

## **Coastlink conference for Antwerp**

Coastlink, the organisation for short sea and feeder operators, is to return to the port city of Antwerp on 14-15th September for its 2010 annual conference.

At its 2009 annual conference in Dunkerque, the emphasis was on the short sea trades linking Northern Europe, the Mediterranean and North Africa, and on the growing importance of reefer traffic in these trades. These two themes will be revisited with specific attention being paid also to Iberia.

Attention will also be directed at the Benelux ports and the various short sea and feeder activities that serve them. Despite the global downturn in trade, ports such as Antwerp, Rotterdam and Zeebrugge have recorded a number of successes and investment continues, especially in the provision of better hinterland links.

Other topics to be discussed include the changing route patterns taking place in North Europe, including the growth of Rotterdam as a hub for the Baltic, a trend which has impacted on the North German ports of Hamburg and Bremerhaven. Is this reversible? And as port congestion fades into distant memory, Coastlink will ask how short sea and feeder operators have benefited and whether, if port congestion returns, we might learn from past experience.