

Cybersecurity: a culture of security is taking root across the Ports of Genoa and Savona-Vado

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Two workshops organised by the Western Ligurian Sea Port Authority to intensify efforts to strengthen digital resilience at Italy's foremost port, by bringing together a broad spectrum of major stakeholders operating along the Port Authority's 50-kilometre coastal jurisdiction.

This initiative marks the culmination of a structured programme focused on training, awareness and skills development, reflecting a shift towards a more integrated and community-wide approach to cyber defence. Rather than confining responsibility to internal systems alone, the Port Authority has sought to embed a shared culture of security across the entire port ecosystem. This includes partners, suppliers and operators, recognising that in a highly interconnected environment, each link in the value chain can either reinforce resilience or expose critical vulnerabilities.

The Ports of Genoa and Savona-Vado provide direct liner service to over 450 ports worldwide and play a strategic role in the global supply chain which extends beyond national borders. Over 1,100 businesses operate within the port area. In such a complex and globally connected setting, cybersecurity has become indispensable to ensuring business continuity, safeguarding service reliability and maintaining international competitiveness. Efforts to modernise infrastructure — ranging from cloud migration to enhanced monitoring and response capabilities — have been accompanied by systematic vulnerability assessments and penetration testing. However, the Port Authority has placed equal emphasis on human capital, recognising that sophisticated feats of technology must be matched by informed and vigilant personnel.

The workshops underscored a central theme: cybersecurity is no longer solely a technical discipline, but an everyday organisational practice encompassing people, processes and governance. Across a range of ongoing training initiatives, simulated cyber-attacks and open dialogue with stakeholders, the Port Authority is working to cultivate a proactive and informed port community.

In his opening address, the Ports of Genoa President Matteo Paroli highlighted the decisive role of human behaviour in cyber defence. *“Cybersecurity is often underestimated, but there are best practices that everyone can follow to improve their personal level of protection. We can install a range of technological safeguards, but all it takes is a momentary lapse in attention to expose systems to attack. Just a few days ago, our organisation was the target of another cyber-attack: we managed to*

mitigate the impact because we were prepared, and once again the human factor made all the difference.” Paroli also pointed to the increasing sophistication and subtlety of cyber threats, often exacerbated by volatile geopolitical conditions that contribute to a surge in global cyber-attacks. “In such an environment”, he argued, “constant vigilance is imperative. Awareness, preparedness and continuous training remain the cornerstones of effective defence — principles that the Authority aims to reinforce through initiatives such as these workshops, which are fast becoming integral to the region’s broader cybersecurity strategy.”