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President Paroli at “Un Mare di Svizzera 8”: “Governance, digitalisation and sustainability will guide our future”

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With a presentation marked by both strategic vision and operational pragmatism, Matteo Paroli, President of the Western Ligurian Sea Port Authority, outlined the future of Italy’s logistics and port sector at the international conference “Un Mare di Svizzera 8” in Lugano.

From the very beginning, Paroli set the objectives of his mandate: tangible infrastructure, reliable timelines, clear regulatory frameworks, and a port range capable of competing on global markets. “*Our challenge*,” he opened, “*is to establish a robust port range, fully integrated with industry and European markets, attractive to investors while remaining entirely respectful of the environment and the communities hosting it*”.
In this context, the President announced that by mid-October the first massive concrete caisson of Genoa’s new outer breakwater will be completed and positioned, initiating a new construction phase, with twelve standard caissons already installed. “*The project, valued at €1.3 billion, is the largest maritime construction project in the world and will enable vessels up to 400 metres in length at full load to access the port. The breakwater is a source of national engineering pride and will significantly enhance the port’s capacity and operational efficiency*,” Paroli stated. The breakwater is part of a comprehensive €3.3 billion infrastructure plan, which also includes docks, back-of-port areas, new access routes, and the two-level arch bridge, which was recognised in 2023 as the best project worldwide in its category.
“*The objective*,” he emphasised, “*is to make freight flows more efficient, rapid and sustainable, integrating functionality and aesthetic quality in a modern, environmentally sustainable development model*”.
Nevertheless, according to the President, physical infrastructure on its own is insufficient. “To attract investment, robust governance, legal certainty and administrative transparency are essential,” he explained, referring to the recent resolution of a complex terminal concession dispute, which secured operational continuity, alignment with planning objectives, and safeguarded employment. “*This was no easy task, given the complexity of port concession regulations. However, since my arrival, and in less than three months, thanks to the commitment and dedication of the Authority’s staff, we resolved a landmark case which could have adversely affected both our ports’ operations and the reputation of the Italian port industry*”. President Paroli also emphasised: “*We wanted to send a clear signal: those investing in Italy must have assurance that investment in Italian ports is secure, but we must also ensure clear, predictable and consistent rules*”.
Paroli also underscored the Ligurian model as an exemplary model of institutional collaboration: “*Genoa today serves as a model of institutional convergence, bringing together regional, municipal and national authorities, along with the two Ligurian Port Authorities. This synergy enables us to*

deliver results efficiently while minimising environmental impact".
Another central focus of his address was digital transformation and cybersecurity. "*We have invested over €2 million in cybersecurity in the 2026 budget, in response to a twofold increase in cyberattacks since 2023. We have also allocated €3 million to the Port Community System, where the data accompanies shipments and often precedes them; ensuring the security of IT systems is now an absolute imperative*".
At the international level, Paroli cautioned against the proposed new Arctic shipping routes: "*This represents a significant risk, as it could undermine the Mediterranean's strategic centrality and disrupt its highly sensitive ecosystem. Europe must ensure alignment between environmental transition and commercial development, while safeguarding the Mediterranean's strategic role in the aftermath of the Red Sea and Suez crises*". In conclusion, the President reaffirmed the Authority's commitment to a consistent strategic course: "*We are building a long-term governance framework, where physical and digital infrastructure progress in tandem. The tangible results achieved within the first three months of my mandate reflect the dedicated efforts of all divisions of the Authority. Commitment, credibility and trust remain the core pillars of our ports*".