

Rotterdam, 9 September 2021

Dear contact,

By means of this e-mail, we aim to provide you with preliminary information on our vision to strengthen the hinterland chain in the coming years, and with that on the decision to pass on the operational costs of our Hinterland Container Notification (HCN) services to the carriers from 2022 onwards.

Of and for the port logistics sector

As a subsidiary of Port of Rotterdam Authority and Port of Amsterdam, Portbase aims to make the logistics chains that run through the Dutch ports stronger and smarter. We have been doing this for almost 20 years now, in a neutral manner and without a profit motive. We bring parties together and collaborate on solutions that make the Dutch ports and their logistics chains appealing to companies that want to transport goods via Europe. Of and for the port logistics sector; that is Portbase.

Room for improvement

One of the major cornerstones of the competitive strength of the Dutch ports is the proper organisation of hinterland transport. An increase in scale at the shipping lines and interdependence in the logistics chain are currently making it more complex and challenging to plan hinterland transport. The number of peak moments is increasing, while data between all the chain parties is not seamlessly integrated. This leads to high cost items for each chain participant. Parties have to invest substantial amounts of time and effort to (manually) bring together the information required for the handling of the hinterland transport.

At the same time, we have identified the need among carriers to gain more added value from our HCN services. Given the fact that up till now these services have mainly been geared to the pre-notification process at the terminals, the scope they are currently experiencing is too limited. Carriers see sufficient room for improvement by means of additional service provision by Portbase.

Focus on the hinterland

The complex playing field of the hinterland, as outlined above, requires uniform, port-wide and scalable solutions. The utilisation of the Port Community System as a neutral basic infrastructure for the sharing of data serves as an important condition for this. For that reason, Portbase has decided to develop an ambitious, multi-year hinterland program that focuses specifically on the smooth exchange of data throughout the entire hinterland chain. With this focus on the hinterland, it is our ambition to elevate the customer experience and to contribute to making hinterland transport more efficient, cheaper, more secure and more sustainable.

With the hinterland program, Portbase specifically focuses on:

1. Improvement:
 - Intuitive hinterland services, so that planners experience a higher degree of user friendliness
2. Broadening:
 - A uniform pre-notification process at all container terminals
 - Expansion of the pre-notification process to inland terminals and depots
3. Deepening:
 - Centralisation of data, so that fewer screens are needed, planners have the necessary information at their disposal faster and are able to use this more efficiently
4. Renewal:
 - Innovative service provision, aimed at greater transparency in the chain and thus improved insight into potential congestion and/or disruptions
5. Trusted:
 - Establishment of secure core processes, with all chain partners, on a secure platform

In order to achieve the five aforementioned ambitions of the hinterland program, we will start passing on the operational costs of the hinterland services to the carriers from 2022 onwards. By doing so, we are bringing this segment in line with the other users of our services and are creating a good balance in the operational costs incurred throughout the entire logistics chain.

Continued investment by port authorities

Over the past 20 years, Port of Rotterdam Authority and Port of Amsterdam have made substantial investments in Portbase and thus in the establishment of a neutral basic infrastructure for the Dutch ports. This includes the development of Portbase services and, consequently, the operational funding of the HCN services.

The basic principle of the Port Community System is that the costs of the services are borne by the users. In the case of HCN, the terminals have been bearing these costs since 2008 and the port companies have so far borne the costs of the carriers.

Both port authorities have indicated that they will no longer finance the operational costs of the HCN services from 2022. They do this based on the conviction that the HCN services provide value to the carriers and that these parties should therefore (co)finance the operational costs of using the HCN services.

Both port authorities will continue to invest in the basic infrastructure of the Port Community System. They will invest in innovation as well, also within the hinterland program, to make the Dutch ports even more competitive in the future.

In conclusion

You will receive more information on the fees for the HCN services later this month. The aim is to maintain these prices for a prolonged period of time. The fees for the HCN services – like all of our services – will definitely be based on a cost-effective calculation, without a profit motive.

We will inform you as optimally as possible of the change of course, and with that of our joint path towards a more data-driven hinterland chain that is characterised on all fronts by ingenuity, uniformity, security and transparency.

Yours sincerely,

Iwan van der Wolf
Managing Director Portbase