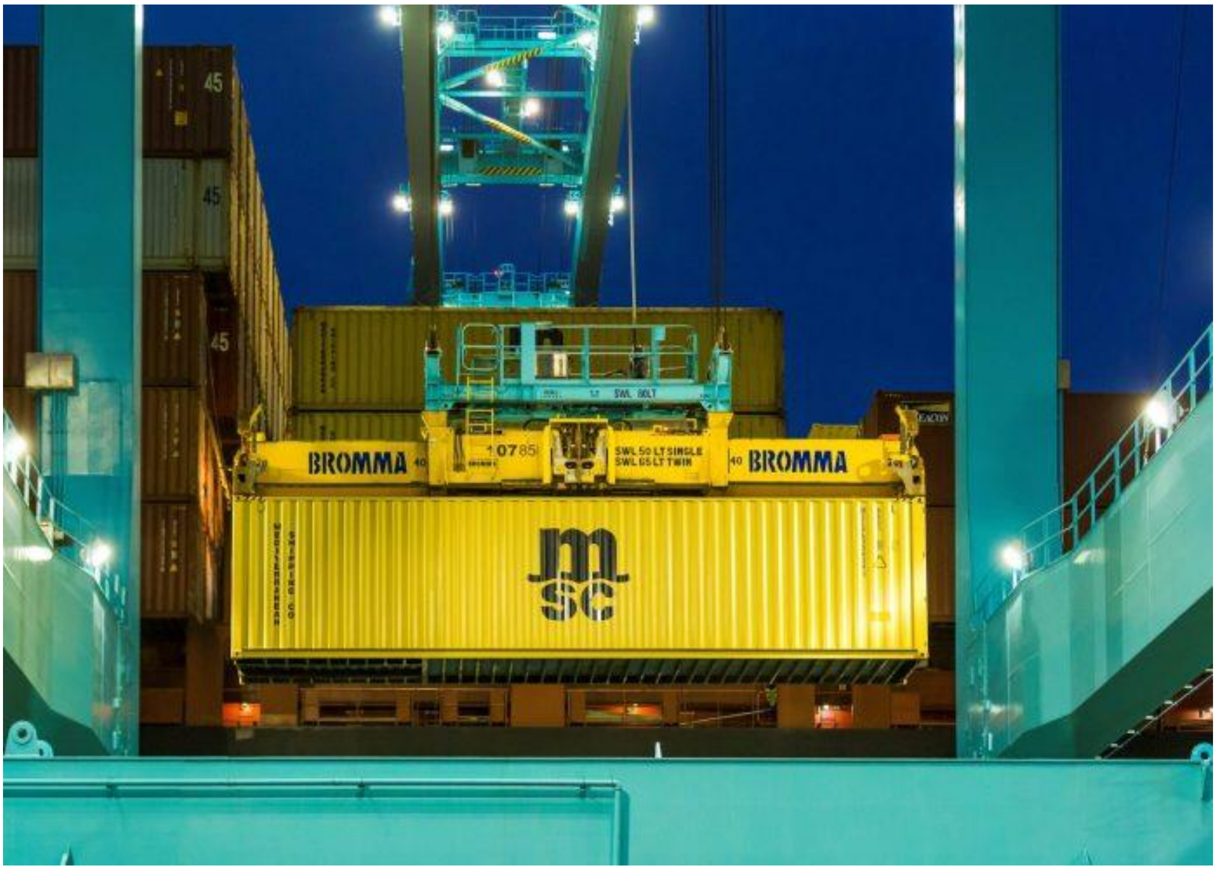
CONTAINER NEWS

MSC, Hapag-Lloyd introduce more solo services ahead of alliance changes

August 14, 2024



MSC and Hapag-Lloyd have begun building up their capacity as both carriers prepare to leave their respective current alliances, according to Alphaliner's report.

MSC, which will split from its 2M partner Maersk, has been launching standalone loops on the Asia - North America and Far East - Europe routes.

After launching two additional standalone services in July, MSC's non-2M fleet capacity on the big Asia - North America and Far East – Europe routes now stands at 733,000 TEUs, which represents 33.2% of its total capacity on the trades.

On Asia - Europe, MSC is now the operator of four loops to North Europe (the 2M 'Lion', 2M 'Griffin', 'Sentosa-Swan' and 'Britannia') and three to the Mediterranean (the 2M 'Jade', 2M 'Tiger' and the standalone 'Dragon').

MSC's capacity in standalone loops is to further increase in the next weeks. Its new China - Korea – Long Beach 'Mustang' service only kicked off on 20 July, which means that its fleet is not fully staffed yet. MSC also launched a Far East - US East Coast 'Liberty' loop on 8 August.

The Swiss-Italian operator's standalone capacity on the Asia-Europe and Transpacific lanes is set to grow to 921,000 TEUs once all the ships are in place, upping its non-alliance share on these routes to 38.4%.

Currently, MSC's capacity on the two lanes stands at 2.4 million TEUs, compared with 2.6 million TEUs that Maersk and Hapag-Lloyd, which will form Gemini Cooperation in February 2025, will have.

Hapag-Lloyd has also started to increase market share outside THE Alliance, which it will depart to form Gemini. Its 15.4% non-alliance capacity is related to the start of a standalone Far East - North Europe 'China Germany Express' ('CGX') in June 2024. The German carrier currently also provides five 15,440 TEU ships for the AA7 Asia - US East Coast loop which is jointly operated with Wan Hai.

Hapag-Lloyd (15.4%) and HMM (28.3%) are the only other alliance members to operate a substantial part of their East West vessel capacity outside THE Alliance of which they are currently both members, but this is expected to change as soon as the 2M partnership is terminated and Hapag-Lloyd enters the Gemini Cooperation with Maersk.

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