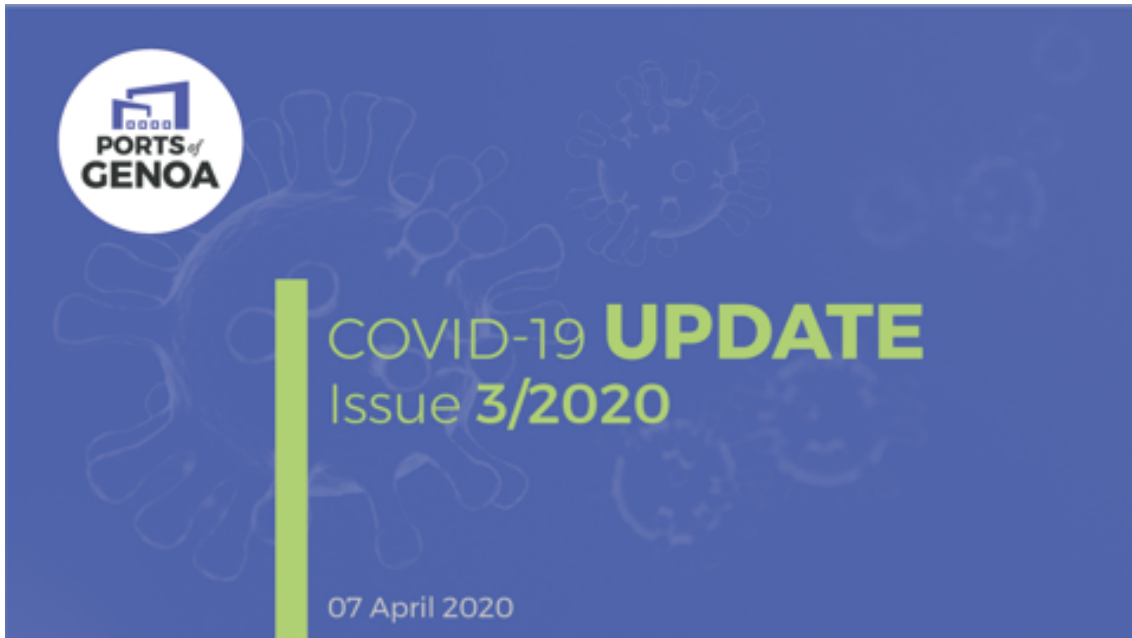


## Covid-19 Update - Issue 3/2020

07 April 2020



### **Rail freight transport in Europe does not seem to be affected for the moment by the measures to contain the coronavirus epidemic implemented by several countries**

**GLOBAL ECONOMIC TRENDS** According to Unicredit Italian bank analysts, in 2020 there will be a 6% drop in world GDP, followed by a 8.6% recovery in 2021. A major contraction is expected for the US (-10.8%) and the euro area economies (-13%) with a return to a positive GDP in 2021 (+11.8 and +10% respectively). Italy would be among the most affected countries, with an estimated GDP drop of -15% this year followed by a +9% rebound in 2021. Deloitte investigated COVID-19 possible evolution and economic impact in terms of value of the production in Italy. The result estimates a negative economic impact quantifiable in 80bn of Euros, equal to 4.6% of annual GDP. China's official Purchasing Manager's Index for March 2020 was 52.0, beating expectations for an economy hit by the coronavirus outbreak. Analysts had expected the official PMI to come in at 45 for the month of March, from a record low of 35.7 a month earlier.

### **EUROPEAN INTERMODAL TRANSPORT**

Rail freight transport in Europe does not seem to be affected for the moment by the measures to contain the coronavirus epidemic implemented by several countries, Although protective measures for staff slow down operations and introduce higher costs, the major European operators claim all freight trains travel on time and the rail transport offer has remained unchanged, indeed additional capacity has been set up to cope with the increase in

the daily demand for consumer goods. In the first three weeks of March, the main Italian railway service provider, Polo Mercitalia, transported three and a half million tons of goods, offering a valuable service in the emergency phase. Mercitalia Logistics has dealt mainly with the transport of consumer goods and products for the agricultural cluster. The company also operated 30 fast trains (ETR500-driven) for the forwarding of pharmaceutical products and sanitary materials. TX Logistik (TXL) has handled 1,000 international trains between 11 European countries, transporting 10,000 maritime containers and over 15 thousand swap bodies and semi-trailers, thus ensuring the need of large scale distribution. Mercitalia Intermodal has operated over 1,000 trains transporting more than 33,000 intermodal units, a third of which containing food and hygiene products and basic chemical preparations for the manufacture of sanitary products for disinfection.

**PORTS OF GENOA** Intermodal transport trend Driven by container traffic growth, intermodal transport closed the first two months of 2020 recording a remarkable positive trend. The number of trains arriving and departing from the ports of Genoa and Pra' during January and February reached 1,243 from 1,088 last year (+10%). The rail ratio (number of TEUs by train out of total traffic handled) therefore settled at 13.6% (+0.7% ). In the same period, 98 trains were operated in Savona Vado, corresponding to a 20% increase compared to last year result, linked to the activity of the new Vado Gateway container terminal, which began operations on Feb 12. A 50% share of the containers handled were shipped via train thanks to regular rail services connecting the port terminal with intermodal centres throughout Northern Italy. Bulk and break bulk (agribulk, iron & steel, coal) rail transport from the port of Savona remained stable.

**Innovation** In addition to the expansion of port facilities and transport connections, the Ports of Genoa are investing in re-organisation and technological innovation processes in order to boost port efficiency.

**Port Processes Digitalisation** Following the provisions of the "measures for the containment of the Covid-19 epidemic in the Ports of Genoa", the Port Authority and the port cluster operators (road haulage, shippers, shipping agents, port terminals) are implementing the Port Community System with new functions aiming at the complete digitalization of import and export container procedures. The objective is, on the one hand, to contain the spread of the coronavirus within the port by limiting personal contact among supply chain operators, whilst on the other hand, to simplify procedures and to make the port logistics cycle more efficient, by streamlining the delivery and collection of goods to and from the port terminals.

**PCS Rail Module** Together with its technological partners (UIRNet/Logistica Digitale), the Port Authority is developing a "Rail Module" of its Port Community System specifically aimed at the management of railway operations across the port and last mile railway network. Through the use of automation and IT, the Rail Module will overcome the limits that today significantly affect port railway operations and improve intermodal transport service efficiency by simplifying information exchange between the players along the logistics chain.

**EU projects** The Ports of Genoa are involved in several EU co-financed projects aimed at improving port efficiency and sustainability. Within the Connecting Europe Facility EU programme, the Port Authority is developing two actions specifically aimed at improving efficient transport and IT integration between the port and its hinterland. The VAMP UP project aims at boosting railway transport

from the Port of Vado Ligure to the inland markets, by means of infrastructure and technology development . New port-railway connections have been set up and the intermodal terminal facilities have been upgraded, thereby improving train handling capacity. An automated railway gate has been installed to control train movements and speed up operations, exchanging data with the Port Community System. The E-BRIDGE project was conceived with the aim of supporting Ports of Genoa operations following the collapse of the Morandi bridge and aims at implementing IT connections across port terminal gates, remote parking areas and inland intermodal centres, in order to optimise truck and train journeys to/from the port.  Â

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