



INTERMODAL EFFICIENCY AT EUROPE'S CROSSROAD

DFDS Tor Line-Eurobridge offers a regular ro-ro short sea service between Ghent and Gothenburg

The port of Ghent is a truly intermodal operation, handling 24 million tonnes of cargo from short sea shipping each year, as well as 16 million from inland waterways and five million each from road and rail. Close to the intersection of the trans-continental E17 Scandinavia-Portugal and E40 United Kingdom-Turkey motorways, the port is directly connected with both via a special expressway. Canals link the port to major inland waterways, and each quay has its own direct connection to the European rail network.

Since 1997, the Lys Line has operated a regular twice-weekly service between Ghent and Oslo. Special side-loading ships carry paper and timber products, and palletised goods and containers, from Scandinavia to mainland Europe. The Tor Line's Eurobridge terminal, operational since 1994, is the hub of a high-quality roll-on/roll-off ferry service linking Ghent and Gothenburg.

Further attractions for users include special facilities where goods can be processed, assembled and sold. Development of the port complex is on-going.



Moored at the new quay at Thyborøn, a ship prepares to off-load soda lye into Cheminova's storage facility

CREATING A COST-EFFECTIVE ALTERNATIVE TO ROAD HAULAGE

The port authorities of Thyborøn have successfully collaborated with private industry to take over 2 000 truck-loads of hazardous cargo each year off Denmark's roads.

The Danish fine chemicals company Cheminova exports 99% of its output to more than 100 countries around the world. It also imports raw materials, including an annual 50 000 tonnes of soda lye from Germany, the United Kingdom and Scandinavia. In the past, the soda lye was transported overland by road and rail from ports on the eastern side of the Jutland peninsula. Each day throughout the year, six truck-loads made the journey.

Now, after investment by the port authority and Cheminova in a new quay, tanks, pipelines and service buildings, ships arrive at the new facility at fortnightly

intervals, delivering 2 000 tonnes of soda lye on each visit. The benefits to the environment and the local community are matched by the cost-savings enjoyed by Cheminova, which is already seeing a good return on its investment.

The European Commission's Directorate-General for Energy and Transport develops and carries out EU policy in these closely linked areas. The 2001 White Paper, *European transport policy for 2010: time to decide*, sets out 60 practical measures designed to bring about significant improvements in the quality and efficiency of transport in Europe by 2010, and to break the link between economic growth and growth in the demands on transport systems. Development of EU seaports is a vital component of this overall strategy.

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SEAPORTS



The European Union's seaports are vital to the competitiveness of its internal and international trade, and as links to its islands and outlying regions.

To accommodate anticipated future growth in freight traffic without putting further pressure on Europe's already congested road network, maritime transport will assume an ever more important role. The development of short sea shipping is a central element of the strategy for achieving a clean, safe and efficient European transport system set out in the Commission's 2001 White Paper, *European transport policy for 2010: time to decide*. As the White Paper makes clear, this will require an increase in the capacity and efficiency of ports and port services, as well as improved intermodal connections between ports and inland transport networks.

seaports

- key interfaces between inland and maritime transport networks
- dynamic commercial centres with considerable growth potential

the challenges

- to increase intermodal capacity and efficiency in ports
- to open the market for port services to prospective service providers

the goals

- better ports, fully intermodal
- fair and equal access to all port service providers

Community action

- establishment of clear rules and open procedures in the market for port services
- targeted financial support for port development projects, including support from the Trans-European Transport Network programme
- new research and development to improve intermodal efficiency, safety and security



EUROPEAN
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PORTS AND THE TRANSPORT CHAIN



In order to reduce pollution and ease congestion on the roads, EU transport policy aims to stimulate a large-scale shift of traffic to other modes by 2010 – notably, to short sea shipping.

The capacity of European ports to handle this increased traffic efficiently will be an essential element in the shipping industry's ability to put together attractive door-to-door service packages and win new customers. It is at ports that many of the new intermodal solutions must be implemented, to ensure the streamlined transfer of cargo between ships and road, rail and inland waterway networks.

Ports and the Trans-European Transport Network – practical measures

Increasing and modernising port capacity and installations is primarily the responsibility of the private sector and national or regional authorities, which are best placed to take into account local circumstances – commercial, environmental and safety-related.

The EU can offer financial support for port infrastructure projects and feasibility studies as part of its programme to establish the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T), which also supports the development of port hinterlands. Such projects may also be eligible for aid from the Community's Structural and Cohesion Funds, and for loans from the European Investment Bank.

Port services

A key objective of the European Commission's strategy for the development of ports is to establish clearer rules which set high quality standards for access to the port services market, and make procedures more transparent.

Commercial port services – and in particular cargo handling, passenger services, towage, pilotage and mooring – are normally payable in addition to the fees charged for calling at a port. Charges for these services represent the bulk of the total costs of port visits for ships, and of port transit for cargo. They must be efficient, flexible, and competitively priced if shipping is to be cost-effective as a component of overall transport solutions, not just for the long-haul transport of bulk cargo but for an increasing range of containerised goods. This in turn requires a competitive market for these services, responsive to the changing needs of existing and potential customers.

Competition for the provision of port services has, in fact, become much more open in recent years – but the process is far from complete. At most ports, services were traditionally provided by single, monopolistic operators, often owned or controlled by public authorities. Today, they have in many cases been wholly or partially opened to competition, and this has resulted in widespread improvements in quality and reductions in price.

This trend, though encouraging, is by no means universal. Although Community competition rules already apply to ports, fair rules on market access are needed to cover situations where the establishment of new services is limited by external factors – for example, by physical constraints on space.

The 'ports package'

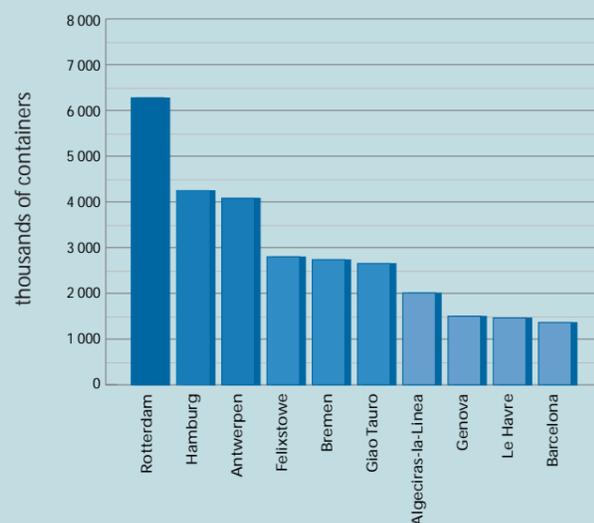
In February 2001, the Commission presented a proposal for the first-ever directive on market access to port services, as part of the communication *Reinforcing quality service in sea ports: a key for European transport* (COM(2001) 35 final), also known as the *'ports package'*. Its aim is to establish clear rules and transparent procedures for access to the provision of port services. It also summarises Community rules on public funding and State aid for seaports, and reports on the current public financing and charging practices of EU ports. After its first reading by the European Parliament, the Commission adopted an amended proposal (COM(2002) 101 final) in February 2002.

The directive aims to establish a new legislative framework, including provision for:

- **transparent, fair and objective procedural rules**, using proportionate and non-discriminatory criteria – to ensure that every prospective operator has a fair and equal chance to benefit from opportunities in this growing market
- **local circumstances** – while special local factors should continue to be accommodated, this must not be allowed to reduce or hamper market access.

Traffic at Europe's largest container ports, 2000

Data supplied by ports



In the past decade, total cargo traffic at European ports has grown by over 20%. Container traffic, now a mainstay of EU trade (see chart), more than doubled. Over three-quarters of all EU trade with third countries passes through its seaports, which load or unload around 2.7 billion tonnes of freight each year.

