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Grimaldi sees ro-ro edge over shortsea boxes



ITALY'S Grimaldi is aiming to capture significant volumes of reefer perishables from box lines on the group's intra-Med routes.

The group's expanding ro-ro network allows customers to cut back transport lead times as they rejig their transportation system from containers and lift-on/lift-off operations to road trailers, the company said.

The commercial director of Grimaldi's corporate truck and trailer business, Guido Grimaldi, told Fairplay in an interview at the Fruitlogistica show in Berlin: "The number of trailer operators has increased dramatically [in the Mediterranean]. It's really a process of trailerisation," Grimaldi explained.

With road operators and freight forwarders expanding their networks across several countries, they can now dispatch trailers in one port and have them picked up by an associate in another.

This enables a cash-in on cheaper ocean rates for unaccompanied trailer shipments, with the trucks always remaining in the respective export and import countries.

Shippers of more time-sensitive perishable goods, such as fruit and vegetables, can thus use the more direct ro-ro services with their shorter transit times, Grimaldi pointed out.

Referring to Spain/Italy trade, he explained: "We cost the same or less than a container service, and we can do it in 18 hours instead of 8 days."

About 15% of all the cargo carried by Grimaldi companies is fruit and vegetables. Grimaldi predicted more gains as the group ramps up sailing frequencies and transshipment services between Western and Eastern Med ports.