

The development of Short Sea Shipping
in the Mediterranean basin and
the role of Italy and Southern Italy

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The new scenario
of maritime flow

As a result of the global crisis that has mainly affected Western Europe and in particular Italy, there seems to be a change in the overall picture of how goods used by Europeans flow. These changes include the choice of multimodal routes, maritime transport on the routes of the Mediterranean and their connection through ports and the ground extension that go towards the coastal and inland areas of European countries and the rest of the world.

This scenario is a profoundly Eurocentric model that focuses on north-to-north routes and especially in the origin and destination of northern European ports (Antwerp, Rotterdam, Hamburg, etc.) extends to the Mediterranean Sea that tends to take a more strategic role in choice of alternative routes to the whole way through the use of the SSS (Short Sea Shipping).

Intermediterranean flows affecting Italy and represent the centrality of Gioia Tauro



Figure 1 - Source: Elaborations of the author

Figure 1 shows the geography of transversal and longitudinal flows that may be of interest to Italy and are part of Mediterranean network that supports transport markets affecting the European, African and Asian markets. These corridors use these sea routes when designing itineraries and as part of a geography of flows that are increa-

singly oriented towards reducing the distances between origins and destinations. The productivity of these transport processes are a constant in the historical evolution of transport systems.

The potential of these sea routes are also noteworthy for the construction of routes which are connected sequences for other means of transport. Currently, these sea routes are important paths that begin from the southern Mediterranean and submit guidelines that shift the overall focus of these flows from a Eurocentric model to an Intermediterranean one.

In intercontinental travel there are more and more full container mother ships (a nut-shell with the deck at the stern or the bow) that take the route of a “pendulum” and over time become larger and larger reaching up to 18/20.000 TEU in recent orders that constitute standard loading units for general cargo, i.e. for various goods as finished products, semi-finished and intermediate products. These are common goods and have both personal and domestic usages. They are protected by packaging in the early stages of travel and are stored until delivery.

Unlike liquid and solid bulk, which during transport have specialized ships and port terminals, the products are not packed in the same way like in the ship’s hold which acts as a protective cover. The path to naval gigantism began in with supertankers during the 1960’ and was due to the temporary closure of the Suez Canal. As soon as the ships began to return to smaller dimensions which were compatible to the depths of the terminal seabeds, soon returned to smaller dimensions compatible with the depth of the seabed of the terminals. This also seems to be the case in the history of full mega container ships.

It is well known that the cargo travelling on services within markets in which there is unfair competition, sometimes by real oligopolies, and bulk travels on services which are freely competitive and whose charters are formed and are in the proper balance of the freight markets. In both sectors of the maritime transport agreements you may encounter horizontal and vertical operators for travel management and terminal operations.

Through the Suez Canal containers and bulk flows are related to the Far East and the geography of flows strongly emerges. The role of “Hub Container” of the port transshipment in Gioia Tauro, together with the large port terminals of the so-called southern range is dedicated to movement and handling of containers with its own supply chain process technology “Traslog”, which is the transport and logistics which affect the type of ship and is related to the specialized activities terminals.

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