

A 12.4 12% Rise in Non-Energy-Related Traffic

In a difficult economic and social context, the Port of Nantes – Saint Nazaire exceeds the 31 million tonne mark. The 4.6 % overall annual growth is driven by a two-digit rise in container and ro-ro traffic volumes.

The Nantes – Saint Nazaire Port Authority's external traffic volume amounts to 31.1 million tonnes. It has risen by 4.6 % compared to the previous year. This increase is above the national average for France's major seaport authorities (+ 1 %) and occurs during a period characterized by industrial action over the plans for ports reform and the new retirement proposals, and by significant economic tension in the markets.

The Port Authority's energy base, which represents two thirds of the total traffic volume, has held firm overall at the same level as the previous year (+ 1.2 %). Liquefied natural gas imports show a 3.8 % increase. The 4.8 % growth in crude oil marks the expansion of operations at the Total refinery at Donges, after its five-year overhaul in the spring of 2009. Refined hydrocarbons progress by 3 % overall on account of the 14.1 % rise in exports, notably to the other ports on the Atlantic Seaboard. At 1.8 million tonnes, coal imports show a 21.1 % decrease compared to 2009, the year in which the EDF coal-fired power station at Cordemais was required to make up for the reduced production at the Flamanville nuclear power station in Normandy.

The increase in the volume of cargo throughput is also explained by the significant growth in non-energy-related traffic volumes (+ 12.4 %).

Cattle feed imports and grain and cereal exports have both grown, by 15.5 % and by 17.4 % respectively. The tonnage for grain and cereals therefore passes the 1.5 million tonne mark, with 2010 having been characterized by very strong worldwide demand for wheat, related to the drought conditions and fires that hit Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan, three of the market's major suppliers, in the course of last summer. Following a difficult year in 2009, fertilizer traffic doubled in 2010 due to the greater demand from the agricultural sector. Scrap metal shipment volumes bound for steelworks progress by 22.6 % thanks to the expansion of operations at the crushing and grinding facilities on the Loire Estuary.

Although several vessels had to be rerouted to Northern European ports on account of the strike action during the year, container traffic records a 10.3 % increase. This result is attributable in part to the recent link-up of the Montoir de Bretagne terminals with major transshipment ports including Rotterdam, Valencia and more recently Tangiers Med. Ro-ro traffic rises by 20.8 %. This growth is explained among other reasons by the increasing volumes handled by the maritime motorway between Montoir de Bretagne and Gijón (Spain), which was launched last September, and by the development of imports of Renault vehicles.

Cargo handling volumes for wind turbine components have increased fourfold in one year. In this way, 200 wind turbines transited the Montoir de Bretagne terminals, bound for the most part for wind farms in Brittany.

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