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Current Status and Trend of China's Port Infrastructure Construction

maritime economy

2017

This paper has been published by SRM in the 4th Annual Report "Italian Maritime Economy. The Mediterranean as new key crossroads: outlooks, geomaps and Italy's role on the Silk Road"

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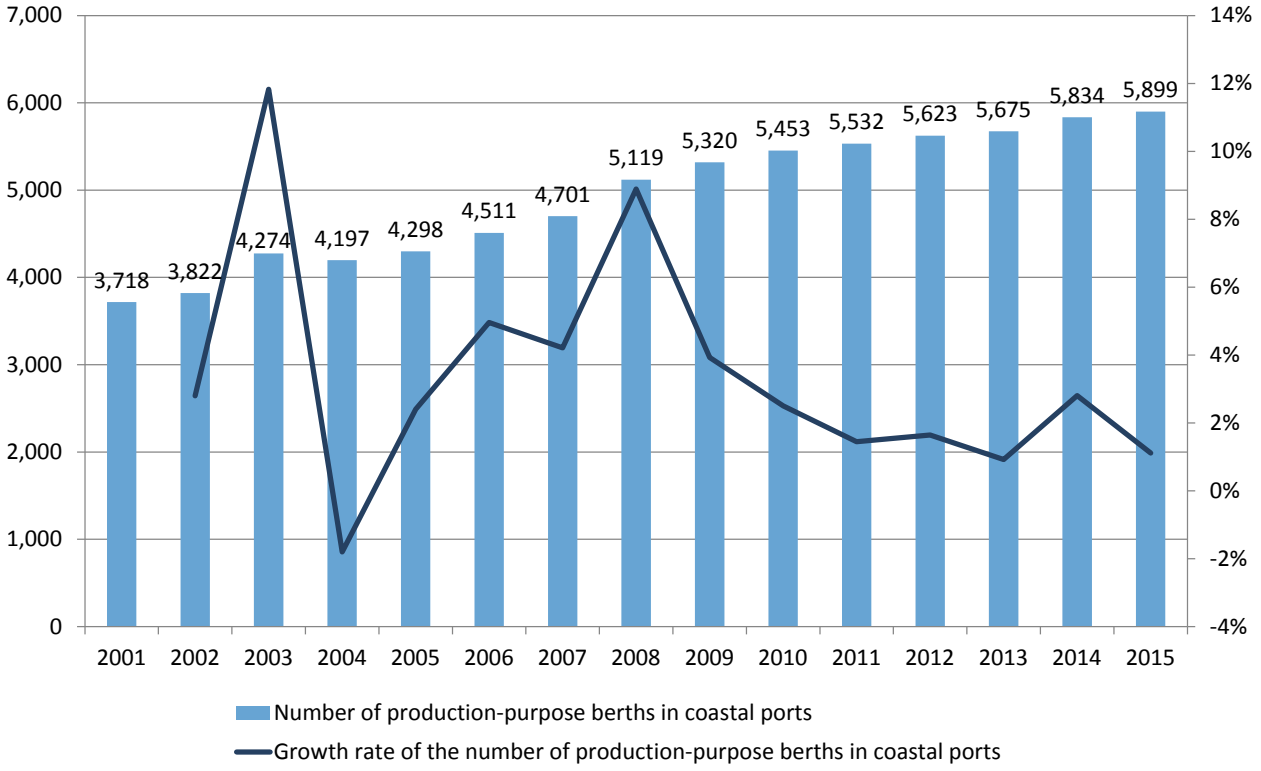
China's port infrastructure construction

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, China's port development can be generally classified into four stages or periods, namely development and construction restoration, fast-pace development and construction, high-speed and high-grade development and construction, and stable development and construction[1]. During the development and construction restoration period from 1949 to 1979, the principal tasks involved expansion and renovation of existing aging terminals. With the implementation of the reform and opening-up policies and huge increases in import and export trade volumes in China during the fast-pace development and construction period from 1980 to 1999, China's ports could not meet new import and export requirements any more. The Ministry of Transport (MOT) of the PRC put forward the coastal main hub ports layout and planning and approved the construction of a batch of specialized terminals, allowing the terminal construction to pass into a fast development period. Following China's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO), and with China's fast-pace economic development and the rise of port-neighboring industries from 2000 to 2010, China's port construction experienced high-speed development, with a rising number of high-level shipping routes. The number of production-purpose berths in coastal ports increased from 3,718 in 2001 to 5,453 in 2010, an average rise of 192 every year, after nearly one-decade persistent development. Since 2011, affected by the macro economy downturn, China's port construction entered the stable development period, which is characterized by saliently decreasing growth rates in berth numbers and cargo throughput as well as the growing number of production-purpose berths in coastal ports, which is 89 every year on average from 2011 to 2015.

Due to the constant sluggish shipping market, especially the domestic-trade shipping market, and enhanced supply-side reform of ports in recent years, the production-purpose terminal construction remains in stable development. By the end of 2015, the number of production-purpose terminals and berths owned by all the ports in China stood at 31,259, a decrease of 446 year on year. Among these ports, the number of production-purpose terminals and berths in coastal ports was 5,899, an increase of 65, and the number of production-purpose terminals and berths in inland-river ports was 25,360, a decrease of 511 (See Table 1). The number of berths for ships with a capacity of 10,000 tons and above at all ports in China was 2,221, an increase of 111 from the end of the previous year. Among these berths, the number of berths for ships with a capacity of 10,000 tons and above in coastal ports in China was 1,807, an increase of 103, and that in inland river ports in China was 414, an increase of 8.

[1] Ministry of Transport of the PRC (2011). "China Port and Waterway Construction in the Past 60 Years" in *Construction Achievement Volume*. China Communications Press.

Changes in numbers of China's production-purpose berths in coastal ports from 2001 to 2015



Graph 1 - Source: Statistical Bulletin on the Road and Waterway Transport Industry Development issued by the MOT in various years

Statistics on the number of production-purpose terminals at ports in China in 2015

Category	Unit	2015	2014	Increase (decrease) in number	YoY increase in 2015
Port production-purpose berth	Number of berths	31,259	31,705	-446	98.59
Coastal	Number of berths	5,899	5,834	65	101.11
Inland river	Number of berths	25,360	25,871	-511	98.02
Terminals and berths for ships with a capacity of 10,000 tons and above	Number of berths	2,221	2,110	111	105.26

Table 1 - Source: China Ports Yearbook 2016

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