

Membership milestone: Ports of Genoa welcomed as the 40th member of the International Port Community Systems Association

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IPCSA has reached a membership milestone, welcoming Ports of Genoa as its 40th member.

Since the recent merger of the Ports of Genoa, Savona and Vado Ligure in a single Port Authority, a key challenge has been the integration of the Port Community Systems of the ports, and membership of IPCSA will be an important contribution to this. The two Port Community Systems have a long history, dating back to 2005 (Savona) and 2007 (Genoa). Between them, the two PCSs process over 15 million electronic import/export documents a year and manage approximately 20,000 users, 1,500 companies and six container terminals.

“The two Port Community Systems will merge, under the umbrella of the Italian Logistics Platform, which is an unusual feature compared with other countries,” said Paolo Emilio Signorini, President of the Western Ligurian Sea Port Authority.

Genoa was the first Italian maritime port to be integrated into the national platform, which was created and managed by the Italian Government to connect maritime ports and inland freight villages, and promote the further development of the entire national logistics system.

“That is another reason why we decided to become a member of IPCSA – because we and our port operators community want to share this experience and learn what has been done in other national and international contexts.”

Cargo volumes through Genoa have increased by 61% in the past ten years, while import cycle times have decreased by 47%. “As port infrastructure and transport connections have remained nearly the same, this result has been achieved thanks to the contribution of Information Technology and the development of E-port,” he said.

“In our case, it is very clear that organisation and technology have been crucial in the development of our traffic in recent years. Our Port Community System will also be key for the future, when container throughput is expected to grow further, and in handling peak volumes when mega container vessels call at the port.”

Genoa is strongly established as a port of entry into southern and central Europe and is poised for volume expansion despite being constrained in terms of space by mountains to the north and the sea to the south. “Achieving this will depend on organisation, technology and innovation,” said Mr Signorini.

The opening of the Gotthard Tunnel, as well as other strategic Alpine tunnels, are smoothing the links between Italy and central Europe. "Rail interoperability will be increasingly important when it comes to shipping cargo to northern Italy and central Europe, so we are focusing strongly on the rail components and modules of our Port Community System," he said. "We are also very interested in the issue of vehicle booking systems to spread demand and traffic flows and improve the level of service and efficiency at the port, and in the creation of a Quality Certification System to help streamline processes and improve the efficiency, safety and security of port operations."

Richard Morton, Secretary General of IPCSA, said: "We are delighted to welcome Ports of Genoa as our latest member. Reaching a membership of 40 is a real milestone for IPCSA, which was only founded in 2011 by six European-based Port Community System operators, and has since expanded into an international association with an unrivalled level of expertise and experience and a strong relationship with a number of international bodies, including the IMO, WCO and UN/CEFACT."

Paolo Emilio Signorini praised IPCSA as "friendly, reactive and positive from the start". He said: "We are really pleased to be part of IPCSA, especially as we are the leading port in Italy and the one with the most experience of operating a Port Community System. To improve further, the Genoa port cluster needs an appropriate environment and group in which to discuss innovation in Port Community Systems and logistics. IPCSA gives us the opportunity to share experience and ideas with some very important players in this sector, and to gain inspiration from their work."

He concluded: "Ports of Genoa is keen to play a proactive part in some of IPCSA's working groups, including those focusing on standards and technologies, Single Window/trade facilitation, Customs and other government agencies, and community system development."