

Interporto Bologna increasingly getting into its stride

Speed queen of the freight gateways

The capital of the Italian region Emilia-Romagna has many nicknames, including 'professor', on account of it being home to the oldest university in the world, 'fatty', for its rich cuisine, and 'the red city', on account of its red brick buildings as well as its leftist politics.

Soon logistics might add 'speed queen' to the list, as Sergio Crespi, managing director of the Interporto Bologna, told the *ITJ* recently.



of affairs. He has headed the facility, a PPP with a staff of 26, as its managing director since 2015.

"In 2018, around 1.63 million trucks passed through our gates, which was 7.3% more than in the previous year," Crespi elaborated. Although the number of trains handled fell by 3.6% to 2,737 trains, new developments since last autumn have reversed this trend again.

In the first two months of this year, track use improved more rapidly (+10.1% to 456 trains) than lorry volumes did (+6.8% to 275,475 trucks).

Crespi says that it is very difficult to quantify the trend's continuation, but he assured the *ITJ* that "we're definitely working on further increasing our rail traffic volumes." The centre continues to operate railfreight services to and from Catania and Tarvisio (thrice weekly) and Marcianise and Padua (one a week).

There are also regular pan-Italian ro-mo services to and from La Spezia, Busto Arsizio, Nola, Bari and Livorno, and a ro-mo option to Zeebrugge (Belgium).

Over and above this the Interporto Bologna has been the terminus of a high-speed railfreight line since November that is unique in the world (see also page 15 of our Italy Special in *ITJ* 47-48/2018). The 'Mercitalia Fast' service runs five times a week and takes 3.5 hours to reach Marcianise, near Naples – three times less than conventional freight trains. "It's also extremely punctual," Crespi adds. "With roll-tracters, including iso-thermal units, deployed in this service, it has been designed for express firms as well as other companies handling time-sensitive consignments. Enterprises manufacturing small or light goods with high added values, such as fashion products or pharmaceuticals, can also benefit."

What next?

Crespi expects this new service to deliver peak performances within three years. It is expected to be fully utilised by around the year 2021, according to the Interporto's plans. "Since there is more strong demand for warehousing facilities, we're currently in the process of adding a fourth area to our logistics infrastructure compound," Crespi says, looking further into the future.

The *ITJ* will keep an eye on how the Interporto Bologna logistics hub fits into new intercontinental capacities in future (see also page 5). *Andreas Haug*



Images: Interporto Bologna

Sergio Crespi illustrated the Interporto Bologna's current and future reach with the aid of this map.

The Interporto Bologna freight transport hub was founded in 1971 and is now one of the largest logistics centres in Europe. "Our Interporto covers around 410 hectares, is home to 120 companies operating here and last year handled approximately 1.2 million t of railfreight goods and around 12.7 million t of trucked goods," as Sergio Crespi summarises today's state

Intermodal services a priority
The Interporto Bologna is located in Emilia-Romagna, one of the most heavily industrialised regions of Italy, and is also positioned on three TENT corridors, namely the Baltic Sea-Adriatic Sea route, the Mediterranean Sea, as well as the Helsinki-La Valletta option. This has helped the freight village to set up several new intermodal connections to and from various European destinations.

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