Securing supply chains with reliability, scalability, and competitiveness

by Przemysław Opłocki

From end-June 2025, Finnlines' Finnecos, each of these modern ro-ros offering 5,800 lane metres for cargo, started also visiting the Port of Gdynia on their way from Southern Finland via Baltic Germany and Belgium to Northern Spain. Half a year into the new rotation, we sat with the company's Blasco Majorana to ask about the service's performance. We also talked about the Green Lane concept, trade post-Brexit, and how Finnlines' network ties to that of the Grimaldi Group.

■ ***Can you describe your role and involvement pre- and post the inclusion of the Port of Gdynia into the North Sea & Biscay Line??***

As Line Manager, I'm responsible for securing the service performance and ensuring its long-term sustainability and development. The inclusion of the Port of Gdynia followed a strategic evaluation aimed at strengthening our value proposition in the market and enhancing synergies with Finnlines' other services, including the wider Grimaldi Group network. Access to that network is a unique opportunity for Finnlines' customers: with a single transhipment via the Port of Antwerp, it is possible to reach most corners of the world, and the network continues to expand with new connections added regularly. We value this opportunity highly, and it represents a strategic pillar of our market offering.
Flexibility is another asset. Take, for example, Brexit, which has certainly added complexity, requiring service and rotation adjustments as well as customer adaptability. Nevertheless, we believe the current setup minimises the impact on intra-European trade and continues to support the line's development.

■ ***Did you encounter any operational challenges during the first half of the year? Are you satisfied with the volumes going via Gdynia – or is there room for improvement?***

Quite the opposite! We were already very familiar with the Port of Gdynia through the direct thrice-a-week ro-ro link with the Finnish Hanko. We have an established relationship with both the port authority and the OT Port Gdynia terminal management, and we maintain a constructive dialogue to promptly address any issues.
Finnlines entered Gdynia with the objective of offering a sustainable ro-ro alternative in a largely containerised market. We specialise in liner services and intermodal connections, and we aim to convince as many forwarders and cargo owners as possible to use our service by leveraging schedule reliability, capacity flexibility, and the lowest carbon footprint per unit transported.
While we have already received significant interest from many players considering rerouting their cargo through our services, we believe we are still in an early phase and that the full volume potential has yet to materialise. We are keen to see this corridor developing as robustly as the Malmö-Świnoujście ferry service we put in motion not so long ago. On that note, since January this year, we have included the Port of Hanko in the regular rotation, strengthening the Poland-Finland bridge even more. This increased the frequency from three to four weekly connections.

■ ***Which customer segments have adopted the new connection most rapidly? What message would you give to (Polish) shippers who are still evaluating the new connection? Also, what are the top risks to the route's development?***

Photo: Finnlines

Currently, the main commodities moved are containers and project cargo. However, we aim to expand our product portfolio by strengthening our presence in the automotive, machinery, and rolling cargo segments, including trailers. The Finneco ro-ros offer flexible and versatile cargo configuration options, making them an ideal solution to support a broad range of market segments.

I would encourage potential clients by saying to take advantage of this opportunity to secure their supply chains with a service that offers reliability, scalability, and competitiveness.

Given the current geopolitical situation, the market is highly volatile, affecting volume development and, consequently, the long-term sustainability of the service. We therefore closely monitor market conditions and continuously balance the cost structure to maintain service performance. Notwithstanding, the service has the potential to become a reference point for industrial customers looking for sustainable transport solutions. The Finnecos are outstanding assets and have significantly strengthened our sustainability programme. Besides innovative on-board technologies – air lubrication, battery packs, photovoltaics, waste heat recovery – that reduce fuel consumption, their large capacity and flexible cargo configuration support higher utilisation even in unbalanced market conditions. This helps reduce emissions and enables transport with a very low carbon footprint per unit carried.

Beyond the already low-emission levels achieved by the service, we recently introduced the Green Lane option that allows customers to purchase green transport with up to a 90% reduction in emissions. We believe this will be a strong option going forward, although the significant cost increases linked to environmental policies, such as the EU Emissions Trading System and FuelEU Maritime, are currently making the market more cautious. ■