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Global Port Tracker: North Europe Trade Outlook

“Uncertainty and Caution”

European Container Flows Remain Under Pressure

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For Immediate Release

International trade to Northern Europe is as weak as it was during the Great Recession. The import growth rate projected by the **North Europe Global Port Tracker** for 2013 is projected to decrease by 8.9 percent for North Europe to 12.2 million TEU. (A revision of data by Container Trades Statistics has actually improved our forecast from the previous month). North European exports, after declining in 2012, are projected to grow by 0.7 per cent this year. The weak consumer demand in the European economies is having a particularly strong impact on carrier deep-sea laden import volumes to Northern Europe.

After a disastrous Q1, both imports and exports are recovering but they have a long way to go and the recovery will be slow as consumers remain hesitant about spending their money. Until there is more certainty about economic policies and reduced unemployment we shall not see a strong resurgence in consumption.” Notes Mr. Hackett of Hackett Associates. The Global Port Tracker forecast for 2013 projects a 4.1 per cent increase in total imports to Europe, with 21.7 million TEUs of international deepsea laden boxes. North Europe is projected to fall by 8.9 per cent to 12.2 million TEUs, while the Med-Black Sea region is projected to increase by 27.5 per cent to 9.4 million TEUs. □ The export forecast projects a 6.4 per cent increase for Europe as a whole, with a total of 18.1 million TEUs, with North Europe increasing by 0.7 per cent to 10.9 million TEUs and the Med-Black Sea region increasing by 16.5 per cent to 7.1 million TEUs.

As handling volumes are concerned, the North Range incoming volumes are forecast to decrease by 0.9 per cent in 2013 to 15.9 million TEUs, while outgoing volumes are projected to grow by 1.3 per cent to 17.6 million TEUs. Total European imports are projected to increase by 4.1 per cent, while exports are forecast to gain 6.4 per cent. (Note that this includes international trade, transshipment, short sea and empty containers.)

“At the individual port level there are significant differences in throughputs with weakness in Hamburg and Zeebrugge and strength in Antwerp, suggesting that trade routes do have an impact on port’s activities” notes Mr. Maatsch of ISL. For Antwerp the forecast projects a 7.6 per cent increase in total moves in Q2 and Q3, compared to a 0.6 per cent increase in the same period of the previous year. Incoming loaded containers are projected to increase at a faster pace than outgoing containers over the same period, with a nine per cent anticipated increase versus a 6.5 per cent gain.

The Global Port Tracker: North Europe Trade Outlook provides a six-month projection plus an additional two quarter forecast of inbound and outbound container movements in TEUs for the region's six major container ports – Le Havre, Zeebrugge, Antwerp, Rotterdam, Bremen/Bremerhaven and Hamburg.

Hackett Associates LLC provides expert consulting, research and advisory services to the international maritime industry, government agencies and international institutions.

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The Institute of Shipping Economics and Logistics (ISL) is based in Bremen and is one of the leading institutes in maritime research, consultancy and know-how transfer. The Maritime Economics and Transport department is active in a wide range of consulting activities.

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