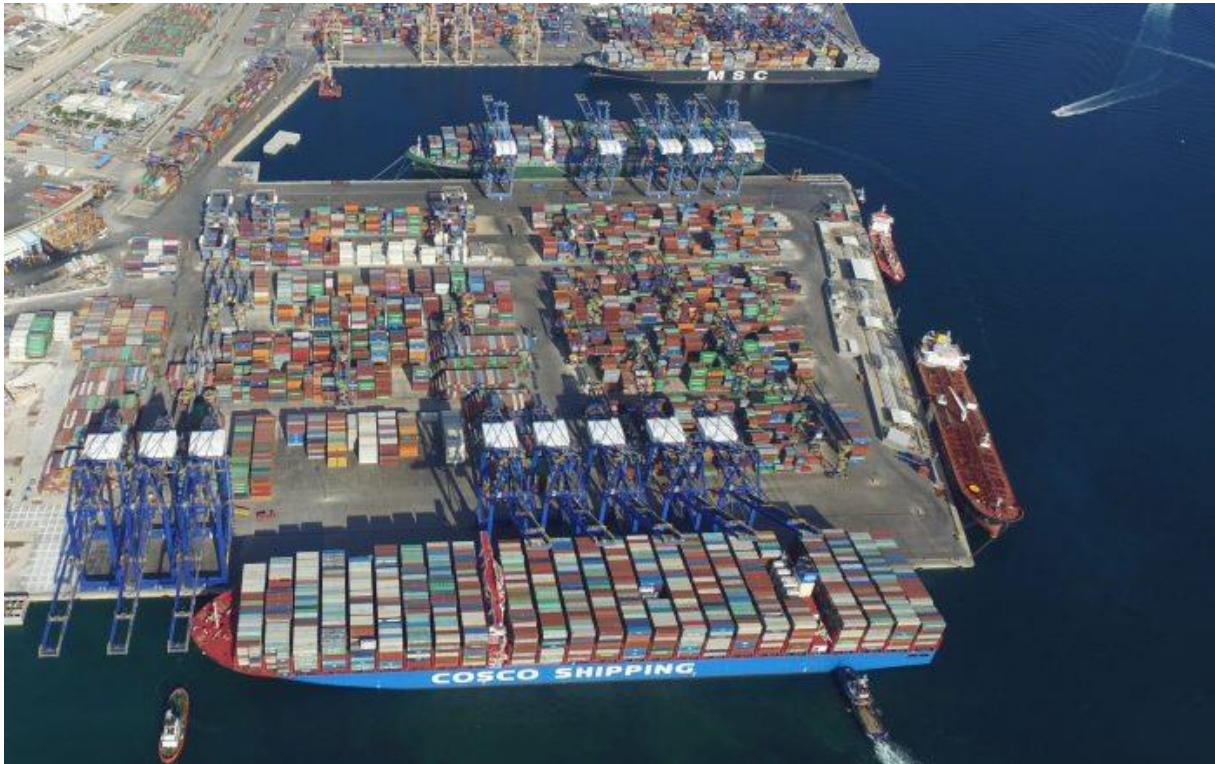


Top 10 Container Ports in Europe: Piraeus position at risk

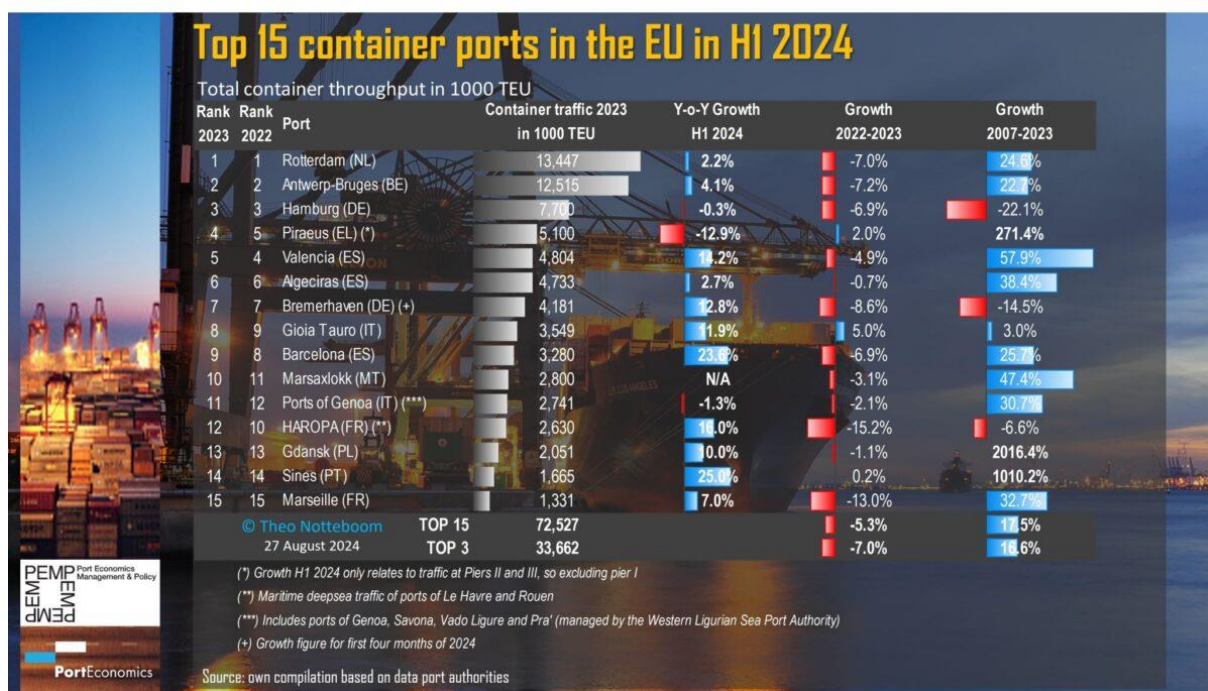
September 9, 2024



Cosco container ship at the port of Piraeus in Greece

PortEconomics member Theo Notteboom compiled a table showing the year-on-year TEU growth in the top 15 container ports in the European Union during the first six months of the year.

"While 2023 was characterized by a strong to moderate traffic decline in most ports, the first half of 2024 brought double-digit growth in seven of the top 15 ports," pointed out Notteboom.



As seen in the table, Portugal's port of Sines, Spain's ports of Valencia and Barcelona, France's HAROPA complex, Germany's Bremerhaven port, Italy's port of Gioia Tauro and Poland's port of Gdansk achieved significant year-on-year container volume increases.

On the other hand, COSCO's Port of Piraeus has experienced a significant decline in container throughput, putting its competitive position at risk. Ports like Valencia, Algeciras, and Bremerhaven are on track to surpass the Greek port by the end of the year, potentially pushing it down to seventh place.

"Piraeus incurred hefty traffic losses as the East Med became a maritime cul-de-sac due to the dramatic drop in Suez Canal transits," noted Notteboom.

The traffic changes in the podium were modest with Belgium's port of Antwerp-Bruges recording a 4.1% growth decreasing its distance from the leading port of Rotterdam, which reported a 2.2% container increase. At the same time, Germany's major port of Hamburg saw relatively stable volumes (-0.3%).

Notteboom commented, "If the current traffic trends continue throughout the remainder of 2024, the top 15 ranking will see some changes by the end of the year."

He said that Benelux ports Rotterdam and Antwerp-Bruges will remain the largest container ports in the EU by far, while Valencia is expected to overtake Piraeus to become the fourth largest EU port in 2024 at a respectable distance from Hamburg.

Additionally, Algeciras and Bremerhaven might overtake Piraeus, pushing the Greek port to position 7, closely followed by Barcelona, while HAROPA is expected to gain two places to reach the tenth position in the ranking.