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Goods at Port up by 15 percent  
Transshipment and number of ships slightly  
down



The Port of Beirut (PoB) recorded a sharp annual growth in its revenues, the number of containers, and shipped goods, in 2013. This reflected the diversion of trade routes through Syria because of the ongoing war. Port revenues rose by 25 percent to \$219 million in 2013.

The overall number of containers amounted to 1.12 million TEUs (twenty foot equivalent unit standard container), up by eight percent from 2012. Containers dedicated to local consumption grew by 55,000 TEUs to 364,000 TEUs. Transshipment however went down by 12 percent to 359,000 containers. “The Port authorities had asked the two companies operating the transshipment hub (CMA CGM and MSC) to scale down their operations due to heavy congestion and lack of enough spaces for containers,” said Elie Zakhour, Head of the International Chamber of Navigation in Lebanon. Maroun Abi Aad, Head of Statistics Department at PoB, said: “Even though the two companies lowered their activity level, but they remained higher than the minimum requirements.” But transshipment activity later normalized, once the quay 16 expansion was over. “We now have modern equipment, better infrastructure, and larger spaces,” said Abi Aad. Zakhour said that this can be detected in the November and December 2013 figures, when transshipped containers reached 30,000 TEUs, per month. The number of vessels went slightly down by 0.5 percent y-o-y to 2,114. “Smaller ships are being replaced by larger ones that can hold a larger number of containers,” he said. This is partly the reason for the increase in volume of goods. Compared to 2012, the total volume of goods climbed by 15 percent to 8.3 million tons. Discharged cargo for local consumption went up by 14 percent to 7.2 million tons, whereas loading of local cargo grew by 22 percent to 1.04 million tons.

The number of cars also grew by eight percent, to a total of 93,000 passing through the port. Zakhour warned that these figures are subject to go down if the local security situation deteriorates. “This cannot be detected instantly in monthly statistics, but rather in near-future figures.”

Reported by Yasmine Alieh