

101st short sea service inaugurated in January

Improving the network

The Naples-based Grimaldi Group is seeking new hubs for its short sea network. Making links available 7/24/365 is the corporation's daily bread. The line started connecting Sardinia with Livorno at the beginning of the year, and simultaneously reactivated services to Barcelona and Civitavecchia. Its motorways of the seas are continuing to grow.

Short sea solutions have been on the rise again in the Mediterranean region over the past few years. «The volumes on some trades in the triangle between Spain, Greece and Italy doubled last year,» Dr Eugenio Grimaldi, line manager of the logistics group's short sea lines, reported. The political situation in Africa and the Middle East has contributed to this outcome, he added. Growing tourism also results in corresponding freight volumes, so that these routes have developed very satisfactorily.

New links to Sardinia

This is only one of the reasons why Grimaldi positioned itself strategically at the Fruit Logistica 2016 trade fair in Berlin recently. Since mid-January the group's network – an integral component of the Mediterranean's motorways of the

seas – has included links to and from the island of Sardinia all year round.

Thus the *Zeus Palace* now sails between Livorno and Olbia, in northeastern Sardinia, every day. The passenger and cargo ferry has 2,000 lane metres available for trailers, and can also take 1,500 passengers and 100 accompanying vehicles on board. The transfer takes eight hours. «This is the 101st service we've launched in the short sea segment,» counts a proud Grimaldi.

Eye on the market

At the same time the Civitavecchia-Porto Torres as well as the Porto Torres-Barcelona links, which were only offered in winter so far, have been converted into year-round options. There are daily sailings in summer and two a week in winter. The Sardinia-Spain connection has been running since 2009.

Grimaldi believes that «this market has an enormous potential,» for no less than 3.5 million tourists visit Sardinia every year. Over and above this the export of fruit and vegetables as well as cork to mainland Italy and to Spain also



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Eugenio Grimaldi

In conversation with Eugenio Grimaldi at Fruit Logistica.

represents good business. On top of this the island also hosts many regattas in summer, which means that there is substantial breakbulk demand too. «Our next step will see us setting up a hub of our own in Sardinia,» Grimaldi said.

Many an advantage

Short sea options with ferries offer road haulage companies many advantages, especially for trailer services. On the one hand laborious overland transport, perhaps even involving toll routes, can be avoided. And on the other unnecessary CO₂ emissions can also be cut. «The option also allows drivers to be deployed in out or inbound transport tasks closer to home,» Grimaldi elaborates. «We call the whole process trailerisation. It's a strong trend.»

The corporation is currently also developing further solutions to other new destinations, in collaboration with road haulage enterprises active in this segment. Thus the line's short sea link to the port of Igoumenitsa is a time-efficient option for exporters sending goods to Iran. Prepared consignments can be trucked to Teheran in a mere 48 hours from the Greek gateway.

Christian Doepgen

Grimaldi Group

- Grimaldi Lines was founded in 1947 by five brothers from the Grimaldi family. Besides the corporate headquarters in Naples, the multinational logistics group, which specialises in maritime transport, is present in 25 countries.
- The Grimaldi Group is made up of seven shipping lines. These include Atlantic Container Line (ACL), Malta Motorways of the Seas (MMS), Minoan Lines and Finlines.
- The company currently has 110 vessels in its fleet, with 14 more due to be delivered soon. It employs a staff of more than 15,000, working both at sea and on land.
- The firm's annual results for 2015 saw sales increase by approximately EUR 150 million and its net profits reach an all-time high of approximately EUR 270 million.



Photo: Grimaldi, E.