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SHORT SEA SHIPPING ON THE BLACK SEA

The Black Sea region includes the ports of Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine, Russia, Moldova and Georgia excluding the ports on the Bosphorus. Oftentimes the Black Sea region is considered an integrative part of the Mediterranean-Black Sea area in the common system of cargo delivery and passengers' transportation.

Although the rapidly growth of short sea shipping in the Black Sea in the last years, this sector has not received enough attention yet. Among the other European regions it takes the least share of cargo traffic (only 6.6%) carried by short sea shipping (1, 2).

On the one hand, the reason is that a big part of Non-EU - countries in this region (such as Ukraine, Moldova, Russia and Georgia) are not included in the short sea statistics of the European Union. On the other hand, in the most post formed Soviet Union countries (particularly in Ukraine) there are not any statistics on short sea shipping up to the fact that its definition has not been clearly defined yet.

The Black Sea is one of the most isolated seas in the world; though, it plays an important part in cargo delivery and passenger transportation from North to South, from Baltic Sea to Mediterranean and through Eastern Europe to Asian countries.

Hinterland development is vital in the region. The biggest share of the rail cargo between the Black Sea and Central Europe is unpaired and the road net is overloaded and deteriorated.

Container ports on the Black Sea are mostly feeder ports, serving their local markets as gateways, with exception of Constantza, which is also a transshipment hub for the Black Sea. The highest share of short sea shipping of goods is though expected to be with partner ports located in the same sea region as the own coastline.

In order to establish regular and frequent short sea connection on the Black Sea, first, the conditions of SSS should be analysed in order to assess the overall potential.

The short sea shipping is understood to cover maritime transport services, which do not involve an ocean crossing. It also includes maritime transport along the coasts and between the mainland coasts and islands of the European Union, covering purely national transport (cabotage) and cross border services, as well as sea-river transportation by coastal vessels to and from ports in the hinterland (2,3 p.9). The concept of short sea shipping (SSS) extends to maritime transport between the Member States of the European Union and Norway and Iceland and other States on the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. SSS also means the movement of cargo and passengers by sea between ports situated in geographical Europe or between these ports and ports situated in non-European countries having a coastline with the enclosed seas bordering Europe (as e.g. the Black Sea and Azov Sea) (2).

Besides the numerous of definitions of short sea shipping and synonymic used terms as the coasting trade, the motorways of the sea and the marine highway (2), most important for such countries as Ukraine is to distinguish the short sea shipping in order to receive equal statistics information that will be comparable with existing EU-statistics.

Short sea shipping on the Black Sea includes domestic and international maritime transport, feeder services along the coast, to and from the rivers (2). It consists on Ro-Ro, intraregional services, passenger service (ferry, cruise service and other) and transshipment-feeder operations between the Black Sea and Mediterranean region.

It is possible to differentiate between cabotage (short sea shipping inside the country and between the ports of one country such as in Ukraine), shipping between the neighbouring countries, for instance between Ukraine and Turkey, and sea-rivers shipping, for example on the Black Sea - Danube route.

For some aspect, it is also necessary to divide short sea shipping into liner and tramp shipping (1,3).

References

1 Definition on short sea shipping by the European Union, ESN, <http://www.shortsea.info/definition.html>

2 Black Sea container market review, [http://www.maritimesun.com /news/black-sea-container-market-review](http://www.maritimesun.com/news/black-sea-container-market-review)

3 Short sea shipping in europe, european conference of ministers of transport (ECMT), M. Stratos Papadimitriou.