

Containers and oil lead Marseilles Fos recovery

January-April throughput at leading French cargo port Marseilles Fos saw the container and oil sectors maintain their recovery from the world economic crisis, although bulk trades continued to suffer.

Box traffic at Fos, which mainly handles deepsea east-west trades, reached 225,726 teu for a 1% improvement on the first four months last year, while total container throughput of 284,715 teu saw the Q1 deficit of 21% reduced to 11%.

Containers contributed 2.8 million tonnes (-14%) to the general cargo total of 4.47MT. This was down 19% - after being 24% worse for the first three months - as reduced demand in the steel and motor industries continued to hit ro-ro and conventional traffic.

Oil volumes of 20.16MT matched the 2008 total for the four months. Pipeline deliveries to Switzerland helped crude imports to 13.54MT - closing the year-on-year deficit to 2% - while refined products rose 3% to 4.34MT and LNG improved 8% to 1.5MT, although LPG slipped 4% to 0.78MT.

Dry bulk throughput of 2.14MT (-52%) remained less than half of that seen in 2008 due to a slump in steel industry demand for raw materials, while liquid bulks - where the mainstay is chemical products - fell 20% to 0.83MT despite a 77% boost in biofuels to 0.26MT.

Passenger throughput finished 6% worse on 301,000 after carryings on Corsica and North Africa ferry services fell 12% to 229,000, although cruise passengers rose 20% to 72,000.

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

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