

Central Europe's industrial cluster looks to the South and to the Ports of Genoa as an alternative maritime gateway

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What About the Southern Route? This was the topic of discussion at the Ports of Genoa opening event on the third day of the Transport Logistic trade fair in Munich.

The round-table talks, organised in cooperation with Italcam, the Italian-German Chamber of Commerce, grouped together leading players of the European supply chain industry who shared their expertise and insight into the recent developments, which are reshaping European logistics and boosting the strategic role of the southern range Ports of Genoa and Savona-Vado to serve the prosperous manufacturing and consumer area along the Rhine-Alpine Corridor. The event provided participants with the opportunity to assess the logistic partnerships which are impacting upon today's volatile European supply chain industry, subject to rapidly changing geopolitical scenarios, and listen to the expectations of the Swiss, German and Austrian operators eager to consolidate trade relations across the southern maritime route option.

The panel discussion, skillfully moderated by the economics journalist of *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, Thomas Fromm, opened with a presentation of two studies commissioned by the Western Ligurian Sea Port Authority. Alessandro Panaro, esteemed Head of the Maritime & Energy Research Area of SRM, analysed the evolution of the global supply chain, in the light of the new strategies underway which are redefining the economics and geopolitics of the coming years. The recurrent keyword is an ability to adapt in real-time to changes in terms of trade routes, vessel upsizing and modes of transport. Data projections point to an overall increase in world container traffic in the next five years, but with a sharper growth rate expected across the Mediterranean Sea, catering for shipments to/from the Middle and Far East, and shortsea intra-European trade volumes. Bolstered by a 3-billion euro major infrastructure investment programme underway, the Port Authority, at Transport Logistics with a group of terminal operators from Genoa, Pra', Savona and Vado equipped to provide services for all commodity sectors, is on track to strengthen its position as premier Italian gateway port and as a modern logistics platform serving trade across the Med into Europe to the final destination beyond the Alps. ([To download highlights of the study "The Med ports in the global supply chain reshuffle"](#)).

The second study, illustrated by Enrico Pastori, partner of TRT *Trasporti e Territorio*, prominent consulting firm for the transport sector, focused upon an analysis and potential of intermodal connections as a prime driver behind the expansion of the Ports of Genoa's catchment area, with respect to Central European markets, namely, Switzerland, Austria Baden-Wurttemberg and Bavaria. Central to the research conducted are the prospects for the port upon the completion of the major rail infrastructure works underway in Genoa and Savona-Vado, in cooperation with *Rete Ferrovia Italiana*

(Italian State Railways), and the opening of the Terzo Valico, the new hi-speed/hi capacity railway line across the Apennines and on track to be fully integrated in the TEN-T North Sea-Rhine-Mediterranean rail corridor. Upon completion, the Ports of Genoa cargo facilities will be equipped with the capability to handle in full safety EU standardised freight trains, 750 metres in length, P/C 80 gauge, 12.5% max. gradient. Set against this scenario, the study outlines an estimate of the cost of a range of intermodal rail freight services operating to/from the Ligurian ports, forecast to be drastically reduced once all the rail infrastructure works are in place. The findings point to the great potential which intermodal transport will have on boosting the competitive edge of the Ports of Genoa in relation to the Swiss, Austrian and Southern German marketplaces. ([To download highlights of the study “The Intermodal potential of the Southern route to Europe”](#)).

The panel of experts, invited to provide their invaluable insight into the requirements of a market in continuous evolution, included a select group of leading logistic operators from central-southern Europe: Andrea Marongiu (Geschäftsführer VSL - Verband Spedition und Logistik Baden-Württemberg), Andreas Ott (Senior Director Sales & Business Change Air & Sea division *DSV Switzerland*), Jens Norgaard (COO Benelux & Germany, *Global Liner Agencies*) and Curzio Boaretto (General Manager COO *CargoBeamer Italia*). The discussion, moderated by Thomas Fromm, addressed the challenges faced by the Southern European ports to overturn a legacy which has traditionally been anchored in the past to the Northern Range ports. Nevertheless, the round-table talks also highlighted the strategic advantage of the Ports of Genoa as southern maritime gateway into Europe and as centre of cargo handling excellence capable of offering reduced transit times for shipments to/from Asia across the Suez Canal and across the Mediterranean Sea. The major logistic operators of the high-performing automotive, chemical and retail sectors in Switzerland, Southern Germany and Austria confirmed, in fact, their renewed confidence in the Ports of Genoa, Pra', Savona and Vado Ligure, and welcomed the sizable investments underway to improve accessibility to Italy's premier port by sea, by rail and by road.

To learn more: [Watch the video](#).