

Mediterranean supply chains require simplified processes

## Fast and digital corridors

The automation and digitalisation of processes is one of the keys to smooth interaction between Mediterranean shipping lines, ports and terminals. Circle offers measures to simplify supply chains between North Africa, the Middle East and Southeastern Europe.

The transport and logistics industry is evolving in the Mediterranean region, but the situation nevertheless remains strongly fragmented – partially on account of information barriers between supply chain entities that have not developed to the same levels, technologically-speaking. Thus small forwarders, road hauliers, national customs and the like all exist side by side.

Some Mediterranean and Middle Eastern countries have responded by simplifying and harmonising procedures, for example by implementing national maritime single-window processes, or by digitalising customs papers. This also applies to documents and procedures in the new EU customs code (which entered into force on

1 May 2016), as well as for commercial and customs simplification measures recently implemented in some Middle Eastern and Northern African countries. The Mediterranean's fast international trade lanes need solutions that reach further, however.

### Circle's potential solutions

These matters, and the implementation of international single-window solutions, were discussed in Marrakesh early in September at a meeting entitled "Guichet unique virtuel du commerce extérieur: L'exigence d'une collaboration inclusive". The IT solutions provider Circle is a logistics consultant and technology partner for some fast international trade lane projects being implemented in Italy as well

as other Mediterranean states, some of which are being co-financed by the EU.

Thus the EU-funded fresh food corridor provides the framework for Circle's contractual cooperation with the Israeli IT company Bynet. The aim is to implement a corridor-management platform to monitor the transport of reefer containers from Israel to their destinations in Northern Europe. The boxes are transported from the ports of Venice, Marseille and Koper by rail.

Concrete steps towards the implementation of other fast trade lane projects will follow in the coming months, with Circle due to share details with interested parties at the 12th Trans-Middle East trade fair in Jeddah (27–28 October) and at the Logitrans meeting in Istanbul (16–18 November).

The aim is to exploit emerging opportunities by employing new technologies, such as electronic seals, tags, and modern IT platforms. Corridor management platforms along international supply chains will help to digitalise and automate procedures, thus simplifying import/export loops and cutting goods' transit times.

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