

Containers best performer at the Port of Rotterdam in first three quarters

Europe's largest port reports mixed results for the first nine months of the year with growth for containers but declines for liquid and dry bulk.

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Credit: Port of Rotterdam

Overall cargo throughput at the [Port of Rotterdam](#) was down slightly in the first nine months of 2024 at 328.6 million tonnes a decline 0.4%.

The best performing sector for the port was container which registered 2.2% growth in the month period to 30 September at 10.4 million teu. The port credited the increase to primarily increased consumer spending in Europe.

Diversions via the Cape of Good Hope to avoid Houthi attacks resulted in an early peak season as shippers looked to avoid disruption later in the year. However, in September Rotterdam noted some services were diverted to other ports resulting in a reduction in volumes. Limited vessel capacity has meant a slightly lower number of port calls but very full ships putting pressure on the port and hinterland at periods of peak load, which they continue to face.

Boudewijn Siemons, CEO of Port of Rotterdam Authority: "Global trade saw a tentative recovery in recent months. Consumer confidence has increased and this translated to a growth in container throughput."

The picture was not so bright for other sectors. Dry bulk throughput declined 0.9% in the first nine months of the year to 52.2 million tonnes compared to 2023. Lower dry bulk throughput was driven by a drop in demand for coal which fell 26.6% to 13.3 million tonnes.

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The throughput for liquid bulk fell by 1.7% in the first nine months of the year to 151.5 million tonnes. The port said this was due to a reduced throughput of crude oil, LNG and other liquid bulk.

“The drop in the throughput in other segments sadly shows that European industry is still wrestling with a weak competitive position due to high energy costs. These developments come as no surprise,” Siemons said.

Looking ahead he said: “We continue to deal with major challenges on the geopolitical stage and in the global supply chains. We therefore don’t expect to see any major shifts in commodity flows in the remaining months of this year.”