

02 Sep 2019 Livorno dredging helps port cope with bigger ships



The port of Livorno (aka Leghorn) has recently carried out dredging to improve vessel access to its container terminals. Livorno's aim was to facilitate calls from 10,000 teu class container vessels with a draft of up to 12.00 m compared to just 10.75 m in the past.

It is believed that funding for the dredging works was primarily supplied by Gruppo Investimenti Portuali (GIP) which controls the Terminal Darsena Toscana (TDT), Livorno's largest container pier. GIP itself is jointly owned by the investment funds Infravia and Infracapital and, in addition to TDT, its group portfolio includes SECH in Genoa and shares in PSA Gevoa Pra and the Venice-Marghera terminal Vecon.

While Livorno does not feature on full container Asia - Med services, the increasing size of container ships on second-tier routes, such as the Transatlantic trade where the port has many calls, has prompted GIP to fund the works. An example for this is the CMA CGM and Marfret operated Med - Caribbean - US Gulf service 'MedCar' ([see details](#)), which now operates ships of up to 7,000 teu. Vessel size in Hapag-Lloyd's Mediterranean Gulf Express (MGX - [see details](#)) has also crept up over the years, from 4,000 teu in 2017 to a mixed fleet of 6,000 and 8,000 teu vessels today.

For the time being, dredging works at Livorno have now reached the feasible limit, since underwater pipelines and cables in the entrance to the inner port do not easily permit a further deepening - at least in the near term.

In the long run, the port of Livorno plans to stay competitive and possible even attract ultra-large services by

developing a new container terminal in its outer port. The project, known as 'Darsena Europa', was first tendered in 2016 (see [related news](#)) but its bidding deadline was pushed back repeatedly. Nevertheless, it is on the list of the 'strategical' projects at Government level and 'Darsena Europa' does enjoy strong support by Toscana Region. Following last year's Italian general election, the subsequent political stalemate and the eventual formation of a government coalition, the planned port expansion is finally expected to be accelerated by the new administration.

So far, GIP was considered the front runner for the new terminal, as confirmed by its non-binding Expression of Interest, dated November 2018. Late in 2017 however, the ocean carrier MSC also expressed a general interest in the project (see [related news](#)), but it has not made any formal offer. Overall, it remains to be seen if the planned new terminal comes on stream in the mid-2020ies or not.

(Source: Correspondent / Alphaliner)