

■ ■ ■ Tuesday 24 november 2015

CONTARGO LINKS DUNKIRK AND VALENCIENNES

The port of Dunkirk continues to reinforce the inland waterway grid of its direct hinterland. Since mid-November the company CONTARGO has operated a waterway container shuttle between Dunkirk's Terminal des Flandres (TdF) and the inland ports of Valenciennes.

Until now the many shippers in Valenciennes, which has a containerised goods market estimated at some 100,000 TEU, did not have the vital facility for developing consolidated and sustainable logistics via the port of Dunkirk.

This has now been made possible by **CONTARGO**, the operator of the inland terminals of Saint-Saulve and Prouvy. During the startup phase the company offers a weekly frequency and a rotation schedule synchronised with the Asia service which calls at Dunkirk every Tuesday.

CONTARGO's decision to develop a new waterway container service is directly related to the setup, on 1 September, of a system that provides a lasting solution to the extra cost of waterway handling in French container terminals, hitherto borne by the waterway operators alone.

Since that date Dunkirk has been the first port in France to spread this surcharge evenly over all containers transiting through the terminal. Hence, this surcharge is no longer invoiced solely to waterway operators but shared between all shipping companies according to the volume of their entire container traffic entering and leaving the Dunkirk terminal.

«We are very pleased that the system of cost equalisation on inbound and outbound containers, recently put in place in Dunkirk's TdF terminal, has already resulted in the setup of a new waterway transport service. The announcement confirms that this concerted decision by all the operators of the transport chain was the right one,» said **Daniel Deschodt, Commercial Director of Dunkerque-Port.**

Gilbert Bredel, Chairman of CONTARGO North France, added: *«Finding a solution to the issue of the final handling surcharge was an essential condition for the CONTARGO Group's commitment to Dunkirk. With new practices in waterway transport operating in this port, this new service between Dunkirk and Valenciennes means we are now in a position to help increase the overall attractiveness of the port of Dunkirk for container traffic.»*

This new solution for combined waterway transport in the region adds to the service offered by the operator **NORD PORTS SHUTTLE (NPS)** between Dunkirk, Lille and Dourges, and will help to reinforce the role of Dunkirk as a regional gateway for container traffic in the north of France.

France's third-ranking port, Dunkirk is well known as a port handling heavy bulk cargoes for its numerous industrial installations. It has also built its reputation in other sectors: the world's busiest passenger port (Calais-Dunkirk); France's largest harbour complex (traffic of more than 90 MT at Calais-Dunkirk); France's leading energy hub; France's leading port for containerised fruit imports; France's leading rail port; the region's largest waterway port; and the first LNG terminal (end 2015). Dunkirk is also a Sustainable Port (Natural Heritage Master Plan SDPN, Sustainable Development & Action Plan PA2D, Natural Environment Management Plan PGEN, etc).

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