

Evergreen and COSCO to transfer giant ships from North Europe to Mediterranean services

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Evergreen Marine Corporation and COSCO Shipping Lines will replace 13,000 TEU vessels with 20,000 TEU ships on their jointly operated Far East-Mediterranean service.

The 20,000 TEU ships will be deployed from the companies' Far East-North Europe services, which will then operate with the 13,000 TEU ships.

Alphaliner's latest report stated that the tonnage swap between the loops is due to the re-routing of all of OCEAN Alliance's Far East – Europe services through the Cape of Good Hope to avoid the threat of Houthi attacks in the Red Sea.

One of these services, marketed as CES by Evergreen and NEU7 by other alliance members, used to call at Piraeus as its first European westbound port of discharge on the way to Antwerp, Hamburg and Rotterdam.

To improve frequency amid the Red Sea crisis, the loop has since skipped Piraeus and turns in 14 weeks, calling at Tianjin, Ningbo, Shanghai, Yantian, Singapore, Colombo, Antwerp, Hamburg, Rotterdam, Tanjung Pelepas, and Tianjin.

Inadequate vessels made the OCEAN Alliance withdraw its third Far East – North Europe loop operated jointly by COSCO (AEU7) and OOCL (LL3) which also made wayport westbound calls at Piraeus. This necessitated an alternative for Asian exports to Greece.

OCEAN Alliance saw a solution in upgrading the aforementioned Far East-Mediterranean service, marketed as AEM1 by COSCO and MD2 by Evergreen, to run on 20,000 TEU ships. The service has been revised to turn in 14 weeks (three extra) with Piraeus as the first European port of call, before the vessels call at other Mediterranean ports in Italy, France and Spain. The complete loop is Qingdao, Shanghai, Ningbo, Kaohsiung, Hong Kong, Yantian, Singapore, Piraeus, La Spezia, Genoa, Fos, Valencia, Singapore and Qingdao.

Alphaliner however, cautioned that it will be difficult for the CES/NEU7 to maintain weekly sailings without the 20,000 TEU ships.

The 14,424 TEU Theseus joined the service at the end of February, to be followed by the 13,808 TEU Thalassa Mana on 17 May and Thalassa Doxa on 19 June, but this still leaves many gaps in the forward schedule.

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