



FILE PHOTO: Container vessel Maersk Hangzhou sails in the Wielingen channel, Westerschelde, Netherlands, July 15, 2018.
Rene van Quekelberghe/Handout via REUTERS/File Photo

Maersk Announces Delays and Blank Voyages Due to Severe Port Congestion

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Shipping giant Maersk announced on Monday significant delays in vessel schedules due to severe terminal congestion in Mediterranean and Asian ports. The congestion has resulted in extended waiting times at various ports, impacting Maersk's ability to maintain regular schedules.

As a result, Maersk will introduce several blank voyages in the coming weeks, starting with *MSC AMELIA* under service AE11, departing from Qingdao on July 1, 2024, and *MSC MIRJAM* under service AE15, departing from Busan on July 2, 2024.

“We understand that this situation may cause inconvenience and disruption to your supply chain plans, and we sincerely apologize for any inconvenience caused,” Maersk said.

The congestion-related changes come at a time when container spot rates continue to rise, with both Drewry’s World Container Index and the Shanghai Container Freight Index (SCFI) reporting solid increases last week, sustaining their upward trend in the post-Chinese New Year period.

Industry experts have been forecasting the ripple effects of reroutings around the Cape of Good Hope for months. These include bottlenecks, vessel bunching (where multiple ships arrive at the port simultaneously), and shortages of equipment and capacity.