

## Port of Rotterdam cargo throughput slightly decreased in 2024

posted by AJOT | Feb 21 2025 at 07:32 AM | [Ports & Terminals](#)



Concerns about investments in a future-proof port:

- Cargo throughput slightly decreased (-0.7%)
- Container segment shows recovery (+2.8% in TEU)
- High investment level and strong business results for the Port of Rotterdam Authority
- Construction of CO<sub>2</sub> transport and storage project Porthos has started
- Port of Rotterdam Authority continues to highlight the importance of an attractive investment climate

**Throughput in the port of Rotterdam declined by 0.7% in 2024. Total throughput amounted to 435.8 million tonnes, compared to 438.8 million tonnes in the same period last year. The decline in throughput is mainly due to lower coal and crude oil throughput. Growth was recorded in the container segment. Driven by increasing consumer spending, throughput grew by 2.8% to 13.8 million TEU. Throughput in the iron ore & scrap, mineral oil products, and other dry bulk segments also increased. The Port of Rotterdam Authority had a strong financial year. The solid financial position enables the Port of Rotterdam Authority to make significant investments in infrastructure for a future-proof port. For example, construction has started on the CO<sub>2</sub> transport and storage project Porthos, and the Port of Rotterdam Authority has invested in enhancing the digital resilience of the port of Rotterdam by setting up a national cybersecurity platform and further rolling out the Secure Chain.**

Boudewijn Siemons, CEO Port of Rotterdam Authority: "Last year, we found ourselves as a stable port in turbulent international waters. Geopolitical tensions and regional conflicts impacted the global economy, leading to market uncertainty. Economic growth in Europe lagged behind other regions, which is reflected in throughput and business investments in the port of Rotterdam. Despite global conflicts, we have demonstrated resilience as a port and continue to invest in the port of the future."

### **Social value**

The Port of Rotterdam Authority aims to develop a future-proof port in harmony with its surroundings. Connecting the city and the port is a key priority for the Port of Rotterdam Authority. Over the past year, new collaborations have been established with partners in Rotterdam South, such as the Theatre Zuidplein. Through the Port Environment Fund, the Port of Rotterdam Authority continues to invest in the quality of the living environment in the city and the region. A pilot programme has also been launched with port consultation hours for residents at various neighbourhood hubs, and the construction of the Portlantis port experience centre has been completed.

### **Energy and raw materials transition**

Over the past year, several projects have been launched that contribute to the energy transition. The construction of the CO<sub>2</sub> transport and storage project Porthos has started. In the second half of the year, the construction of the compressor station, a key component of this project, began. As of 2026 the captured CO<sub>2</sub> will be pressurised at the compressor station, before being transported via an offshore pipeline to a depleted gas field beneath the North Sea. The construction of the hydrogen pipeline through the port and Shell's hydrogen plant is also in full swing. Additionally, new agreements for the use of shore power have been signed with container terminals on the Maasvlakte. The shore power installation for Cruise Terminal Rotterdam is now complete and will be commissioned after a testing phase in the spring of 2025.

Clarity has also been provided on the development of the Delta Rhine Corridor (DRC). While a four-year delay was announced earlier last year for the development of hydrogen and CO<sub>2</sub> pipelines, a decision was made at the end of the year to prioritise these infrastructures. The hydrogen pipeline is now scheduled for completion in 2031/2032, and the CO<sub>2</sub> pipeline in 2032/2033. The Port of Rotterdam Authority welcomes this decision by the Minister for Climate and Green Growth and continues to push for further acceleration, as these connections are crucial for the sustainability of industry in Rotterdam and the European hinterland.

More infrastructure and new solutions to relieve the electricity grid are needed to support the sustainability transition of Rotterdam's industry. Companies in the port complex that aim to become more sustainable face challenges related to permits, nitrogen regulations, high electricity tariffs, high energy prices, slow market development, and increasing pressure on available space. Therefore, the Port of Rotterdam Authority supports the call for a clear and consistent industrial policy and reduced regulatory pressure from the Dutch government and the EU to facilitate the energy and raw materials transition, retain industry, and provide the opportunity for transformation.

### **Digitalisation and resilience**

Progress was made in 2024 in strengthening the resilience of the port and the supply chain via Rotterdam. The cyber threat to ports is increasing every day. Cyber incidents impact the entire supply chain due to the close interconnectedness of the various parties. To better withstand these threats, the port authorities under the Dutch Seaports Association (BOZ) – Groningen Seaports, North Sea Port, Port of Rotterdam, Port of Moerdijk, and Port of Amsterdam – have decided to collaborate with

companies in their regions to enhance the digital resilience of the port ecosystem. Stichting FERM, which is already active for the ports of Rotterdam and Moerdijk, will be transformed into a national cybersecurity platform for the Dutch seaports united in the BOZ.

In the fight against drug-related crime, the Port of Rotterdam Authority supports the rollout of the Secure Chain. This public-private partnership aims to enhance the digital resilience of supply chains against crime and theft. The core principle of the Secure Chain is that each link in the supply chain explicitly identifies the next link. As a result, it is no longer possible to unlawfully collect a container from the terminal. All major shipping lines and container terminals now operate through the Secure Chain, and since its launch, more than 630,000 import containers in the port of Rotterdam have been handled securely and reliably. In February 2025, the final shipping regions - Asia and Oceania - will be added.

## **Economic value**

### **Throughput**

#### **Dry bulk**

The throughput of dry bulk has increased by 0.8% compared to the same period last year, driven mainly by the higher throughput of iron ore and scrap. This segment grew by 5.7% to 29.7 million tonnes due to the slight increase in steel production in Germany, stock replenishments in the first half of the year, and the rise in the re-export of iron ore. The 'Other dry bulk' segment (industrial minerals, non-ferrous ores, fertilizers, salt, etc.) have also seen a 21.5%\* increase. This is remarkable, as industrial production remains under pressure and demand for raw materials is not growing. The growth in this segment is a response to the sharp decline in 2023 and is more about stock replenishment than structural demand growth. Coal throughput declined by 18% due to low demand for thermal coal for power generation. The demand for thermal coal decreased due to competition from gas, which has become cheaper, and from renewable energy sources.

#### **Liquid bulk**

The liquid bulk segment declined by 2.7% to 200 million tonnes. Crude oil throughput fell by 4.5% to 97.8 million tonnes due to refinery maintenance in Rotterdam and the hinterland. The throughput of mineral oil products increased by 0.8%, driven by more trade in fuel oil and increased demand for kerosene. Diesel throughput declined due to lower demand. LNG throughput decreased by 5.3%. As in the rest of Europe, imports declined due to high stock levels. The throughput of other liquid bulk fell by 2.2%, mainly due to a decrease in the throughput of renewable fuels. For example, there was less export to Sweden due to the country's lower biofuel blending percentage.

#### **Containers and breakbulk**

Container throughput in 2024 increased by 2.5% in tonnes to 133.4 million tonnes and by 2.8% in TEU to 13.8 million TEU. The growth in the container segment can be attributed to increased European consumption. Wage indexation and declining inflation led to higher disposable income and increased demand for consumer goods and food.

The breakbulk segment saw a decline of 3.7%. Roll-on/roll-off (RoRo) traffic remained stable due to a strong fourth quarter, driven by the introduction of new services and larger vessels. Other breakbulk decreased by 10% due to lower throughput of steel and non-ferrous products, caused by reduced demand from European industry and sanctions on Russian aluminium.

## **Investments and financials**

The financial position of the Port of Rotterdam Authority allowed for an 11% increase in gross investments to €320.6 million. Investments in traditional infrastructure such as quay walls and jetties, energy transition infrastructure, and innovation and digitalisation, are essential in maintaining the port's attractiveness as a logistics hub and business location. The largest investments in 2024 included the further development of quay walls for the expansion of container terminals in the Prinses Amaliahaven (€42.5 million), the construction of the CO<sub>2</sub> transport and storage project Porthos (€39.4 million), the widening of the Yangtzekanaal (€22.5 million), and the development of the Portlantis port experience centre (€12.8 million).

The Port of Rotterdam Authority had a strong financial year. Revenue increased by 4.8% to €882.0 million. Operating expenses rose by 8.7% to €318.5 million, driven by wage indexation and higher operating expenses for port maintenance and management. As a result, earnings before interest, depreciation and taxes (EBITDA) increased by 2.7% to €563.5 million. Net profit increased by €40.2 million to €273.7 million. The main revenue sources are income from land leases and port dues. Income from land leases increased by €41.6 million to €508.6 million due to new contracts, price adjustments and contract expansions. Revenue from port dues declined by 0.9% in 2024 to €336.5 million. This was due to a negative price effect caused by the larger call sizes of tankers and container ships. Due to vessels rerouting around the Cape of Good Hope, fewer ships are sailing to Europe, but those that do are more heavily loaded.

### **Call to invest in the competitiveness of European and Dutch industry**

Current global tensions have led to uncertain market conditions, increased cyberattacks, and disruptions in the supply chain for the port and industrial complex. Locally, there are also challenges related to organised crime, nitrogen regulations, grid congestion and employment. The port continues to adapt to circumstances to maintain its competitive position and continue delivering economic and social value to the Netherlands and Europe.

Predictable and competitive market conditions for investments in industrial sustainability are crucial for a successful transition to a climate-neutral port, Europe's strategic autonomy, and securing Europe's supply chains. In the run-up to the publication of the Clean Industrial Deal and the Spring Budget, the Port of Rotterdam Authority - together with international partners - is calling on the European Commission and the Dutch government to strengthen the competitiveness of European and Dutch industry and to remove barriers. The focus should be on reinforcing international supply chains and industrial clusters.

*\* The throughput figures for agri-bulk and other dry bulk (including biomass) show deviations from 2023 due to corrections made to ZHG declarations in February 2023. After correction, agri-bulk comes to 7.5% and other dry bulk to 21.5%.*