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MSC set to more than double its share of slot-sharing agreements

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September 16, 2024



MSC

Global liners last week announced en masse their schedules on the main east-west trades come February next year when old agreements expire and new groupings emerge.

Among the key takeaways was how Mediterranean Shipping Co (MSC), the world's largest containerline, will not, as originally envisaged, be going it entirely alone.

Over the past years as MSC readied for the end of its 2M partnership with Maersk, the Soren Toft-led line has embarked on the largest fleet expansion in the history of container shipping, surpassing 5m teu last year, 6m teu in July, and firmly on track to hit 7m slots by early 2026.

This growth came with a strategy to pursue a global liner network without the need for partners. However, in the flurry of announcements made last week as the world's top lines revealed their networks for 2025, it has emerged that MSC has reached out to a number of its peers on the main tradelanes.

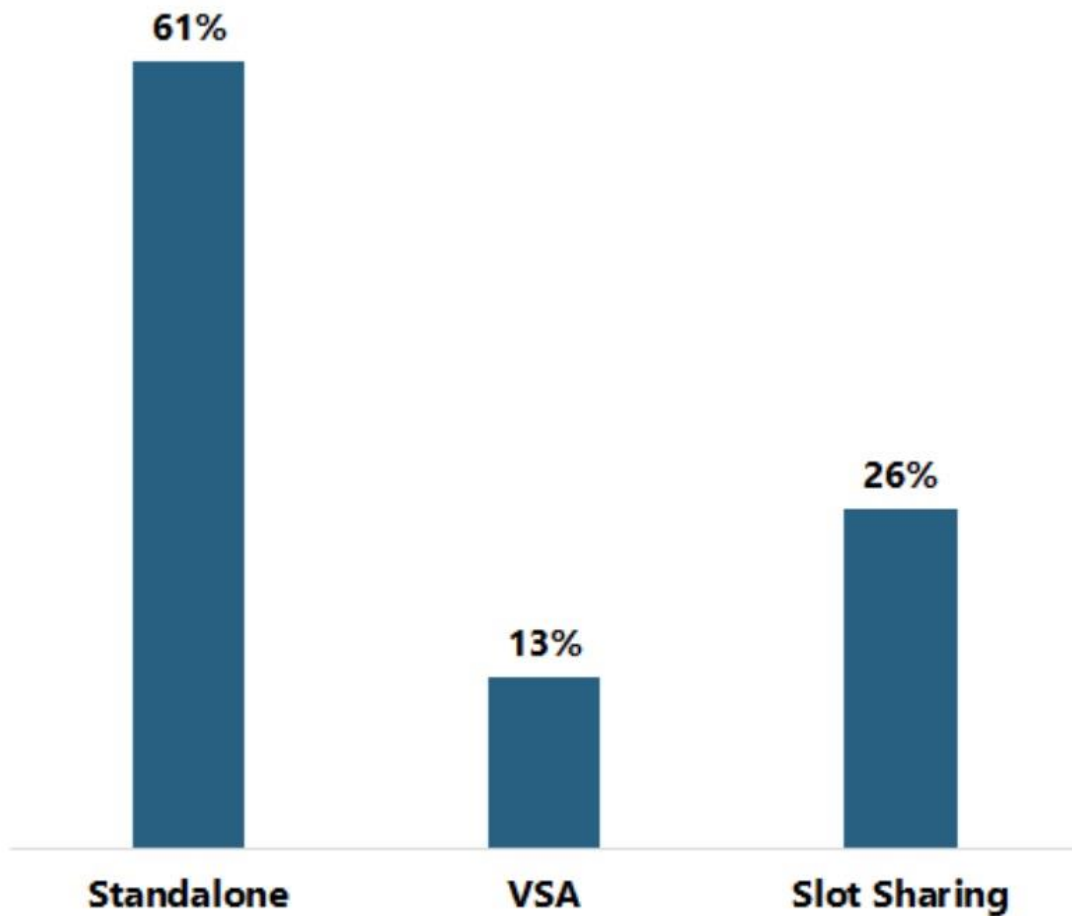
MSC has fixed a three-year agreement with Israeli carrier ZIM which analysts at Sea-Intelligence, a Danish consultancy, understand is a slot-sharing agreement for voyages between Asia and the US east coast, while the new Premier Alliance, made up of Asian carriers Ocean Network Express (ONE), HMM, and Yang Ming, will charter slots from MSC on a number of services from Asia to Europe.

Analysis from Sea-Intelligence shows that MSC's standalone services on its global deepsea network will increase from 48% to 61% come February next year, with 13% attributed to vessel-sharing agreements, the same as today, while the number of slot-sharing agreements will jump from 10% to 26%.

"This shows that even though MSC is expanding their standalone network for 2025, they will also more than double their share of slot-sharing agreements," Sea-Intelligence stated in its latest weekly report.

Among other key changes due February 1, Germany's Hapag-Lloyd and Maersk will start operating their new group called Gemini Cooperation while existing liner group Ocean Alliance, made up of CMA CGM, COSCO, Evergreen and OOCL, has agreed to continue its vessel-sharing agreement until the end of March 2032.

Operational Nature of MSC's 2025 Deep-Sea Network



Source: Sea-Intelligence