

Lack of newbuildings costs OCEAN Alliance's Asia-Europe frequency

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Since the members of OCEAN Alliance (CMA CGM, COSCO Shipping Lines and Evergreen Marine Corporation) did not have many newbuildings join their fleets, nor reassign vessels from other loops, they struggled to operate their usual Asia-North Europe and Asia-Mediterranean schedules amid the Red Sea crisis.

Alphaliner's report showed that while mainline operators should offer 8.5 departures per loop in a week, OCEAN managed just 6.3 weekly loops.

While the COSCO-operated Asia – North Europe LL1 / AEU1 service offered eight sailings and one of these was performed by the 24,188 TEU OOCL Valencia on its maiden voyage, another COSCO-operated loop, the AEU7,

however only had four departures from Shanghai, despite adding the comparatively small 9,469 TEU Beijing to the fleet.

As the mixed COSCO / Evergreen Asia – Mediterranean AEM1 / MD2 loop only had one sailing in January, the 19,273 TEU megamax COSCO Shipping Aries was shifted from a North European loop to this Mediterranean service for the first sailing in February.

There were also missed sailings for the Asia – East Mediterranean BEX loop, which needs four additional ships to continue on a weekly basis. Due to a lack of vessels, only one February sailing could be offered with the relatively small 5,668 TEU Xin Xiamen. CMA CGM was able to compensate this partly for its clients with ad hoc sailings for its own account of the 5,782 TEU CMA CGM Mozart and the freshly-delivered 6,014 TEU CMA CGM Khao Sok which will sail to the Adriatic region.

In contrast, THE Alliance (Hapag-Lloyd, Yang Ming Marine Transport, HMM and ONE) could react quicker to the Red Sea crisis since it had already suspended the South East Asia – North Europe FE5 loop and the Asia – US East Coast EC4 service at the end of November 2023, thus gradually freeing up no fewer than 22 neo-panamax vessels.

THE Alliance managed to offer seven weekly departures for their three loops between Central China and North Europe since Hapag Lloyd received the 23,664 TEU newbuilding Busan Express and ONE shifted the 14,952 TEU chartered sisters Zenith Lumos and Zeus Lumos from the Asia – Mediterranean trade to the FE3 and FE4 loops.

Mediterranean Shipping Company, the most aggressive operator in expanding its fleet, was able to benefit the 2M alliance's sailing frequency on the Asia-North Europe and Asia-Mediterranean lanes.

Maersk and MSC managed to increase the fleet of the Asia – North Europe – Scandinavia AE5 / Albatross' service to 16 units, which enabled them to offer nine sailings on that service through January and February. The addition of the 19,437 TEU MSC Ditte and the 17,816 TEU Ebba Maersk to the fleet of the Asia – North Europe – Baltic AE10 / Silk allowed 2M to offer nine departures for that loop as well.

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