

15 ports will play a key role in Maersk and Hapag-Lloyd's new network

The ports will be the crucial hubs in the two companies' new network, which promises customers a schedule reliability rate of 90%.



Photo: Jon Nazca/Reuters/Ritzau Scanpix

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Maersk and Hapag-Lloyd's new partnership will be centered around 15 major ports worldwide, according to an [analysis](#) of the future Gemini Cooperation by maritime consultancy Drewry.

CONTAINER ALLIANCES

- The largest shipping companies have split into three major alliances:
 - **2M:** MSC and Maersk (terminated from January 2025).

- **Ocean Alliance:** Cosco, CMA CGM, Evergreen and OOCL
- **THE Alliance:** Hapag-Lloyd, ONE, HMM and Yang Ming

From next year:

- **MSC:** Operates on its own
- **Gemini:** Maersk and Hapag-Lloyd (from February 2025)
- **Ocean Alliance:** Cosco, CMA CGM, Evergreen and OOCL (extended to 2032)
- **THE Alliance:** Hapag-Lloyd, ONE, HMM and Yang Ming

The cooperation between the two Northern European container majors will begin in February 2025 and has already attracted a lot of attention in the industry.

This is partly due to the fact that Maersk and Hapag-Lloyd promise customers that ships will arrive in port on time in more than 90% of departures.

The pledge comes after several years where customers of shipping companies have had to put up with major delays. Especially during the pandemic in 2021 and 2022, ship delays were the rule rather than the exception.

In 2021 and 2022, on-time performance was 35.8% and 52.2%, and although it climbed to 67.7% in 2023, there is still a long way to go for Maersk and Hapag-Lloyd to reach their ambitious 90% target.

One of the reasons the two shipping companies believe they can succeed is that there will be fewer stops on the routes in the new collaboration, where they share space on each other's ships.

According to Drewry, the network will instead draw on 15 large key ports from which containers can be transshipped and sent on to smaller ports on board so-called shuttle ships - a model that the two partners themselves call hub & spoke.

The majority of the ports have a terminal owned by either Maersk or Hapag-Lloyd, which is a great advantage for the shipping companies, according to the analyst firm.

These are:

- Bremerhaven (Maersk)
- Wilhelmshaven (Hapag-Lloyd)
- Rotterdam (Maersk)
- Algeciras (Maersk)
- Tanger Med (APM Terminals)
- Damietta (Hapag-Lloyd)
- Jeddah (Third party)
- Port Said East (Maersk)
- Jebel Ali (Third party)
- Salalah (Maersk)
- Shanghai (Maersk)
- Busan (Third party)
- Singapore (Third party)
- Tanjung Pelepas (Maersk)
- Cartagena (Third party)

Drewry points out that these are generally container terminals that are known to be very well run.

“Several of the selected hub ports are already world leaders in terms of operational performance,” writes the consultancy, which points out that there are also plans for expansion in several of the ports.

However, Drewry also sees weaknesses in the new network design.

“While the use of high-capacity dedicated shuttle services will facilitate efficient use of yard space at the hub ports, any repeat of the supply chain disruption seen in 2021-22 will put the Gemini network strategy under extreme pressure,” it says.

“The hub ports will need to provide sufficient buffer storage to make up for any mainline or feeder vessel delays,” Drewry writes.

In total, the new Gemini Cooperation will cover 290 vessels across 26 main services and 32 dedicated shuttle services.

Maersk and Hapag-Lloyd are far from the goal

The 13 largest shipping companies are better at being on time, but there is still a long way to go to reach the new alliance's goal of at least 90%.

| Carrier | 2023 | 2022 |
|---|-------|-------|
|  Maersk | 67.7% | 52.2% |
|  MSC | 65.9% | 41.5% |
|  CMA CGM | 62.8% | 41.6% |
|  Evergreen | 61.9% | 37.9% |
|  Wan Hai | 61.3% | 33.9% |
|  COSCO | 58.9% | 27.7% |
|  OOCL | 58.8% | 35.1% |
|  PIL | 58.8% | 37.9% |
|  Hapag-Lloyd | 56.9% | 36.3% |
|  ZIM | 54.4% | 36.8% |
|  ONE | 54.1% | 36.6% |
|  HMM | 51.0% | 38.2% |
|  Yang Ming | 50.7% | 32.3% |

The table shows how often the company's ships arrived on time.

Translated using DeepL with additional editing by Kristoffer Grønbaek