

## The Start of a Recovery in Port Traffic Volumes

**In 2016, Nantes – Saint Nazaire Port records a total traffic volume of 25.5 million tonnes, which is higher than the previous year. This result is notably characterized by the increase in ro-ro traffic and by the upturn in liquefied natural gas traffic.**

Following 5 years of downward trends, the traffic volumes at the Port of Nantes – Saint Nazaire see fresh growth. The progression would have been more marked had the port-based activities not been disrupted by the national industrial action in protest at the French Labour and Employment Act, in May and June 2016, a period during which many port calls were cancelled.

The ro-ro traffic volume rises again (+ 19 %), after a period of decline following the suspension of the maritime motorway service between Gijón and Montoir de Bretagne in September 2014. 2016 was marked by the entry into service of a new ro-ro berth and by the delivery of parking areas. The traffic volume is boosted by the good results achieved by the maritime motorway service between Vigo and Montoir de Bretagne. It also benefits from the throughput on the Milk Run Med service, which was launched in 2012 to permit the transportation of consignments of aircraft components between the different production facilities in the Mediterranean Basin. Open to other types of traffic, the service is notably used by Renault Nissan and more recently by truck manufacturer Scania, which exports from its production plant in Angers.

In a worldwide container shipping market characterized by sluggish demand, the fall in freight rates on Asia-Europe services and the reconfiguration of shipping lines, the traffic volume at the Montoir de Bretagne terminal is stabilized at around 1.8 million tonnes (MT), or 183 000 TEUs.

Following an exceptional year in 2015, exports of grain and cereals decrease by 32 %, standing at 1.3 MT as compared with 1.9 MT the previous year, as a result of last summer's poor harvest. The low yield and inconsistent quality penalized France's offer, which was not as well placed to respond to international demand as in the two preceding years.

Imports of dry bulk products used to manufacture animal feedstuffs stand at 1.8 MT, recording a 16 % decrease compared to the previous year. This result is related both to the economic difficulties encountered by livestock farmers in Greater Western France, and to new regulatory measures regarding storage in port-based silos. The abundant grain and cereals harvest in 2015 also affected cattle feed imports, as the surplus was used on livestock farms.

The volumes of bulk cargo for the construction and general industrial sectors show an upturn. The gradual recovery of the building and civil engineering market is felt in the imports of cement and clinker (+ 14 %) as well as in terms of marine sand traffic (+ 4 %). Exports of bulk recycled scrap metal to Turkey, North Africa and Spain increase by nearly 6 %.

Energy-related throughput progresses by more than 5 %. Following a previous year marked by the five-year planned shutdown of the Donges refinery, crude oil imports increased by 12 %, driven by the low cost of a barrel of crude at the start of the year. Refined hydrocarbon traffic fell back by 14 %.

Coal imports suffered a 30 % decrease. A mild winter and the continuation of work to upgrade the thermal power station at Cordemais significantly restricted fuel requirements, even though the first signs of a recovery were noted at the end of 2016.

Liquefied natural gas (LNG) traffic rises again, exceeding the 2 MT mark for the first time since 2012. The LNG industrial complex at Montoir de Bretagne benefitted from the rebalancing of prices between Europe and Asia, linked to a progressive upturn in activity at Japan's nuclear power plants and to lower demand from China. Moreover, the emergence of new producing countries (Angola, Australia, USA, etc.) has expanded the LNG offer worldwide.