

Deregulate services to make ports competitive

VENICE port authority president and former European member of parliament Paolo Costa has called for the urgent deregulation of technical-nautical services to improve the competitive standing of Italian ports.

"Deregulation of currently protected markets would release entrepreneurial and productive energies, the only hopes for the development of our country. I confide that associated members could take active part in deregulating technical-nautical services, which currently prevents a fair competition among Italian ports and foreign nations," Mr Costa said.

"Negative effects of services' current rates can be demonstrated with the lack of competitiveness of northern Adriatic ports when they are compared with their Slovenian and Croatian counterparts. The average cost of port services in 2010 for a 42,000 tonne boxship stood at €30,000 (\$45,000) in Venice, €16,500 in Trieste, €12,500 in Koper and €9,000 in Rijeka," he added.

"On an annual basis there is up to a €1m gap for running an intercontinental line to the Far East from Venice," he said.

However, Confitarma president Paolo D'Amico disagreed. "Deregulation is not always the best solution and sometimes it does not grant lower prices," he said.

Mr D'Amico confirmed that Confitarma was working with the unions to renew the national collective agreement.

"Our major target is to reach a proper increase in productivity, although wages [will] increase, in all sectors, including port towage

service." ■

