

Avvisatore Marittimo
2 febbraio 2014

Fruit by ferry sees double-digit growth in 2013

Fruits make up as much as one third of the cargo on the Grimaldi Group's ferry lines

The Grimaldi Group will take part in Fruit Logistics, the important trade fair that will take place in Berlin from February 5th to 7th.

We're having a conversation with Guido Grimaldi, the Commercial Director of Corporate Trucks and Trailers for Grimaldi, Minoan and Finlines, covering many issues in the shipping sector with particular reference to the 'motorways of the sea'.

What are your expectations for the Berlin Fair?

"The Grimaldi Group cannot miss a significant event for its business like Fruit Logistics, in which it has been participating for 5 years. Logistics in the fruit market represents an important segment of our activity, and that's why the group is participating in the event, both to make its interest in the market clear and to consolidate and enhance its relationships with operators in the sector".

What percentage of the cargo that your ships carry is fruit and vegetable products?

"It's very significant, but it varies depending on the line, reaching very high percentages in the North African markets from Morocco (32%) and Tunisia (19%). The Civitavecchia-Barcelona line (21%) is another very important axis of trade in fruits and vegetables. Which lines are the most heavily used, and what kind of products travel on the various lines?"

"Our most popular Short Sea lines to and from Spain are Civitavecchia-Barcelona and Livorno-

Valencia. Recently the group has decided to strengthen some of its lines starting this January with the addition of a Ropax ship that can carry up to 500 passengers and drivers to the Livorno-Savona-Barcelona route. The Livorno-Valencia line will add a fourth departure at each port. Large volumes of cargo are also travelling the Genoa-Palermo line and on the route from Brindisi to Patras and Igoumenitsa, in Greece, which was recently supplemented by the new Ravenna-Igoumenitsa-Paris line.

The new line will receive cargo traffic to and from Northern Italy. Another piece of news is that our Salerno-Catania service has now been running on a daily basis since October. The group's other most important routes are in the Baltic, like Lübeck-St. Petersburg, Travemünde-Malmö (38 departures/week), Travemünde-Helsinki (13 weekly voyages), and Kapellskär-Naantali (38 voyages/week), Helsinki-Gdynia (4 weekly departures), and Rostock-Helsinki (7 weekly departures). For example, did you know that in the German port of Travemünde alone, our ships carry 15% of the fruits and vegetables that go directly to Northern European markets? Or that nut, date, fig and raisin shipments from Tunisia to Campania and Sicily are thriving, as are shipments of olives and olive oil sent directly to super-

markets in Campania and other regions of Italy? On the lines that serve Spain, we mainly carry olive oil, and wine in smaller quantities. We carry a greater variety of products to and from Greece and Sou-



Guido Grimaldi, Grimaldi Group Truck and Trailer Commercial Manager

thern Italy, where we ship many different food items. Have you seen growth in your business over the last few years, and if so, how much?

"The group has grown constantly in the last few years, and in 2013 the Short Sea lines alone exper-

ced double-digit growth, which shows that the Motorways of the Sea are perceived as a truly valid alternative to ground transportation".

How much of your commercial strategy is based on the Motorways of the Sea, and which

are the countries and regions that are most adept to this strategy? "I would describe our modus operandi as a strategy that pays close attention to the market and is tailor-made for the requirements of the market. The regions that have shown they know how to benefit

from the Motorways of the Sea are most definitely the Adriatic, the Mediterranean and the Baltic". Do you believe that the EcoBonus is an effective tool? Which incentives do you think could be used to promote transport by sea, without distorting the competition?

"The EcoBonus was and would still be a very effective tool for incentivising transport by sea. The Group very much believed in the EcoBonus and its re-establishment would be very desirable for us. The EcoBonus proved that it was a "best practice", it had the approval of the E.U. and would be an excellent form of assistance to transportation companies rather than for ship owners".

What do you think about the promotion of clean fuel in maritime shipping and about equipping ports with LNG infrastructure?

"The Grimaldi group is always concerned with environmental issues, and for that reason we created an Energy Saving Department which is responsible for studying new technologies for the reduction of energy consumption. Starting in 2015, environmental regulations will become even stricter, and the use of LNG may become a valid alternative to heavy fuel oil; however, there is still a lot of uncertainty about the costs, and equipping ports with the required logistical infrastructure would mean building very expensive installations. As of now, we don't know whether the cost of LNG will be greater than the cost of fuel oil, nor do we know whether our ports will be outfitted to handle LNG".