



China Merchants in boxship and roro spinoff move with Antong Holdings

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Sinotrans

A major reshuffling of China's top shipping brands is underway, with China Merchants moving to sell its container and roro businesses in order to focus on dry bulk, gas and tanker segments.

China Merchants Energy Shipping (CMES) has revealed plans to spin off Sinotrans Container Lines and China Merchants RoRo Transportation (Guangzhou RoRo) in a deal with compatriot Antong Holdings.

The Shanghai-listed diversified shipping arm of China Merchants Group said in a filing that the agreement, which has yet to be signed and approved, would see Antong, the parent of Quanzhou Ansheng Shipping, become the controlling shareholder of both Sinotrans Container Lines (Sinolines) and Guangzhou RoRo.

Antong went into administration in late 2019 and was restructured a year later in a deal with Fujian Zhaohang Logistics Management, a joint venture between China Merchants Port Holdings and AVIC Trust.

CMES took over Sinolines in 2021 and holds a controlling stake in the Guangzhou RoRo joint venture, set up in 2019, in which fellow carmaker Guangzhou Automobile has a 30% stake. The roro unit, which would mark Antong's entry into the car carrier segment, is currently listed on VesselsValue with nine ships and two delivering in 2026. Meanwhile, Sinolines stands 34th on the liner rankings with a fleet of around 30 ships, which would add to Antong's 83 feeder vessels, of which nearly half are owned.

CMES has been renewing its fleet in several segments and currently has a large shipbuilding programme, either independently or in partnership with CMB Financial Leasing, that includes bulkers, some of the largest LNG carriers, and the world's first methanol dual-fuel VLCC. Six car carriers are also lined up to enter service in the coming years, four of which were ordered late last year.

Earlier this month, *Splash* reported the group's Ming Wah Shipping forked out nearly \$1.4bn for up to 18 newcastlemax bulk carriers spread across New Times Shipbuilding and CSSC Qingdao Beihai Shipbuilding.