

The Norlink Ports afterwork organized on 27 September 2018 at the Museum of Fine Arts in Lille took place 1 year to the day after the symposium organized at the Regional Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCIR). The annual meeting, backed by the Prefect of Hauts-de-France and the President of the Regional Council, allows the 10 founding members of the Association to shed light on the various actions undertaken over the past year but also face-to-face exchanges with all the transport stakeholders in the main focus groups to be opened in the field of transport and logistics in the Hauts-de-France Region.

Norlink Ports now has some twenty maritime and multimodal hubs in the Hauts-de-France Region.

Since December 2017, the association chaired by Bruno Fontaine has welcomed about fifteen additional associate members, including transport operators, port terminal managers, federations, associations, public authorities, etc.

The arrival of Getlink / Eurotunnel within Norlink Ports, concludes in particular the alliance between a group of 4 ports on the Opal Coast, namely Dunkirk, Calais, Boulogne-sur-Mer and the dry port of Eurotunnel.

The association works in particular to promote port infrastructures in the Region by developing synergies between maritime and inland ports. It is working on the development of new alternative intra-regional transport schemes, in direct connection with the Seine-Nord Europe Canal project.

The work by Norlink Ports helps to jointly promote the port potential of the Region and to reinforce its positioning one of logistical and tri-modal excellence.

The association fits perfectly within the framework of the decisive policy expressed by the government to create a French port strategy by corridor, the north corridor being one of the 3 cornerstones of that policy.

From September 2017 to September 2018, Norlink Ports invested in a range of different types of operations.

COMMERCIAL & MARKETING OPERATIONS

Norlink Ports has been showcased at various transport and logistics trade shows and has resulted in the effective consolidation of its founding members under a single banner (*RIVERDATING, SITL, Corporate Real Estate, SEAFOOD etc.*). Similarly, the members of the association promoted the NORLINK PORTS brand during the various trade delegation missions abroad, especially in Oceania and Latin America.

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Norlink Ports has also taken part in the organization of numerous meetings with regional shippers and all the stakeholders in the supply chain. The partnership agreement signed with the French Inland Waterway Board (VNF) during the 2017 colloquium in particular favoured the joint organization of this type of event.

The various measures taken to simplify and streamline intra-regional transport schemes have been the focus of specific monitoring. This is the case of the Cargo Community System (CCS) adopted by the Dunkerque port community and which was opened in 2017 to all regional freight forwarders, under the impetus of Norlink Ports and with the support of the Hauts-de-France Regional Council. This is also the case with the reverse charge of VAT due on imports, which has helped to increase the attractiveness of French ports.

Finally, the 2019 budget proposal (PLF) provides for the abolition of the parafiscal tax on seafood, thus reinforcing the position of the ports of Dunkirk and Boulogne-sur-Mer for the fishing industry.

In order to carry out its commercial operations, Norlink Ports has developed various communication supports over the past year:

- Presentation leaflet of the association
- Opening of a LinkedIn account
- Joint press releases with the founding members of the association.

PROSPECTIVE OPERATIONS

"North corridor" assignment of the Prefect of the Hauts-de-France Region

The assignment entrusted by the Prime Minister to the Regional Prefect in February 2018 follows on from the speech by the Prime Minister pronounced at the Assises de la Mer in November 2017, recommending that France's port strategy focus on 3 corridors: the Seine, the Rhone and the North.

Norlink Ports actively supported the Prefect's services during the assignment, participating in the various steering committees and working groups set up for that purpose.

The following work themes were given particular attention by the association:

- Make Hauts-de-France the port and logistics hub of North-West Europe
- Improve the safety, security, fluidity and set up the conditions to make Brexit successful
- Set up cooperation between the corridors.

Seine-Nord Europe Canal

Norlink Ports fully supports through its operations the construction of the Seine-Nord Europe Canal and through various other operations (*participation in various round tables, letters of support to the project, participation in the CSNE Master Plan etc.*).

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BREXIT

The current negotiations on the nature of the future BREXIT have brought to light some potentially prejudicial measures for the Hauts-de-France Region, as was the case with the BREXIT proposal on the modification of shipping corridors.

To avoid future Customs crossings in and out of the United Kingdom, the proposal to modify the corridor would have positioned the Benelux ports as the main access point between Ireland and continental Europe, to the detriment of the Hauts-de-France seafront.

Norlink Ports therefore co-authored a press release with all of the economic partners, and challenged various other partners (French Ports Union, etc.) on the risks of this proposal.

BREXIT should however also generate new needs (in terms of site development - customs warehouses, etc. - and human resources) and new opportunities for the local and regional authorities, with the creation of logistics sectors linked to the new border (and the possibility of taking advantage of the "breaks created by this new frontier" for the development of logistics activities).

To limit the potential risks and take advantage of the opportunities related to this event, Norlink Ports will be taking action and launching various focus groups on:

- communication on BREXIT
- training of companies responsible for transiting goods
- the implementation of the Cargo Community System (CCS) common to the ports of Hauts-de-France and the Customs authorities
- seeking funding for Ports (ERDF)

These forward-looking operations are obviously of seminal importance for all port infrastructure managers in the Hauts-de-France region and will continue to be included among the association's priority objectives in 2019.

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