

## Deepsea box trades lead signs of recovery at Marseilles Fos

Container throughput at leading French cargo port Marseilles Fos reached 583,779 teu to the end of August for a 4% increase on the first eight months last year.

While a slump in intra-Mediterranean trades saw box volumes via the Marseilles eastern harbour drop by a third, the deepsea Fos terminal saw a 23% rise in traffic to 458,219 teu.

Container tonnage was 3% better on 5.75 million tonnes and helped general cargo to 9.52MT. This was down 8% for the period, with ro-ro volumes lagging 9% on 2.73MT and conventional trades still 40% down on 1.04MT, although demand for steel products revived in August.

Total cargo throughput at the port remained 13% down on last year at 55.69MT despite further signs of recovery in August.

Dry bulks – hit all year by a decline of more than 50% in demand for steel industry raw materials – reduced the month on month August deficit to 29% with the reopening of a major furnace. Although the January-August total of 4.33MT was still 53% worse, there are now hopes of further slight improvement in the second half.

Within the oil and gas sector – down 5% on 39.9MT - August traffic boosted LPG to 1.2MT for the eight months, closing a previous 5% deficit to 2%, while demand for LNG was maintained with 19% growth to 3.2MT. Against this, crude imports fell 8% to 27.5MT after several technical problems, including a fracture in the pipeline serving Swiss and German refineries, and refined products dropped 3% to just under 8MT.

Other liquid bulks finished 23% down on 1.94MT in line with reduced chemicals industry demand, although biofuels contributed a 47% increase at 0.68MT.

Passenger throughput stayed 2% ahead on 1.51 million. Ferry carryings dipped 1% to 1.124m but the cruise sector improved 14% to 386,000 passengers in a reflection of regular calls by MSC and Costa mega-ships. Cruise calls totalled 40 in August and 195 for the eight months.

Total calls to the end of August came to 5,211, which included 4,432 cargo vessels.

*For port images, see Espace presse/Phototheque at [www.marseille-port.fr](http://www.marseille-port.fr)*