



## **Press Information**

11 September 2009

### **Coastlink anticipates heated debate in Dunkerque**

**Coastlink Annual Conference 2009  
Chambre de Commerce, Port of Dunkerque  
24 & 25 September 2009**

Do 'inland' ports like Hamburg and Antwerp, have a longterm future as major deepsea container hubs? That is just one of many questions likely to generate heated debate at Coastlink's annual conference in Dunkirk on 24/25 September. Aad Koolard of Samskip Logistics believes that the case for continually dredging deeper the approaches to these ports is becoming harder to justify both on financial and environmental grounds. He also notes that deepsea lines are increasingly choosing Rotterdam rather than Hamburg as a transshipment centre for their Baltic traffic, a trend he predicts will continue as Rotterdam expands its capacity and offers more dedicated berths to the major carriers.

Despite the current downturn in overall container traffic, which is hitting ports and carriers hard, Coastlink reports that interest in shortsea shipping has never been stronger. It attributes this to a number of factors including shippers seeking cheaper and more sustainable transport solutions and innovation on the part of shortsea shipping companies and port operators.

One issue that is exercising many minds is how best to transport goods over longer distances. Trucking from North Africa or the Balkans to NW Europe and Scandinavia is fast becoming unacceptable; it is expensive and it is far from being environmentally friendly. Shipping companies, including those with multimodal capabilities, have a wonderful opportunity to break back into markets they more or less lost in the 1960s/70s.

Ports too will need to adjust to these changes, as Anthony Pétilion of the Port of Calais will explain when he outlines his port's plans for handling more multimodal traffic.

Cont'd.../2

Coastlink's Chairman, David Cheslin, believes that Dunkerque will prove a popular location given that so many companies have cut travel budgets to the bone:

"Most delegates coming from France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany will probably drive to Dunkerque. We expect UK participants to do the same, taking advantage of the competitive rates being offered by the ferry operators.

"Hotels in Dunkerque are reasonably priced and there are no charges for parking on the street.

"Other travel options include rail and air with good rail connections from Amsterdam, Brussels and Paris airports to Dunkerque via Lille."

Coastlink conferences are noted for the networking opportunities they provide and the programme will allow ample time for delegates to meet. Furthermore, the Port of Dunkerque has extended an invitation to all conference delegates to participate in its Annual Golf Day, to be held on Saturday, 26 September.

The Coastlink Annual Conference 2009 programme can be found at <http://www.coastlink.co.uk/downloads/programmes/Dunkirk-programme080909.pdf>

-ends-

For further information, please contact:

David Cheslin on tel: +44 20 7345 5233. E-mail: [davidcheslin@coastlink.co.uk](mailto:davidcheslin@coastlink.co.uk).