a ten per cent stake in Pagny Terminal, the strategically located multimodal hub at the northern end of the Rhone-Saone corridor between Chalon and Dijon.

The deal is the first since a hinterland policy announced in April under which Marseilles Fos is seeking capital stakes in key inland platforms to reinforce its aim of becoming the Mediterranean alternative to ports in the northern range.

Enhanced rail access to markets such as southern Germany and Switzerland made Pagny a priority target. Marseilles Fos says transit times will be reduced by developing 'landbridge' solutions combining maritime and overland logistics – and expects to generate new traffic of 40,000 teu per year.

Pagny is managed by Manuport, a subsidiary of Euroports-Benelux Port Holdings, which took a 34% stake in the terminal last year and works alongside a string of local chambers of commerce. Marseilles Fos said “the arrival of a stevedoring company of this calibre” influenced approval of its own investment by the port’s supervisory board.

A template for the hinterland policy dates from the 1999 alliance with Port Edouard Herriot in Lyons, where Marseilles Fos holds a 16% stake.

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Port promoters on Algeria mission

Members of the Marseille Europort promotional group – representing the port authority, shipowners and chamber of commerce - have completed a two-day trade mission in Algeria, the second largest market for Marseilles Fos container traffic.

Presentations to port of Algiers executives, customs officials and port professionals featured logistics IT and changes under French port reforms, including the transfer of cargo handling to private operators and public funding of EUR600 million under Marseilles Fos strategy to 2013.

Trade with Algeria rose 8% in 2008 to 8.7 million tonnes. Liquid bulks contributed 84% of the total while general cargo provided the balance of 1.3MT – including 0.94MT of containerised traffic (+1%) and a ro-ro total of 0.37MT (+8%).

For port images, see Espace presse/Phototheque at www.marseille-port.fr