

New Breakwater: underwater construction of 850 giant columns

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The construction of the 850 columns is in its final stages, with a total of 370,000 tons of gravel laid on the seabed. Work on the second block of columns is now set to commence.

Genoa, 21 September 2023 - The underwater giant columns have been designed to support the New Genoa Breakwater and construction is scheduled for completion by the end of September. The installation of the first group of columns will complete the works planned in the first testbed and herald the start of planned works on the block of columns in the second testbed. The Port of Genoa's new open-sea breakwater represents the greatest infrastructure facility to have ever been built to serve the Italian port industry.

The 370,000 tons of gravel deposited onto the seabed were transported by ship across 220 voyages from Genoa and Piombino. The goal is to deposit 170,000 tons of gravel per month, with the deployment of additional ships. As of this week, production will be boosted by the use of an extra 40,000-ton capacity ship which is scheduled to call from Spain every 15 days.

In the meantime, the underwater search for unexploded ordnances along the seabed, up to 50 metres in depth, continues. Since the end of July, these operations have been conducted by Webuild with the deployment of an innovative saturation diving facility which enables the divers to work in a hyperbaric environment.

Over 1,000 people are set to work, directly and indirectly, in the construction of the New Genoa Breakwater and, to date, over 80 companies, mostly Italian, are involved in the project. Commissioned by the Western Ligurian Sea Port Authority, this major infrastructure facility will play a strategic role in the local, Italian and European economy. Co-funded by the government, with resources released by the PNRR (National Recovery and Resilience Plan) Complementary Fund, the breakwater has been designed to improve accessibility to the Port of Genoa by sea, and to consolidate the strategic role of the city-port within the Rhine-Alpine corridor of the TEN-T Trans-European network. The 6,200-metre New Genoa Breakwater, a unique sophisticated feat of engineering, will replace the existing structure further out at sea, to ensure safe access to the port by the ultra-large vessels which require wider navigation channels and turning basins and which, to date, are subject to restrictions.