

Greater Western France's Port at the Heart of National and International Energy-Related Challenges

In 2021, the overall traffic level at the Port of Nantes – Saint Nazaire amounts to more than 29.7 million tonnes (MT), 76 % of which comprises import traffic. This evidences the Port Community's ability to gain fresh impetus, in a context marked by considerable geopolitical tensions and by the expected development of energy transition.

The share of energy-related throughout represents more than two thirds (69 %) of the total traffic volume in 2022, as opposed to just over half of that figure in 2021 (55 %). This progression is in part the consequence of the worldwide energy crisis. Just like many other countries in Europe, France needed to secure its energy supplies in anticipation of 2022/2023 winter demand. In this way, Montoir de Bretagne's Elengy liquefied natural gas terminal saw its volumes increase very significantly compared to 2021 (+ 85 %). LNG traffic amounts to 9.9 MT, a level never previously achieved on the Loire Estuary.

In a context of electricity production tension, the EDF thermal power station at Cordemais was also very much in demand in order to meet the electricity requirements of Great Western France. Coal imports thereby progressed by 51 %, reaching a level of 1.2 MT, as compared to 0.8 MT in 2021 and 0.2 MT in 2020.

Hydrocarbon traffic experiences an upswing in 2022, with the progressive restart of operations at the TotalEnergies refinery at Donges as of the summer of 2022, following an 18-month-long shutdown. Crude oil imports exceed 5.1 MT. Refined petroleum products traffic returned to a more normal rhythm, with less imports (1.8 MT, - 52 %) and more exports (2.4 MT).

A Key Player in the Construction of France's First Offshore Wind Farm

2022 is marked by the construction of France's first ever offshore wind farm, which is sited off Saint Nazaire. In terms of figures, this great logistical and human achievement represents an estimated traffic volume of 100 000 tonnes of wind turbine components and 120 port calls in total.

Activity at the container terminal records a similar level to that achieved the previous year (1.5 MT), being marked by a slight upturn in business in the final quarter, in spite of the disruption to supply chains experienced worldwide impacting the feeder services connected to Montoir de Bretagne. Ro-ro traffic decreased by 11 % compared to 2021. The level of ro-ro traffic was impacted by the raw material provisioning difficulties encountered by the Stellantis plant in Vigo, which resulted in the closure of the factory for several weeks. The number of new vehicles thereby amounts to 96 000 units, compared to 109 000 units in 2021. On the other hand, the recovery in the aeronautical sector resulted in a progression in maritime traffic in 2022 (+ 72 %), notably on the Montoir de Bretagne – Mobile (USA) link, the number of port calls having doubled.

The recovery in agri-food product traffic observed in 2021 was confirmed in 2022, with a 21 % increase. Grain and cereals exports record a sharp rise (+ 80 %, 1.2 MT), on account of the quality of the harvest and of the impact of geopolitical tensions on international markets. Imports of ingredients to be used in the production of animal feed amount to 2 MT, a level comparable to that achieved in 2021, despite the bird flu pandemic that affected poultry farms across France.

Liquid bulk cargo traffic (excluding energy) attained record levels. In an unprecedented international context, worldwide demand for vegetable oils strengthened. The trituration plants in Saint Nazaire and at Montoir de Bretagne drove this strong progression to a large extent, with over 600 000 tonnes (+ 31 %) exported to Europe and to other countries. The continued operation of the Montoir de Bretagne liquid cargo berth (whilst work was being carried out to increase the capacity of the dedicated infrastructure) thereby helped to ensure that 440 000 tonnes of rapeseed oil were exported.

Construction-related dry bulk products show a small increase this year. Supported by the good volume of activity in the building and civil engineering sector in 2022, marine sand stabilizes at 1.3 MT, and clinker and cement progress by 12 %, reaching 358 000 tonnes.

Main Traffic Results for 2022
(provisional data as of 5th January 2023)

Main Traffic Areas	2022 (MT)	2021 (MT)	2022-2021 (%)
Liquid Bulk Cargo			
▪ crude oil	5.1	0.0	≥ 100 %
▪ refined petroleum products	4.3	3.9	+ 10 %
▪ liquefied natural gas	9.9	5.3	+ 85 %
Dry Bulk Cargo			
▪ coal	1.2	0.8	+ 51 %
▪ animal feedstuffs	2.0	2.0	+ 1 %
▪ grain and cereals	1.2	0.7	+ 79 %
▪ marine sand	1.4	1.4	- 3 %
▪ clinker and cement	0.4	0.3	+ 12 %
General Cargo			
▪ containers in TEUs	1.5 135 600	1.6 145 700	- 4 % - 7 %
▪ ro-ro	0.4	0.4	- 11 %
▪ other general cargo (including wind turbine components)	0.3	0.3	+ 25 %
Total Traffic Volume	29.7	18.9	+ 57 %