

Containers lead Marseille Fos growth trend

Container throughput at leading French port Marseille Fos reached 956,999 teu for the first nine months, a 4% rise on January-September last year driven by 6% growth at the Fos deepsea terminals.

Box tonnage also rose 4% to 9.18 million tonnes, leading general cargo to 13.9MT (+3%). The main support came from ro-ro traffic – up 5% to 3.06MT – which included 130,616 import/export vehicles, a 6% increase boosted by a 17% surge in September.

Liquid bulks finished the period 1% ahead on 36.8MT. Oil & gas volumes contributed 34.3MT, underpinned by crude imports of 19.6MT - each result echoing the one-point gain – but marked by LNG rising 31% to 4.1MT. Meanwhile liquid chemicals and agro-products ended 9% down on 2.5MT.

The dry bulks sector, dominated by steel industry raw materials imports, fell 12% to 9.43MT due to China dumping cheap steel worldwide in the first half-year. Volumes were also hit by the conversion of the coal-fired Gardanne power station to biomass fuel.

Passenger throughput rose 4% to 2.09 million, with cruise numbers up 8% to 1.189 million. Ferry carryings – down 8% in Q1 and 3% after six months – further closed the deficit to 1% on 903,000 passengers after a 19% increase in Algerian traffic and a return to normal on Corsica services.

Marseille to seek income stream from historic property

The Marseille Fos port authority has announced that it will launch a call next summer for long-term projects to redevelop the J1 ferry terminal and adjacent areas as an innovative amenity at the heart of the city. With international ferry services currently hosted at J1 due for relocation at nearby Cap Janet in 2020, the plan reflects 'a major ambition' to preserve and earn income from the authority's heritage property portfolio as a supplement to port activity revenues.

Leading international names in architecture and development will be briefed to submit culturally sympathetic proposals compatible with the history, activity and location of the site. This includes the three-storey building of 22,000m², a 10,000m² yard, 150m of quay, a 4,000m² water basin and, as an option, 700m of the sea wall. After a December 2017 deadline, candidates will be shortlisted in February 2018 ahead of final selection by an international jury in November that year.

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