



New member: Eastern Ligurian Sea Port Authority joins the International Port Community Systems Association

The International Port Community Systems Association (IPCSA) has expanded its membership once again by welcoming the Eastern Ligurian Sea Port Authority as its newest member.



The Port Authority is responsible for the ports of La Spezia, which handled 13 million tonnes of cargo in 2021, and the neighbouring port of Marina di Carrara, where cargo volumes grew by more than 31% to 3.46 million tonnes last year.

La Spezia recorded a 17.2% increase in container traffic in 2021. This included a 19% increase in “gateway” traffic, with strong growth in volumes moved to and from the port by rail. In total, La Spezia’s container throughput was 1.37 million TEU last year.

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The Eastern Ligurian Sea Port Authority developed, implemented and operates the APNet Port Community System (PCS), which is used in the port's two container terminals. APNet enables data exchange between all operators in the port community, including public authorities and private operators, and provides a common interface with Italy's national data exchange platforms.



APNet went online in 2015 and has been steadily developed since then, said Federica Montaresi, head of special projects, innovation and institutional relations at the Port Authority.

“APNet provides a range of modules dedicated to the needs of customers in the port and logistics sector,” she said. “This includes the import/export of goods, speeding up data exchange between the members of the port community, and simplifying cargo-related operations, which in turn reduces time and costs.”

The platform also incorporates a module for interoperability with the maritime agency and authorities, including PMIS.

La Spezia is also equipped with the CMP (Corridor Management Platform) developed within the European Union project “WiderMoS”. This has made it possible to manage the information flow throughout the supply chain, at national and international level, between the port and inland terminal, including multimodal transport operators and railway companies, involving all operators and interfacing with Customs. The platform is also interoperable with the PIC system, the IT platform of the Italian railways company RFI, for tracking trains along the national network.

APNet is also used by operators at Marina di Carrara; as this is a smaller port, not all the functionalities are involved but the platform is expected to expand here too.

“We want to improve cooperation within both ports and between ports,” said Federica Montaresi. “The PCS is owned by the Port Authority, so we are keen to invest in new modules and improve some functionalities in order to make integration between the two ports more effective.”

For example, the Port Authority is developing a module dedicated to trucks; this will facilitate access to the port and give drivers information in advance so that they can plan their journey to the port to avoid congestion and/or queuing outside the port gates. Work is also under way to introduce a vehicle booking system (VBS) in cooperation with representatives of the haulage industry and the terminal operators. “It is important that we work with the stakeholders to ensure

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the PCS provides the information they need to organise access to the port in the best way,” she said. There are also plans to upgrade the rail-related aspects of the PCS.

The Port Authority is also looking at ways to use data gathered through the PCS to develop KPIs and improve efficiency at the port.

“We are very keen to share knowledge and experience and our membership of IPCSA will be an important part of this,” said Federica Montaresi. “Joining IPCSA will enable us to share best practice information, learn about other solutions that could be used in our ports and improve our knowledge about Port Community Systems at international level.

“We have a strong belief in cooperation at all levels, having gained much experience through our involvement in various European projects and as a member of the Digital Transport and Logistics Forum (DTLF).”

Overall, she noted, the biggest challenge is to combine digitalisation and sustainability. “We believe that the PCS can help the Port Authority to manage information in order to enable a more efficient and more sustainable logistics chain; for example, the truck drivers’ module will reduce congestion and also save CO2 because drivers will no longer be waiting outside the port or driving around the local roads while they wait.”



Richard Morton, secretary general of IPCSA, said: “We are delighted to welcome the Eastern Ligurian Sea Port Authority as a member of IPCSA. We are proud of the positive and open relationships between our members, who benefit from sharing their experience and expertise across Port Community Systems and Single Windows. We look forward to learning more about the Port Community System developments in La Spezia and Marina di Carrara.”

He added: “IPCSA’s membership goes from strength to strength, with nearly 50 members drawn from all regions of the world. We were proud to celebrate our tenth anniversary last year and look back on ten years of rapid growth since our launch in June 2011. IPCSA has built a global reputation and influence as an expert authority and adviser on the electronic exchange of information and digitalisation to smooth the flow of cargo and documentation and is also a recognised NGO with consultative status at UNECOSOC.”

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About IPCSA

IPCSA is an international association of Sea and Air Port Community System operators, sea and air port authorities and Single Window operators that is recognised across the globe for providing advice and guidance on the electronic exchange of information across borders and throughout the whole supply chain.

The association has members from across the globe who handle the exchange of information for Business to Business, Government to Business and Government to Government processes and facilitate the smooth cross-border movement of goods. This equates to the electronic exchange of information relating to more than 500 million TEU movements and 10 billion tonnes of cargo for air, sea and land transport – estimated to be in excess of 50 billion exchanges every year.

IPCSA focuses on supporting and facilitating systems and innovations for Port Community System members and users, and promoting the use of international data standards in sea and air ports, at border crossings and via Single Window systems around the world. IPCSA is a recognised NGO with consultative status at UNECOSOC and IMO.

The PROTECT Group develops and supports the electronic reporting required by authorities for vessels entering or leaving a port or port area. It maintains and develops EDI through the PROTECT Guide. PROTECT is now fully integrated into IPCSA.

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About Eastern Ligurian Sea Port Authority

The Eastern Ligurian Sea Port Authority (AdSPMLOr) manages the port activities and the maritime property area inside the Gulf of La Spezia and the port of Marina di Carrara, across the Liguria and Tuscany regions. The Port of La Spezia is one of the most important container ports in the Mediterranean and is a core port in the SCANMED and MED Corridors. It is the second largest Italian container port for direct access to the production and consumption markets in northern Italy, with weekly maritime connections to all the continents in the world, and a total of 8,500 train services in 2021. The Port of Marina di Carrara is a comprehensive port, specialising in dry bulk and project cargo.

The Port Authority of the Eastern Ligurian Sea is very active in projects related to transport, logistics, innovation and the environmental sector and has been involved in several European projects co-funded by Interreg Italy-France Maritime, Central Europe, TEN-T, CEF, Horizon Europe and H2020.

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