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News / As ocean rates fall, Maersk awaits a modal shift from air to sea

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By Alex Lennane 19/01/2023

As ocean freight rates continue to fall, Maersk says it expects to see a modal shift from air to sea this quarter.

In an update to customers, it said air freight volumes remained low, adding: "High inflation rates across Europe are continuing to impact disposable income and how much consumers are spending."

"Ocean freight rates coming down in the first quarter of the year is likely to herald a shift from air to ocean transport, too, as air volume growth remains fairly flat. The Chinese New Year slowdown traditionally slows air freight demand."

Maersk was more optimistic for air cargo in the second half, when inflation rates are set to fall, commenting: "Air freight demand will likely increase as a result."

The Danish group now has a second Amerijet-operated aircraft in the air, plying the same route as the first, between Incheon, Anchorage and


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Greenville-Spartanburg, a route originated by forwarder Senator International, which Maersk is currently integrating.

Air cargo is now being assimilated throughout the AP Møller Maersk group, with subsidiary shipping line Hamburg Süd marketing forwarding and air freight on the Maersk network. A spokesperson explained that Maersk group brands had their own sales and customer services teams, but used the "same network or hardware".

Of the other container line airlines, MSC still has just one aircraft, operated by Atlas Air. CMA CMA had one A330F "withdrawn from use" on Christmas Eve, but it is due to return to the fleet now it has been re-registered in France, according to aircraft databases.

It is also expanding its team. Hafid B, a Qatar Airways cargo veteran, is to join in the Benelux region next month. He has also worked for Cathay Pacific and Schiphol, as well as Pantos Logistics, and will report to Giuseppe Tarantini, commercial manager for the DACH, Benelux and Nordic countries, as well as the UK & Ireland.

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