

Marseilles Fos sees growth in all sectors

January throughput at leading French port Marseilles Fos suggested signs of recovery in the world economy with a 10% year on year increase in cargo volumes and a threefold rise in cruise passengers. Cargo totalled almost 7.2 million tonnes with increases in all four main categories.

General cargo was up 21% to 1.23MT including container tonnage of 0.82MT (+35%). Container units gained 27% to 84,029 teu on the back of deep sea trades via Fos, which rose 42% to 65,251 teu. Ro-ro volumes fell 11% to 0.25MT after a 41% slump in exports from Corsica and Sardinia, but conventional traffic improved by a third to 0.16MT due to revived demand for steel products.

Oil and gas volumes added 6% to 4.93MT thanks to refined products, where a 57% increase in imports boosted the total by 35% to 1.5MT. Crude imports dipped 2% to 2.87MT because the South European Pipeline – down 18% on 0.87MT - was out of action until mid-January after being fractured last August. LNG was down 14% to 0.36MT while LPG fell 6% to 0.19MT.

Other liquid bulks rose 42% to 0.27MT due to chemicals industry demand and the continued rise in biofuels, which went up 58% to almost 0.1MT. Meanwhile, after last year's slump in demand for raw materials, a 49% increase in steel industry activity helped dry bulks improve 8% to 0.73MT.

Passenger throughput was up 5% on 62,000, marked by a 210% increase in cruise numbers to 12,800 passengers. Ferry numbers for Corsica, Algeria and Tunisia fell 10% overall, with Corsica down 17% on 25,000.

Port fills new development post

The Marseilles Fos port authority has appointed Dirk Becquart, 45, to the new post of development director with effect from March 15. He has been commercial director at the port of Ghent in his native Belgium since 2006.

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The new role in business development and investment strategy makes him responsible for economic and competitor analysis, commercial projects and port promotion including external relations and lobbying. In defining products and services to attract new traffic, he will focus on development policy for both hinterland and global links.

After university studies in maritime economics and logistics, Mr Becquart has spent most of his career in international logistics, working in Russia, Finland and Norway.

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