

## Contrasting Changes in Port Traffic Levels in 2012

The Nantes - Saint Nazaire Port Authority saw its traffic levels mark time in 2012. Maritime throughput, which represents 29.8 million tonnes, falls back by 2.7 %, the national downturn being approximately 4 %\*. A direct consequence of a difficult economic situation internationally, this average decrease conceals some contrasting changes, both between imports (- 4.5 %) and exports (+ 1.7 %) as well as within the various categories of traffic.

Energy-related throughput is down 0.6 %. The growth in crude oil (+ 8 %), refined hydrocarbons (+ 8 %) and coal traffic (+ 21 %) partly made up for the drop in liquefied natural gas traffic (- 43 %). The Donges refinery saw a significant level of activity, importing over 9 million tonnes (Mt) of crude oil. The Cordemais power station was very much called upon, with supplies of coal exceeding 2 Mt. Natural gas traffic was practically halved, at 2.2 Mt, due notably to the strong demand from Asia. This is the second consecutive year in which there has been a significant fall. By way of comparison, the average annual traffic level at the terminal amounted to 5.5 Mt over the period 2000 - 2010.

Non-energy-related throughput is down 6.8 %. In that area also, the changes differ in nature. Cattle feed imports progress by 1 %, driven by an abundant soya harvest in Brazil and to a lesser extent by the development of sunflower cakes. Exports of grain and cereals record a 43 % fall, with the second half of 2012 being characterized by great tension in markets worldwide. Under the effects of the erosion of demand from the agricultural sector, fertilizer traffic shows a 3 % decrease. Scrap metal exports bound mainly for steelworks in Spain and North Africa grow by 5 %, as the recycling facilities at Montoir de Bretagne and Nantes Cheviré progressively ramp up their operations.

### 3 % Growth in Container Traffic

Driven by imports (+ 11 %), container traffic amounts to 184 000 TEUs in 2012, representing an overall progression of 3 % compared to the previous year. This result is linked to the development of the maritime service offer and to the dynamism shown by the companies in the hinterland, since at a worldwide level, container traffic has been one of the sectors most severely impacted by the economic situation.

Having doubled in 2011, the volume of activity at the ro-ro terminal remained at a significant level overall. The difficult economic circumstances in the Iberian Peninsula and the contraction of the French motor vehicle market nevertheless led to a 7 % decrease in traffic, with the long-established service between Montoir de Bretagne and Vigo having been affected by the reduction in the volume of industrial throughput.

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\* Change in the total tonnage handled at Metropolitan France's seven major seaports as of the end of November.