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C.I.S.Co.
Council of Intermodal Shipping Consultants
Via Garibaldi, 4
16124 Genova GE (Italia)
Tel. 010 2518852
Fax 010 2518852
e-mail info@ciscoconsultant.it
www.ciscoconsultant.it

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PORTS AND TERMINALS

US RETAIL IMPORTS ON THE UP

As new contracts are negotiated for US West Coast dockworkers, import volume at the nation's major retail container ports is expected to increase 3.5% in May, according to the latest Global Port Tracker report.

Representatives of the Pacific Maritime Association and the International Longshore and Warehouse Union are set to begin negotiations next week on a new contract to replace the current agreement that expires 30 June 2014.

But, the National Retail Federation (NRF) which released the report with Hackett Associates, is urging both sides to avoid any disruptions that could affect the cargo flow.

"We're expecting a lot of cargo to move through the ports this summer.

We hope there won't be any issues, but the sooner labour and management can agree on a new contract, the better it will be for everyone who relies on the West Coast ports," said Jonathan Gold, vice president for supply chain and customs policy, NRF.

West Coast ports handle more than two thirds of US retail container cargo each year, including the bulk of cargo from Asia.

The last major shutdown there occurred in 2002, closing ports for 10 days and creating a weeks-long backlog to be cleared.

US ports followed by Global Port Tracker have already seen a busy first few months of the year, handling 1.3 million teu in March and an estimated 1.38 million teu.

May is forecast at 1.44 million teu, up 3.5% from last year, June at 1.43 million teu, up 5.6%, July at 1.49 million teu, up 3%, August at 1.5 million teu, up 0.8% and September at 1.44 million teu, up 0.1%.

"Most economic fundamentals are pointing in the direction of continued, sustained recovery in consumer demand and important volumes.

This is turning out to be the longest period of growth for some time now," added Ben Hackett, founder, Hackett Associates.

(from: portstrategy.com, May 8th 2014)

MARITIME TRANSPORT

ENOUGH BOXSHIP OVERCAPACITY TO START 12 ASIA-EUROPE STRINGS BY 2017

With 120 newbuildings of 10,000 TEU+ (averaging 14,000 TEU) due to be delivered by 2017, there is ample overcapacity to launch a dozen more Asia-Europe strings, according to Braemar Seascope.

The shipbroker's latest report "underlines the essential nature of the new mega-alliances currently being planned for implementation in the year ahead".

The current emphasis towards consolidation "will strengthen and increase" as the industry tackles the challenge of overcapacity that is hitting the container market hard, the report said.

"Without such consolidation, rapid freight rate deflation would likely continue unabated.

No doubt it will assist in rationalisation of liner deployment but like most things it has the potential to be a double edged sword," the firm cautions, reported Lloyd's List.

Without allowing for the effects of slow steaming and lay-up, "overcapacity is currently running in the region of 30 per cent, an unsustainable level which is bedded in for the next three years."

"Liner operators have no alternative [other] than to slow down loops whilst absorbing the relentless conveyor belt of post-panamax newbuildings hitting the water."

To make matters worse, the scope for additional newbuilding delivery deferrals will become more difficult to negotiate, as shipyards forward cover thins out noticeably towards the end of 2016, the report said.

During the first quarter, an estimated 40 vessels were delivered with a combined capacity of 350,000 TEU, and 1.7 million TEU of fresh capacity is due to be delivered this year.

"Net fleet growth for 2014 is estimated to be in the region of 6.7 per cent.

In 2015, it is more of the same in terms of containership fleet growth, with an expected net fleet expansion of 7.2 per cent."

Containership demolition now plays a vital role in supply management, the broker notes, and expects 500,000 TEU of cellular capacity to be demolished in 2014, accounting for three per cent of the trading fleet at the start of 2014.

Looking ahead it said, "With cost effective vessel management and restrained and strategic containership ordering, the container industry should finally be able to move towards a more positive future."

(from: seanewws.com.tr, May 4th 2014)

RAIL TRANSPORT

SBB PROFITS FALL DESPITE RECORD PASSENGER TRAFFIC

Despite record passenger figures and SBB Cargo achieving its first profit in 40 years, 2013 was a difficult year for Swiss Federal Railways (SBB).

Overall profit dropped by nearly 44% to SFr 238m ($US 268m) while operating expenses rose by 4.3%.

Added to this were a series of accidents and additional track maintenance costs, followed this year with the news that its large order for double-deck long-distance trains from Bombardier would be delayed by two years to 2016.

SBB's financial situation is less than satisfactory on three fronts.

The extra revenue generated by a 5.2% fares increase in December 2012 was insufficient to cover the cost of higher train-path prices and providing more services, resulting in a drastic drop in the passenger division's profit to SFr 96m, just over a third of the 2012 figure.

Moreover, track maintenance costs exceeded budget by SFr 128.6m.

This was partly due to years of under-estimating the increased wear-and-tear from greater use of the network, while the detection rate of track flaws was higher following the purchase of a new diagnostics vehicle.

On top of all this, SBB's debt has risen steadily and has now reached SFr 7.5bn.

At a time when public-sector grants for regional and railfreight services are decreasing, current profit levels are not enough to cover these extra costs.

The good news is that Switzerland's Financing the Upgrading of Rail Infrastructure (Fabi) programme was approved by a convincing 62% majority in February's national referendum.

It comprises an open-ended rail infrastructure fund (BIF), a strategic development programme dubbed Step and a proposal to fund the first phase up to 2025 with projects totalling SFr 6.4bn.

Fabi is an important milestone, as SBB CEO Mr Andreas Meyer points out: "We cannot spend more on maintaining the infrastructure than we get from the government.

But it will probably take until 2016 before it starts to take effect."

Last year's accidents, including a regional train crash in which a train driver was killed, prompted SBB to accelerate the implementation of a project already underway to install speed-monitoring systems at 1700 signals.

"There can be no compromise over safety," Meyer says.

SBB is now examining the possibility of bringing forward the planned introduction of continuous speed monitoring in conformity with ETCS level 2.

"The original plan was to introduce ETCS by 2065, but due to various incidents, it became clear that it has to be speeded up," Meyer says.

"The aim is to have it ready sometime between 2030 and 2040, but it depends on capacity and funding from the government."

The SFr 1.86bn contract with Bombardier for 59 double-deck Twindexx trains is the largest order ever placed by SBB and is part of an ambitious programme to invest SFr 1bn a year in rolling stock over several years.

One of the features of the trains is new tilting technology.

Although Bombardier's specially-developed Wako system will provide compensation of just 2o, this will be the world's first tilting double-deck train, and the technology is proving more challenging than expected, but it is not the only cause of the delay.

"Part of the delay was due to the new Swiss law regarding the needs of disabled passengers," Meyer says.

This requires low-floor access and accommodation for wheelchair-bound passengers, necessitating design modifications.

"We also did a lot of functionality tests with maintenance, cleaning and so on, which took time.

But most of the delay is due to engineering problems by Bombardier."

Bombardier has admitted to a design fault, and has agreed with SBB that the first trains will only include one unit fitted with Wako, which Meyer says can be retro-fitted on the other trains once it has proved satisfactory.

"We need these trains," Meyer says.

"Bombardier is doing its best to keep to our common aim, but we can't deviate from the agreed price."

There has also been a delay in ordering trains for operation through the Gotthard base tunnel which is due to open in 2016, and the winner of the tender for 29 high-speed multi-system trains will only be announced this month.

"We should perhaps have ordered them earlier, but it took time to work out what we actually wanted," Meyer says.

One reason for the delay was again the new provision for disabled passengers.

The gap will be filled by eight new ETR 610 units and another seven being brought back from Trenitalia.

"There will be trains for the tunnel," Meyer asserts.

(from: railjournal.com, May 1st 2014)

INTERMODAL TRANSPORT

MORE UK SHIPPERS AND FORWARDERS TO OPT FOR RAIL FREIGHT?

DB Schenker Rail UK estimates that Eurotunnel's recently announced move to significantly reduce the cost of shipping rail freight through the Channel Tunnel will mean a reduction in current fixed link access charges of around 20% for the majority of its rail freight services between the UK and Europe, which run during off-peak periods.

The hope is that with its price-competitiveness enhanced, more UK shippers and forwarders and their counterparts on the Continent will opt for rail freight as a transport option.

"This welcome announcement from Eurotunnel, together with the widened scope of ETICA (Eurotunnel Incentive for Capacity Additions), will encourage the development of new international rail transport services through the Channel Tunnel," said DB Schenker Rail UK's CEO, Geoff Spencer.

The reduced access charges for the Channel Tunnel come into effect next month, with no increases until at least 2018.

Eurotunnel is also extending its ETICA scheme, which makes provision for new rail services to benefit from a financial 'start up' package of between €150,000 to €750,000 depending on frequency.

Five new categories of traffic are to be added to the scheme including new car transport, food and drinks transported in conventional full train loads and consumer goods.

Eurotunnel has also ensured the removal of the surcharge established by French rail network manager, RFF, for security at the entrance to the Tunnel at Fréthun.

"These changes (by Eurotunnel) are positive news for the rail freight sector, its customers and the environment.

Rail is the most environmentally-friendly form of freight transport, and increasing rail freight is an important step in reducing the overall carbon footprint of global freight transportation," Spencer added.

(from: lloydsloadinglist.com, May 8th 2014)

INDUSTRY

BUMPER SHIP DEMOLITION SALES DESPITE UNCERTAINTY

It is becoming more and more difficult to predict the manner in which shipbreaking markets will behave.

At a time when caution could have been expected to be the watchword, there was rampant buying at rates that can only be considered unsustainable.

In India, uncertainty over the direction of the general elections, a steady slide in prices of steelplate, to the extent of $10-15 per ldt during the month of April, and the imminent start of the monsoon season were factors that should have adversely affected buying, but did not.

In Pakistan and Bangladesh, there would have been worry over the possibility of unfavourable policies being introduced in the national budgets, scheduled to be announced in the first week of June.

Ship recyclers were razor-keen to stock their yards with pre-budget vessels, particularly after the market was abuzz with news that a number of VLCCs were being earmarked for the ship cemeteries.

Pakistani operators tried putting their hands into this segment, but with their counterparts from Chittagong with deeper pockets being vigilant in keeping their fingers on the market pulse, the Gadani breakers had to be content with a slew of aframax tankers they have successfully negotiated in recent weeks.

"The overall – pre-budget, elections and monsoon – buying ramped into overdrive, particularly in India, as some truly speculative and bullish prices beset the market," remarked Dubai-based cash buyers GMS.

"There were even whispers of one or two VLCCs being concluded on 'as is

Singapore' basis at some big numbers approaching $20m, with bunkers for the onward voyage, although gas-free status at this moment remains unclear, so a Pakistan or Bangladesh delivery is uncertain."

Bullish Indian cash buyers were bidding as high as $480 per ldt for clean tankers and $450 per ldt for general cargo vessels, remaining at least $5 per ldt ahead of corresponding offers from Bangladesh, and a minimum of $10 per ldt ahead of Pakistan in both segments.

The pick of this week's sales was that of the Danaos controlled 23,366 ldt Mytilini for an astounding $509 per ldt.

It was the fourth vessel sold to Alang this year by the Hamburg based shipowner.

Singapore's Pacific International Lines got rid of their 6,811 ldt container vessel Kota Wirawan for a mind-boggling $513 per ldt.

Market men felt that the decent age, ownership and size of the ship had attracted many end- buyers, and was responsible for the massive price.

The Polish controlled 1991-built, 13,575 ldt Danish panamax bulk carrier Armia Krajowa sold at an impressive $480 per ldt, with 280 tonnes of bunkers on board.

Italian owners committed both their ro-ro sister ships (both 13,696 ldt) Jolly Verde and Jolly Rosso on 'as is Jebel Ali' basis, for a very firm $500 per ldt en bloc, with extra payment for bunkers.

Despite these bumper sales in the last week of April, there is an overall concern locally that the market has peaked in anticipation of the impending monsoon season and the announcement of the election outcome.

It appears highly unlikely that the current high levels can be sustained, as prices generally dip during the monsoon due to unfavourable beaching tides, along with the seasonal migration of workers away from yards and back to their home towns.

(from: seanews.com.tr, May 4th 2014)

LOGISTICS

PANALPINA'S HEAVYLIFT PROJECT DIVISION ENJOYED 20PC GROWTH IN 2013

Swiss forwarding giant Panalpina's heavylift division has enjoyed 20 per cent growth last year driven by the needs of oil and gas exploration worldwide, but particularly in Azerbaijan.

While the company works on 40 projects worldwide in the Middle East, Australia, Latin America and the US, a recent focus of concentration is BP's offshore oil project in Azerbaijan's area of the Caspian Sea.

Panprojects is one of the fastest growing areas of its business with 400 dedicated staff, said the company, adding that transport and logistics cost for a single industrial project is expected to cross the US$1 billion mark in the near future.

"Large projects are huge transport endeavours that require expert planning, monitoring and compliance - three areas where the company is experiencing growing success," said Panalpina.

Said Panprojects chief Chris Kent: "The importance of on-time delivery at large projects cannot be stressed enough.

Delays at multi-million dollar projects mean excessive and avoidable cost."

Many large heavylift projects are in landlocked, isolated areas, which require road and rail upgrades to carry the loads, as well as seasonal, climate and even political changes.

Moving unusual and oversized loads requires authorisation and customs clearance at several stages of a journey.

"We've spent years developing the people and processes that improve efficiency," Mr Kent said.

"Our people around the world have the local expertise and the global support to establish new routes and continually develop better ways of working on a single project."

Panprojects was established in 2002 to directly address the logistics needs of the world's most ambitious industrial projects.

The service creates tailor-made, end-to-end transport networks for each project.

Lately, Panalpina has been shipping components of the topside unit of an offshore oil platform in the Caspian Sea.

The Azerbaijan platform was deployed for the Azeri-Chirag-Deepwater Gunashli field operated by BP.

The West Chirag platform project is handled by Panalpina under its agreement with BP in 2012 to develop the oil and gas industry's most efficient and cost effective supply chain for large-scale projects.

(from: seanews.co.tr, May 1st 2014)

LAW & REGULATION

NEW CONTAINER WEIGHT REGULATION IN 2016 WILL BE CRITICAL TO THE ENTIRE SUPPLY CHAIN

A new UN code of practice, requiring container weights to be verified before shipping, will come into force in July 2016.

If the issue sounds dull and procedural, it is nothing of the kind.

Under-declaration of container weights, or unsafe loading, has been responsible for many serious truck accidents, and was implicated in the sinking of the *MSC Napoli* in 2007.

Speakers at this week's Multimodal exhibition in Birmingham said better information about box contents could have averted a fire on board the *MSC Flaminia* in 2012, which claimed three lives, as well as last year's fire on the *Maersk Kampala*.

The new regulation is relevant and critical to the entire supply chain, prompting the speakers to question why they were addressing so many empty seats.

Peregrine Storrs-Fox, risk management director for the TT Club, said two-thirds of cargo claims could be attributed to poor container packing or misdeclaration of weight.

"Any one container can have a huge impact on lots of others in an 18,000teu ship.

The potential for a massive incident is out there," he said.

Alongside the major disasters that create global headlines, Mr Storrs-Fox pointed to many "low-level disruptions", such as truck accidents caused by unstable loads, or train derailments resulting from overweight cargo falling through the bottom of containers.

Captain Richard Brough, technical and admin director for the International Cargo Handling Coordination Association (ICHCA), estimates that up to 20% of containers are misdeclared.

One 8,000teu vessel leaving Rotterdam was discovered to be 6,000 tonnes over its declared weight, putting enormous strain on its lashing system, he said.

These discrepancies might explain why 600 boxes are washed overboard every year, according to official statistics, though ICHCA puts the real figure closer to 10,000.

Bill Brassington, of ETS Consulting, who analysed the weight and stability of 125,000 containers in preparation for the drawing up of the UN code, said it appeared that 5% were dangerously eccentric, and weights were up to 80 tonnes.

He added that the industry's ability to pack safely was diminishing, as people try to get more into a smaller space.

The lack of reliable information provided to crane operators and vessel loaders was "a major problem", considering that container shipping had existed for almost 60 years, Capt Brough said.

Under the new regulation, boxes will have to be weighed and verified before loading.

But at what point in the transport chain? Capt Brough wondered – at the container crane it was too late.

The shipper may have to come to the port to resolve the problem if a box was too heavy, and it could mean the law had already been broken on the road or rail journey.

Sharon James, secretary of the dockers' section of the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), said unstable containers moving by road were a public safety issue, not just a threat to drivers.

"Who takes it back if a port says it's illegal?" she asked.

Andrew McNab, marketing director of the biggest privately owned UK road container transport operator, Maritime Transport, showed shocking examples of trucks tipping over on twisty roads or roundabouts – in one case within minutes of leaving the dock gate – because heavier cargo had been placed on top of lighter, or the load was unevenly distributed.

"The onus is still on the driver when it ought to be on the packer," Mr McNab said.

"We need everyone in the supply chain to be aware of and fully accept the guidelines.

We need more and better training for everyone involved, including shippers, packers and warehousemen."

Chris Welsh, director of global and European policy at the Freight Transport Association (FTA), which co-ordinated Wednesday's Multimodal seminars, said the UK government favoured pre-verification, using the calculated weight method rather than physical container weighing.

"Some believe that's a cop-out, but there will be sampling, especially of shippers who are not known or trusted," he said.

Mr Storrs-Fox said technology may come to the industry's rescue.

Weighing via twist-lock sensors would allow those moving containers "to gain more knowledge not just of weight, but what's going on inside the box," he said.

(from: theloadstar.co.uk, May 2nd 2014)

STUDIES & RESEARCH

DESERT PORTS FOR OCEAN CARRIERS: NEW ANALYSIS

ICTSI's announcement earlier this month that it is investing over $130m in a long term deal with Iraq's Port Authority to operate and enhance container handling capacity at Umm Qasr illustrates the opportunities ahead for ocean carriers, says Drewry's 'Container Insight Weekly'.

Investment by major terminal operators in Umm Qasr shows growing confidence in Iraq's container growth potential, whilst sanctions continue to bite in neighbouring Iran.

Iraq's sole container port already saw volumes jump by more than 65% in 2013, up to 570,000 teu.

Admittedly this is from a relatively low base but it remains impressive growth and suggests that the country's cargo base is expanding from military cargoes and construction materials to consumer goods and manufactured items.

The growth in Iraq is in marked contrast to Iran where sanctions hit volumes hard in 2012 and 2013.

Estimated 2013 container traffic for the country is down 30% on the 2011 peak, equating to a drop of almost one million teu.

According to Drewry Maritime Research (DMR) the recent trend in port volumes for the two countries is slightly at variance to the overall trend in trade in containerisable commodities measured by Customs Authorities.

This data suggests a recovery in Iran's trade in 2013, whilst Iraq's 2013 growth is not as pronounced as the port throughput figures suggest.

However, it must be noted that this trade data includes overland as well as seaborne flows and these are significant – not least between Iran and Iraq themselves – plus the data covers all cargoes which are considered containerisable, but this does not necessarily mean that they were containerised.

Also noteworthy is the almost complete absence of export cargo from Iraq.

The rapid growth in Umm Qasr's volumes combined with enhancements to its terminal facilities may, over time, lead carriers to consider making direct calls in Iraq.

However, the access channel to the port is long (over 100 km) and requires regular dredging, and night navigation is not currently permitted.

A maximum vessel arrival draft of 11 metres is quoted by ships' agents and this is based on a tidal window (high water).

In addition, whilst some direct services do call as far up the Gulf as Bahrain and Dammam (around 300 nautical miles from Jebel Ali), Umm Qasr is a further 300 nautical miles away.

Both Iran and Iraq have large populations (78 million and 30 million respectively) which have the potential to generate substantially higher container traffic once political and economic conditions allow.

Whilst Iraqi volumes remain much smaller then Iran's, Iraq has greater scope for growth with its teu per capita still markedly low despite the recent strong volume growth.

DMR points out that Umm Qasr will not have this fast growing market all to itself though, as other ports and projects are eyeing the opportunities too.

For example, neighbouring Kuwait is developing a new, very large $1.2bn greenfield port project Mubarak Al Kabeer (MAK) at Boubyan Island which clearly has transit cargo to and from Iraq as a target market.

Land reclamation work has been completed and infrastructure construction is reportedly ongoing, although the project has been delayed.

Originally the intention was to develop 60 berths, but this was reduced to 24 berths following a bitter dispute with the Iraqi government over the port's development.

Phase 1 of the development will see 1,200m of quay for container handling and is expected to be operational by 2017.

Iraq also has an even more ambitious greenfield port project, the $6.1bn Al-Faw port, located across the water from Boubyan.

However, whilst the foundation stone was laid as far back as 2012, the project has stalled due to political wrangling.

Further afield, the potential for serving Iraq overland from the Mediterranean remains significant.

For example, while Umm Qasr is the closest port to Baghdad, Iskenderun in eastern Turkey is closer to Mosul in northern Iraq.

Having said this, the overland route has numerous logistical challenges and security issues.

Nevertheless, interest exists and this is one reason why MSC-affiliated terminal operator Terminal Investment Limited (TIL) has taken a stake in Assanport, an emerging deep water terminal near Iskenderun.

Drewry's view

Whilst Iraq's container traffic will soon become another major magnet attracting ocean carriers' direct services into the Mid-East Gulf, deep-sea vessel calls at Umm Qasr still remain off the radar screen due to its distant location and difficult access channel.

(from: marinelink/drewry.co.uk, May 7th 2014)

REEFER

MODE SHIFT IN PERISHABLES IS "SIGNIFICANT"

A new study by shipping consultancy Seabury has found that perishable commodities have seen a pronounced shift from air cargo to ocean transport over the past decade.

New container technologies have contributed to the trend and could drive this shift even further, the study says.

"A decade ago, tomatoes were just as likely to be transported by air as in a reefer container.

Today, tomatoes are transported almost entirely in containers.

The same holds true for numerous other perishable commodities," says Seabury's Maritime Advisor, Derek Brand, who authored the report.

Around 100,000 TEU per year is now transported by ocean rather than air carriers.

The shift is particularly pronounced in certain perishable commodities, like tomatoes, capsicum, fresh fish, lettuce and pineapples, but also for other types of cargo, the study says.

"The volumes that have shifted to ocean transport are significant for the air cargo industry," says Brand.

If there had been no mode shift since the year 2000, 5.4Mt of cargo would still be transported annually by air rather than by sea and air cargo would have grown at an average annual rate of 4.5%.

Instead, it has grown at 2.6%.

Seabury carried out the mode shift study in partnership with the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and interviewed a number of shippers and freight forwarders for their perspective on future trends.

Going forward, the study says, shippers and forwarders alike expect a continued shift from air to ocean to occur, but unequally for different commodities.

Automotive and electronics are expected to be most impacted by continued mode shift while pharmaceuticals and perishables are thought to have already completed their shift to ocean.

However, new technology in the form of controlled atmosphere containers has the potential to further disrupt the balance between air and ocean cargo, the study says.

Seabury highlights Maersk Container Industry (MCI)'s Star Cool CA system, with its ability to slow down the ripening process, as having the potential to open up ocean transport as a viable alternative to air cargo on some of the longer trade routes.

For its part, MCI sees this as a positive development.

"As new trades open up our customers can improve their business.

Add to that carbon emissions savings by almost a factor of 50 when you compare air and sea transport," said Anders Gamborg Holm of MCI sales and marketing.

"We have been on the market with CA for five years now.

It's reliable and affordable and we predict it will make further inroads in the market," he added.

A summary of the Seabury report can be found here:

http://ipaper.ipapercms.dk/MCI/Various/SeaburyModeshiftinperishables

(from: worldcargonews.com, May 8th 2014)

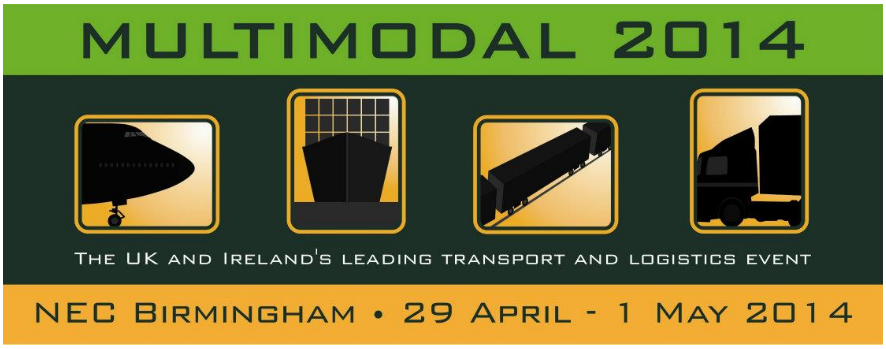
CONFERENCES

ONWARDS AND UPWARDS AS PORT-CENTRIC OPERATIONS CONTINUE TO GROW IN THE UK

The continued growth of the port-centric concept in the UK means shipping lines are no longer tied to the traditional one-port operation, delegates at Multimodal 2014 heard yesterday.

Ocean carriers that want to differentiate themselves from competitors in "same-ship" alliances are offering customers connection options via several regional ports.

A *What Next for Port-centric Solutions?* session, chaired by *The Loadstar* editor Gavin van Marle, debated the benefits to the UK supply chain of port-centric operations and what needed to be done by stakeholders to improve the offer.



Panellist Stephen Carr, head of commercial strategy & planning at Peel Ports, Liverpool, told delegates that port-centric logistics was, in fact, nothing new, and gave the examples of oil refining and storage of dry bulk cargo.

Mr Carr explained that the advent of containerisation in the second half of the 20th century had made it easy to handle and transport goods from ports to all parts of the UK.

However, with journeys by road often hit by congestion and fuel prices having risen dramatically over the past 20 years, demand for port-centric alternatives are on the increase.

In short, the port warehouse has become an extension of the ship at sea, but is no longer used for storage but as a quayside distribution centre, he said.

PD Ports at Teesport is considered the first operator to deliver on the port-centric concept in the UK; able to encourage and attract major retailers such as Tesco and ASDA to open distribution centres at its facility.

Geoff Lippitt, its business development director, said that following the lead of these mega-retailers, others had followed and the project had expanded and “moved on”.

Mr Lippitt and Mr Carr, with fellow panellist Peter Ward, cargo supply chain commercial director at DP World London Gateway, agreed that further development of port-centric operations could only be achieved with the co-operation of local councils, in terms of planning agreements for using both brown and greenfield sites.

Port-centric operations must “be nimble” to succeed and be innovative, they said – which would bring the interesting prospect of the future growth of 3PLs at regional ports.

Feeder services are very much the key to the port-centric concept – as the spokes to the hub – but there are also opportunities for the strings of some ocean carriers to call direct, as is evidenced by the “regional focus” of MSC.

It is the policy of the Geneva-headquartered carrier to operate from a range of ports in the UK, unlike many of its peers, thereby helping to reduce customers’ road miles and carbon footprint.

It was a strategy that proved its value in the latter part of 2013-early 2014, when storms battered many ports to a standstill in the south of the UK, culminating in week-long waits for berths and substantial delays to landside operations.

Mr van Marle posed a provocative question to the panel of port operators: “What comes first, the shipper or the carrier?”

The response was unanimous: “The shipper, always.”

However, there was general agreement from the panel that although port-centric operations are set to increase in the future, they are “just another tool in eliminating inefficiencies from supply chains”.

(theloadstar.co.uk, May 1st 2014)

ON THE CALENDAR

- 10th Trans Middle East 2014
  InterContinental Doha The City, Qatar
  Wednesday 21 and Thursday 22 May 2014

- SIL 2014
  Barcelona, Spain
  3-5 June 2014

- 12th ASEAN Ports and Shipping 2014
  JW Marriott, Jakarta, Indonesia
  Wednesday 11 and Thursday 12 June 2014

- TOC CSC Europe 2014
  London, U.K.
  24-26 June 2014

- RORO 2014
  ExCeL, London, UK
  24-26 June 2014

- Cool Logistics Global
  Rotterdam, The Netherlands
  30 September - 2 October 2014

- 3rd Black Sea Ports and Shipping 2014
  Istanbul Marriott Hotel Asia, Istanbul, Turkey
  Wednesday 03 and Thursday 04 September 2014

- 12th Intermodal Africa South 2014
  International Convention Centre Durban, South Africa
  Thursday 23 and Friday 24 October 2014

- Intermodal Europe 2014
  AHOY, Rotterdam, The Netherlands
  11-13 November 2014

- 9th Southern Asia Ports, Logistics and Shipping 2014
  ITC Grand Chola Chennai, India
  Thursday 27 and Friday 28 November 2014

- 9th Indian Ocean Ports and Logistics 2015
  Maputo, Mozambique
  Thursday 22 and Friday 23 January 2015

- 8th Philippine Ports and Shipping 2015
  Manila, The Philippines
  Thursday 12 and Friday 13 February 2015

- 13th Intermodal Africa North 2015
  Lagos Oriental Hotel, Lagos, Nigeria
  Thursday 26 and Friday 27 March 2015
- 11th Trans Middle East 2015
  Kuwait
  Wednesday 29 and Thursday 30 April 2015
- 4th Black Sea Ports & Shipping 2015
  Constanta, Romania
  Thursday 28 and Friday 29 May 2015
- 13th ASEAN Ports and Shipping 2015
  JW Marriott, Jakarta, Indonesia
  Wednesday 24 and Thursday 25 June 2015
- 10th Southern Asia Ports, Logistics & Shipping 2015
  Mumbai, India
  Thursday 17 and Friday 18 September 2015
- 13th Intermodal Africa South 2015
  Mulungushi International Conference Centre, Lusaka, Zambia
  Thursday 29 and Friday 30 October 2015
- 3rd MED Ports 2015
  Civitavecchia (Rome), Italy
  Thursday 26 and Friday 27 November 2015

The Secretariat of C.I.S.Co. is able to communicate detailed information on the programs of all the events and how to participate.