The Port of Barcelona grows 31% in container traffic and beats the historical record for the first half of the year

- **Total traffic in the first half of 2021 was 32.7 million tonnes, an increase of 16.8% year on year.**
- **The fact that containers now exceed pre-pandemic levels confirms that "we are on the road to recovery and that it is a rapid recovery," explains Damià Calvet, President of the Port of Barcelona.**

The Port of Barcelona moved a total of 1.8 million TEUs (20-foot container units) in the first half of 2021, representing a growth of 31% with respect to the same period in 2020 and beating the record achieved in one single half year, set in 2019, when it moved 1.7 million TEUs.

Container traffic is therefore above the volumes managed before the pandemic, which confirms that "we are on the road to recovery and that it is a rapid recovery," said Damià Calvet, President of the Port of Barcelona, in the presentation of the results for the first half of 2021.

Total traffic at the Port of Barcelona in the January-June period was 32.7 million tonnes, a year-on-year increase of 16.8%. In this case, "we should take into account, however, that if we compare this figure with pre-pandemic data, we are slightly below total traffic for the first half of 2019 (-4.9%) because there are some traffic sectors that remain below pre-Covid levels such as passengers, vehicles or bulk liquids", added Damià Calvet.

Containers grew faster than total traffic, due mainly to a notable increase in traffic (+52.2%). Although the behaviour of origin and destination traffic was also remarkably positive (+18.1%), as explained by the General Manager of the Port of Barcelona, José Alberto Carbonell, in his speech. "In the comparison of the results of the first half of this year with the first half of 2019, the results for container traffic, unlike those for total traffic, are clearly higher, by 4.2 %", he added.

José Alberto Carbonell underscored another historical milestone: "Import and export container traffic, where this first semester we also established a record. We continue to be an eminently

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importing and exporting port, with more than 696,000 TEUs moved with third countries". In this case, exports maintain a high growth rate (+19%), also compared to 2019 (+16%). Although a substantial part of the growth is concentrated in the Asian markets, "there is a certain degree of diversification towards other markets that would also persist if we take 2019 as a reference," explained the General Manager of the Port of Barcelona.

In the area of new vehicle traffic, in the first semester there was a growth of 31.1% with a movement of 286,605 units. However this is one segment most affected by the current context of uncertainty and the economic crisis derived from the pandemic and is still at levels lower than those of 2019 (-31%).

With regard to dry bulk, the Port of Barcelona closed the first six months with a movement of 2.3 million tonnes, placing such traffic 8.1% above the levels of the first half of 2020. This good result is explained by the notable growth of common salt exports, which multiplied practically by six thanks to which the new ICL terminal in the Port is now fully operational. Liquid bulk movements totalled 5.6 million tonnes (-12.4%). The largest decreases are concentrated in imports of natural gas (-51%) and gasoline traffic (-56%).

Passenger traffic remains most affected by the crisis, with a fall of 43.7% between January and June, with 240,904 passengers. Ferry passengers totalled 238,054 (+4%) and are gradually recovering. The decrease in cruise passengers was 98.6% (2,850 passengers). It should be remembered that the first cruise ship of the year arrived at the Port of Barcelona on 26 June and the various shipping companies began progressively to operate. By the end of the year, the Port of Barcelona expects to receive between 75 and 100 port calls of cruise ships and approximately 200,000 cruise passengers, although there are no definitive figures because they are working daily with shipping companies in the light of the development of the health situation and the resulting reprogramming of vessels.

In the economic sphere, there was also a substantial recovery during the first half of 2021. Revenues increased 7% year on year, but they remain 15% lower than in 2019. The operating result was €13 million, marking an increase of 147%, but still 31% lower than the first six months of the 2019 year.

Extraordinary aid to relaunch the economy

In relation to the issues discussed at the Management Board held this morning, Damià Calvet explained that one of the most important points was the Recovery Plan 2021-2022, which will help customers and users of the Port of Barcelona to the tune of €43 million. Out of the total, €23.3 million from this Recovery Plan correspond to 2021 and the other 19.7 million to 2022.

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The extraordinary economic recovery aid package corresponding to the year 2021 is valued at €12.3 million and includes the reduction of the correction coefficients of the ship, passenger and goods fees; the application of special discounts to concessionaires of container, multipurpose, ro-ro and automobile terminals; and the application of discounts to the 2021 usage fees for island traffic. In addition, and within the ordinary commercial discount policy, discounts on fees for 2021 are also expected to the tune of €11 million.

For the tranche of the Recovery Plan corresponding to 2022, the Management Board has approved a new package of extraordinary aid to continue promoting "an economic recovery that must be speedy and must also be a stable recovery. That is why at the Port of Barcelona we continue to stand by our concessionaires and customers", said Damià Calvet. This aid package totals €7.4 million and consists of: a reduction of the correction coefficients for passenger and goods fees: application of special discounts to concessionaires of container, multipurpose, ro-ro and automobile terminals, and the application of discounts to the 2021 usage fees for island traffic. Within the ordinary commercial discount policy, discounts for 2022 have been approved to the tune of €12.3 million.

"The Port of Barcelona is one of the great economic drivers of Catalonia and is leading the recovery of port traffic, growing above the rest of the large ports. And with all these measures, we aim to continue stimulating the economy and generating more jobs", continued Damià Calvet.

Hermitage

The Management Board also reported on the appeal for reconsideration filed by the Port of Barcelona against the decision adopted at the end of May by the Governing Commission of Barcelona City Council not to approve the Hermitage Barcelona Museum project. The appeal presented by the Port defends the public interest of the project and the technical characteristics that would allow its implementation.

It also ruled on the appeal filed by the Hermitage Barcelona Museum against the conditional concession approved by the Port in the Board of Directors in May, estimating that in fact the obligation to sign an agreement specifically with the Liceu, within a period of two months, is not valid. The partial approval of this appeal by the promoters led to the adoption of an agreement amending the previous one and establishing that the promoters must provide all protocols or agreements that are signed, setting the terms to allow cultural acts and events related to music, ballet and dance to be held in the building to be constructed on the plot under concession without limiting the agreement to the Liceu and without setting deadlines.

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Damià Calvet explained that "just like the entire public sector, the Port of Barcelona has an obligation to rule on requests made by citizens. It also has to provide investors with legal certainty and respect the legal interests both of these investors and of the Port itself". This makes it necessary "to generate formal administrative acts. Despite everything, we continue to work together with the City Council to find a consensus solution and the appeals could be suspended".

"As President of the Port, I would like to think that we can reverse the current situation," stressed Damià Calvet, opting to "seek the maximum consensus between the Port and the City Council" to reinforce a port-city integration "that we all want, which is necessary, which must serve to stimulate the economy, generate jobs, provide quality of life and prosperity".

Other points of the Management Board

A new concession was also approved for Transportes Portuarios for the installation of a warehouse for the management and storage of empty maritime containers on 28,617 m² of land located in the old facilities of the Damex container depot. The concession is for five years and the company has planned an investment of €1.7 million.

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You can find the complete presentation of the Port of Barcelona 2020 Results at the following link:

https://www.portdebarcelona.cat/2021Resultats1erSem

PHOTO: Damià Calvet, President of the Port of Barcelona, and José Alberto Carbonell, General Manager.



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