Innovation bolsters the Port of Barcelona as an international benchmark in sustainable development

- **During the first half of the year, the Port of Barcelona focused its strategy on fostering innovation projects to strengthen its role as a driver of the economy in the coming years.**

- **The balance of the first six months of the year is positive despite the slowdown in traffic growth, in line with the complex global economic and geopolitical situation.**

Innovation has become the keystone of the strategy that the Port of Barcelona has been rolling out in recent months, enabling it to close the first half of 2023 on a positive note, both in terms of the number and the importance of the projects that have been undertaken during these six months. This was underscored by Port of Barcelona president Lluís Salvadó during the press conference on the balance for this first half of the financial year, held today.

Lluís Salvadó explained that during the first half of this year, efforts were focused on innovating "in all areas of activity that are specific to the Port." This allowed us to "fulfil our roadmap, undertaking important initiatives that will guarantee the sustainable development of the Port of Barcelona and position us as an international benchmark." Among the projects that have materialised in the first six months of 2023 were the BCN Port Innovation Foundation, the BlueTechPort benchmark blue economy innovation space, or the start of the implementation of the first private 5G SA network to be installed in a European port.

"We are committed to playing a pioneering role in all aspects of innovation to make Barcelona a greener and more human port and to make this port an international benchmark. We are doing this by creating projects that allow us to grow sustainably, to have a positive impact on the territory where we are located, and to set ourselves apart from our competitors thanks to the quality of our services", summarised the president of the Port of Barcelona.

Innovation and services

As an example of this, Lluís Salvadó mentioned the launch of the B2B Logistics Busan Barcelona Hub, a logistics centre for trade with Korea designed and executed in collaboration with the Port of Busan, making the Port of Barcelona Europe's best connected port with the Asian country. "The regular

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shipping lines we have with Korea have been growing ever since this hub was opened, and in this first half of 2023 we have become the European port that is best connected to this market, ahead even of the ports of northern Europe. We started the year with four container shipping services with Korea, the same as the Port of Rotterdam, which is the second best connected port. The fifth shipping line with the Asian country came on stream in May and we will be adding a new service in August", announced Lluís Salvadó. This improvement in connections has gone hand in hand with a significant growth in imports from that market, specifically 43.5% compared to the first half of 2022.

The port manager recalled that Barcelona is "an eminently importing and exporting port, which serves a dynamic hinterland. However, the consumption and production of goods and services generated in this hinterland is finite. Therefore, the traffic handled within the Port cannot grow infinitely. So what are we doing to generate new lines of business that allow us to contribute more wealth to the society we serve? Innovating in the business sector."

Movement of goods

As regards Port traffic in this first half of the year, the General Manager of the Port Authority, José Alberto Carbonell, explained that 32.5 million tonnes of goods were moved, which is 10.6% less than in the same period of 2022, "due mainly to the fall in liquid bulk and transshipment containers. Dry bulk and cars are the positive side of this year's traffic, experiencing significant growth." Container traffic fell by 10.9%, in a similar proportion to total traffic, to reach 1.6 million TEUs. "These figures are the result of the current economic situation and match the state of affairs in the remaining the ports of Spain and the Continent", added José Alberto Carbonell.

Hinterland traffic, meaning export and import goods traffic, fared much better than total traffic and remained at similar levels to 2022, with a movement of 17.6 million tonnes.

With regard to bulk commodities, liquid bulk movement totalled 6.7 million tonnes, falling 15.8%. "The reasons for this decline lie in the drop in hydrocarbon traffic and LNG imports; in this latter case because storage tanks are very full and there is little demand due to the cooling of economic activity, the increasing use of renewables by the electricity sector and the unusually high winter temperatures", said the General Manager of the Port of Barcelona. Dry bulk traffic stood at 2.71 million tonnes, up 15.9% over the same period in 2022, an increase driven mainly by the strong performance of cement and salt exports and cereals and meal imports.

Car traffic speeds up

Vehicle traffic stands out as the traffic sector that experienced the biggest increase at the Port of Barcelona. A total of 410,809 vehicles were moved, marking an increase of 64.8%, and positive figures were registered across all segments: exports and imports, and transit and cabotage.

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Positive export figures (+33.5%) were caused by the increase in foreign sales of practically all the brands that export through the Port of Barcelona. Imports enjoyed triple-digit growth (+146.3%) explained mainly by the Port of Barcelona's commitment to positioning itself as an entry hub for Chinese electric vehicles in the European market. Growth in transit and cabotage was 94.3% and 38.4% respectively.

Finally, passenger numbers at the Port of Barcelona between January and June amounted to two million people, growing 69.7% year on year to end slightly above pre-pandemic figures (+8.3%). 642,251 ferry passengers came through the Port of Barcelona, along with 1.38 million cruise-goers.

Start of the Portal de la Pau refurbishment

Just before the press conference, the Board of Directors of the Port of Barcelona agreed to award the refurbishment works of the Portal de la Pau building, which houses the official headquarters of the Barcelona Port Authority, to the joint venture Dragados/Urcotex/CRC for an amount of €15,629,051.73. This action includes reinforcing the existing structure, consolidating and repairing the buildings, and the necessary installations for adapting the building to current energy, environmental and security requirements.

The works are expected to last for 18 months, but will be paused during the America's Cup from August to October 2024, during which time the tower crane will also be temporarily dismantled.

Furthermore, there was a change in the make-up of the Board of Directors with Laia Bonet, first deputy mayor of Barcelona City Council, replacing Janet Sanz.

The full presentation can be found at:
https://www.portdebarcelona.cat/resultats1ersem2023

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PHOTOS: Lluís Salvadó, President of the Port of Barcelona, and José Alberto Carbonell, General Manager.



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