CONTAINER THROUGHPUT & TERMINAL CAPACITY

In Europe

June 2010
# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PREFACE</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KEY TO TABLES AND OVERVIEWS</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port and Terminals Selection</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes on Terminal Capacity</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes on Container Volume Forecasts</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General notes</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current and projected container terminal capacity</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Throughput</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Throughput versus 100% capacity</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Throughput versus 75% capacity</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BALTIC/SCANDINAVIA</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POLAND</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gdansk</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deepwater Container Terminal Gdanks (DCT Gdanks)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DENMARK</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aarhus</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aarhus Container Port</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Denmark</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltic Gate Terminal</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWEDEN</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gothenburg</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skandia Container Terminal</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK/EIRE</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNITED KINGDOM</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing facilities UK</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felixstowe and Harwich</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port of Felixstowe - Landguard Terminal</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port of Felixstowe - Trinity Terminal</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harwich International Port</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felixstowe and Harwich projects</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port of Felixstowe South Reconfiguration</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harwich International Port (Bathside Bay)</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liverpool</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Seaforth Container Terminal</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liverpool Project</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Seaforth Mersey River Container Terminal, or Seaforth River Terminal</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tilbury - Northfleet Hope Terminal</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tilbury Short-Sea Container Terminal</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project London (Shell Haven)</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London Gateway</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southampton</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP World Southampton</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thamesport</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
London Thamesport container terminal .............................................................. 36
Projects UK ........................................................................................................ 37
Bristol .................................................................................................................... 37
Avonmouth Container Terminal ........................................................................ 37
Portbury Container Terminal ........................................................................... 37
Bristol Project ....................................................................................................... 38
Avonmouth Deep Sea Container Terminal ....................................................... 38
Teesport .............................................................................................................. 39
Teesport Project .................................................................................................. 39
Northern Gateway Container Terminal .......................................................... 39
Other UK deepsea projects .............................................................................. 41
Hunterston .......................................................................................................... 41
Scapa Flow Container Hub ................................................................................ 41

NORTH WEST EUROPE ......................................................................................... 42

BELGIUM .............................................................................................................. 42
Antwerp ............................................................................................................. 43
Antwerp Gateway .............................................................................................. 43
Delwaide Dock Terminal .................................................................................... 43
Independent Maritime Terminal ....................................................................... 44
Churchill Terminal (multipurpose) .................................................................... 44
Deurganck Terminal, Antwerp International Terminal ..................................... 44
Europa Terminal ................................................................................................. 44
Noordzee Terminal ............................................................................................ 45
Antwerp Projects ............................................................................................... 45
Saeftinghedok .................................................................................................... 45
Zeebrugge ......................................................................................................... 47
APM Terminal Zeebrugge .................................................................................. 47
Container Handling Zeebrugge (CHZ) ............................................................... 47
Zeebrugge Projects ............................................................................................ 47
Zeebrugge International Container Port ........................................................... 48

FRANCE (ATLANTIC) .......................................................................................... 49
Dunkirk .............................................................................................................. 50
Port of Dunkirk container terminal ................................................................. 50
Le Havre .......................................................................................................... 51
Terminal de l’Atlantique (Quai de l’Atlantique) .................................................. 51
Quai des Amériques (Terminal A.E.T.) ............................................................... 51
North Terminal-Quai de l’Europe (previously Terminal de l’Europe) .............. 51
Terminal de France (Quay du Havre) ................................................................. 52
Terminal de l’Océan (Quai Bougainville) .......................................................... 52
Terminal de Normandie (Quais de l’Asie and d’Osaka) ................................... 52
Terminal Porte Océane (Quay de France) ......................................................... 52
Projects Le Havre ............................................................................................. 53
Terminal de l’Atlantique & Terminal A.E.T. fill-in/extension ............................ 53
MSC France Terminal ....................................................................................... 53
Port Autonome du Havre .................................................................................. 54

GERMANY ........................................................................................................... 55
Bremerhaven ..................................................................................................... 55
Existing Bremerhaven terminals ..................................................................... 56
Container Terminal Bremerhaven (CTB) (multi-user) ....................................... 56
MSC Gate (dedicated to MSC) ......................................................................... 56
North Sea Terminal Bremerhaven (NTB) (dedicated to Maersk Line and service partners) ....................................................................................... 56
Projects Bremerhaven (in Wilhelmshafen) ..................................................... 56
JadeWeser Port ................................................................................................. 57
Hamburg ............................................................................................................ 58
Buss Hansa Terminal (multipurpose and Ro/Ro facility) .......................................................... 58
Container Terminal Hamburg (CTH) ....................................................................................... 58
Container Terminal Altenwerder (CTA) .................................................................................. 58
Container Terminal Burchardkai (CTB) ................................................................................... 59
Tollertort Container Terminal (TCT) ......................................................................................... 59
HHLA Frucht- und Kühl-Zentrum (multipurpose fruit handling facility) .................................. 59
Unikai (multipurpose and Ro/Ro facility) .................................................................................. 59
Projects Hamburg...................................................................................................................... 60
Central Terminal Steinwerder (CTS) ....................................................................................... 60
Container Terminal Moorburg (TCM) ....................................................................................... 61

NETHERLANDS .......................................................................................................................... 62
Amsterdam ................................................................................................................................. 63
Amsterdam Container Terminals (ACT) .................................................................................... 63
Amsterdam Marine Terminals (AMT) ....................................................................................... 63
Flushing (Vlissingen) ................................................................................................................. 65
Scaldia Container Terminal (SCT) ............................................................................................ 65
Projects Flushing......................................................................................................................... 65
Verbrugge Container Terminals (VCT) ..................................................................................... 65
Westerscheldt Container Terminal (WCT) ................................................................................. 66
Rotterdam ................................................................................................................................. 67
APM Terminal Rotterdam (dedicated to Maersk Line and service partners) .......................... 67
ECT Delta Terminal .................................................................................................................... 67
ECT City Terminal ..................................................................................................................... 67
Euromax Terminal (dedicated to the Green Alliance and service partners) ........................... 68
Interforest Terminal Rotterdam ................................................................................................. 68
Rotterdam Container Terminal ................................................................................................. 68
Rotterdam Shortsea Terminal ................................................................................................. 68
Uniport Multipurpose Terminals ............................................................................................. 68
Waalhaven Terminal .................................................................................................................. 69
Rotterdam Projects ................................................................................................................... 69
APM Terminal Rotterdam II ..................................................................................................... 69
Rotterdam World Gateway ........................................................................................................ 70
Euromax Terminal II ................................................................................................................ 70
Maasvlakte II - Phase II ............................................................................................................ 70
Terneuzen ................................................................................................................................. 71
Terneuzen Container Terminal ................................................................................................. 71

SOUTH WEST EUROPE ............................................................................................................. 72
PORTUGAL .................................................................................................................................. 72
Sines ............................................................................................................................................ 72
Sines Container Terminal XXI .................................................................................................... 72

CONTAINER SHIPPING SERVICES .......................................................................................... 74
EUROPE - FAR EAST .................................................................................................................. 74
Ports of call analysis ................................................................................................................... 74
Slow Steaming ............................................................................................................................ 75
Details of the 29 individual services ......................................................................................... 75
TRANSATLANTIC ........................................................................................................................ 82
Ports of call analysis ................................................................................................................... 82
Slow steaming ............................................................................................................................. 83
Details of the 16 individual services ......................................................................................... 83
FULL CONTAINER VOLUMES - MAIN TRADES TO/FROM EUROPE ............................................. 87
TRANSshipment AND INLAND MODAL SPLIT ......................................................................... 89
In September 2008, the collapse of Lehman Bros turned financial turmoil into a worldwide economic crisis culminating in a global downturn of the container trades of proportions not seen before.

As a consequence, container terminal capacity, which had become very tight in various regions, quickly turned into overcapacity across the world, and not the least in North West Europe. Terminal expansion plans became subject to demand and new projects were delayed or postponed, if not cancelled altogether. Valuations of port companies tumbled from their unimaginable heights of just a few years ago.

Earlier than expected, recovery started around one year later. From the end of December 2009 onwards, volume growth seemed to accelerate every week. It did not stop, as it was initially assumed, after the mid-February Lunar New Year holidays. This had to be more than re-stocking, something the liner industry had initially not even dared to dream. This was all the more so as, along the road, freight rates had gone up substantially and services cancelled a year or so ago became re-launched.

Capacity in lay-up decreased substantially during the first half of 2010:
- Early January 2010: 580 ships - 1,500,000 TEU - 11.6% of the (then) existing fleet
- June publication of this report: 235 ships - 480,000 TEU - 3.5% of the (increased) existing fleet

In the same period, through the delivery of nearly 70 newbuildings averaging 7,300 TEU, the total capacity of the existing fleet increased by nearly 4%. In part, those and others have been “consumed” by the new fashion of slow steaming.

Despite all this renewed activity, rates have kept relatively firm. Altogether, and although there rightfully remains some doubt about the sustainability of this recovery, optimism has definitely returned to the container liner industry.

Obviously, this all impacts the container terminal industry. By definition, ships are built faster than the ports and terminals that have to handle them. This also goes for the Ultra Large Container Ships of over 10,000 TEU, which have proven to be the most economical for the carriers to operate. None were placed in extended lay-up. Currently 48 of those ranging between 10,000 TEU and 15,000 TEU are operating on routes to/from the Far East - the next 3 years they will be accompanied by another 175 units of 12,800 TEU average. The present average capacity of all box vessels sailing between Europe and the Far East is 8,300 TEU.

Dynamar’s latest publication CONTAINER THROUGHPUT & TERMINAL CAPACITY in Europe is all about the volume of container trade in North West Europe and the current status of actual and planned container terminal capacity there.

The report provides historic throughput (from 2000 onwards) in all North West European ports (in 4 main regions) that are the subject of calls by container services with the Far East and North America, as well as a forecast up to 2020, all per port and per region.

This is compared with the current container terminal capacity in the same ports and regions, and all planned expansion projects in the same ports (and potential alternative outlets).
In this way, indicative answers are formulated to questions, such as:
- How are container volumes forecast to grow over the next 10 years?
- How is box handling supply expected to develop in the same period?
- Where might space run tight; where will it remain ample?

Features of this publication include:
- Identical, compact overviews of over 50 existing terminals in more than 20 ports
- Planned terminal expansions and some 20 new projects, similarly structured
- 2010 status and annual development until 2020 of terminal capacity
- 10-year actual TEU throughput of all ports
- 2010-2020 forecast of port handled TEU
- Overview of all Europe-Far East and Transatlantic container services
- European ports of call analyses for both trades
- Transhipment shares, inland modal split, container trade volumes, GDP developments

Any and all information for this publication has been collected, researched and processed in April-May 2010. Terminal and associated project data have in as much as possible been checked with the relevant authorities/companies. Information on container shipping services and further content stems from a variety of sources, including Dynamar’s own databases. As different sources often offer diverging information on the same topics, we have endeavoured to provide the most accurate estimates.

Our (soon to be re-launched) website [www.dynamar.com](http://www.dynamar.com) provides links to the websites of many ports, to all global terminal operators and to most of the liner operators mentioned in this report. Extensive information on the largest of the latter can be found in our annual publication *Top 25 Container Liner Operators - Trading Profiles*.

We trust that the reader will enjoy this publication, which can be considered a compact, yet comprehensive, assessment of the current status and near future of North West European container terminal supply and box trade demand.

Alkmaar, The Netherlands, June 2010

Dirk Visser
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