

Hamburg box volumes stable as fleet profile shifts

Port of Hamburg Marketing



Fewer large container vessels called Hamburg in the first half of 2024, but volumes remained stable as small and medium ship numbers rose.

[Gary Howard](#) | Aug 20, 2024

The Port of Hamburg handled 3.8m teu in the first half of 2024, falling by 0.3% compared to the same period last year. The port said the result reflected stable trends in transshipment and continental traffic, but there were changes in the fleet profile.

The number of ships with container capacity calling at Hamburg rose by almost 1% in the period, driven by medium-sized and smaller vessels. Calls by vessels with larger container capacities were lower across all size classes over 10,000 teu.

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“This trend reflects the impact of the ongoing crisis in the Red Sea, where disruptions caused by Houthi rebels have led shipping companies to choose the longer route around the Cape of Good Hope. This detour extends sailing times to and from Asia by up to 15 days and has prompted adjustments in liner services. On the positive side, additional liner services are now calling at Hamburg,” the port said in a statement.

Loaded container volumes rose 0.5% in the first six months and general cargo volumes rose by 4.3% to 585,000 tonnes.

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Total seaborne cargo throughput was down by 3.9% compared to last year, led by a decline in coal volumes.

"We can see the trend towards decarbonisation in the bulk cargo figures, reflecting a shift away from fossil fuels towards alternative energy sources. This is particularly noticeable in the 11.8% drop in coal handling over the past six months," explained Axel Mattern, CEO of Port of Hamburg Marketing.

The drop in coal volumes also brought bulk cargo throughput into the red, decreasing by 12.1% to 16.7m tonnes.

Looking at its main trading partners, Hamburg noted a 14.7% increase in trade with Malaysia 88,000 teu, and a 9.0% increase in trade with the US to 341,000 teu. China retained the top spot despite a 2.2% decline to 1.1m teu.

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