

Deepsea box boost for Marseilles Fos as cruise numbers soar

In line with first-half results, Marseilles Fos cargo throughput to the end of July was down 13% compared to the first seven months last year despite further container growth, while soaring cruise numbers continued to boost passenger traffic.

Total throughput at the leading French cargo port reached just under 49 million tonnes for the period. Container volumes rose 4% to 515,307 teu, marked by a 21% increase to 402,325 teu at the Fos deepsea terminal.

Container tonnage improved 2%, contributing 5.1MT to the general cargo total of 8.41MT. The total was down 9% on last year due to the impact of the global recession – the motor industry slump saw ro-ro dip 8% to 2.4MT, while falling demand for steel products left conventional trades 44% worse on 0.9MT.

The dry bulks sector – heavily dependent on raw material for the steel industry – remained 57% down on 3.43MT, although bulk foodstuffs rose 54% to 0.5MT. The pattern was repeated for liquid bulks despite a 3% improvement in July – the seven-month total fell 22% to 1.73MT, mirroring a decline in chemicals industry traffic, although biofuels contributed 0.56MT for a 50% increase.

Oil and gas volumes remained 4% down with a 35.4MT total for the period, including crude imports of 24.4MT (-7%). Refined products dipped 2% to 7.1MT and LPG fell 5% to 1.1MT, but dynamic LNG demand prompted 21% growth to 2.8MT.

Passenger throughput improved 2% to 1.074 million on the back of booming cruise traffic, which rose 16% to 307,000 – including 80,000 in July alone – with the advent of regular calls by 3,000+ capacity vessels. Ferry passengers fell 3% to 767,000, with Corsica sailings contributing 464,000 (+2%) but numbers down on North Africa services.

Total calls to the end of July amounted to 4,459 – 3,873 cargo vessels and 586 passenger ships, including 147 cruise calls.

GRAND PORT MARITIME DE MARSEILLE

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