
La Méridionale joins the CMA CGM Group

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The CMA CGM Group has finalized the acquisition of La Méridionale, a mixed-use freight and passenger shipping company established in Marseille since 1931.

As the leading shipping company running scheduled services to Corsica, La Méridionale currently has four ro-pax vessels, which operate up to 13 weekly crossings between Marseille, Porto Vecchio and Ajaccio, plus connections between Marseille and Morocco.

Innovation in shipping services

The acquisition of La Méridionale complements the new division of the CMA CGM Group dedicated to specialized shipping operations. This division, which reflects CMA CGM's desire to continue innovating in the shipping sector, encompasses the new car carrier business, the stake in Brittany Ferries, the leading French-flagged passenger and vehicle shipping operator in the Atlantic Arc, as well as the investment in NEOLINE, a Nantes-based company developing the first sail-powered ro-ro vessel, and now La Méridionale.

With this new division, which aims to transport cargo and passengers more sustainably, CMA CGM intends to strengthen its overall decarbonization efforts.

A modernized fleet for enhanced environmental performance

The vision for La Méridionale is to provide one of the first “green corridors” in the Mediterranean. To that end, the CMA CGM Group will invest in modernizing the shipping company’s fleet to improve energy efficiency and reduce its environmental impact. The Group intends to place an order for two new LNG-powered vessels. These ships will be able to run on methanol and deliver some of the best environmental performances in the sector. They will also be able to carry out operations with zero CO2 emissions during port calls and are set to replace the oldest vessels on services between Corsica and Marseille, contributing to the preservation of the environment between the island and the mainland.

Revitalized customer experience and promotion of Corsica as a travel destination

The fleet’s modernization will also significantly enhance the passenger experience on La Méridionale, with quieter and more comfortable ships. The focus on improvements for La Méridionale’s customers will also involve an overhaul of the boarding experience in Marseille, upgrading onboard telecommunications equipment, and the digitalization of the customer experience, with a revamped e-commerce offering.

To enhance the appeal of Corsica as a destination, CMA CGM has also committed to develop La Méridionale’s tour operating activities, promoting the local ecosystem and sustainable tourism.

Employment and training opportunities supporting a sustainable French shipping industry

Lastly, the CMA CGM Group will seek to maintain the expertise and commitment of the approximately 600 employees involved in looking after La Méridionale’s customers at sea and on land.

Since La Méridionale boasts one of the largest contingents of French seafarers operating under the French flag (first register), it needs to remain at the vanguard of efforts to train crew in France. To achieve this goal, CMA CGM has committed to form a partnership with the Lycée Maritime et Aquacole high school in Bastia, thereby offering young seafarers in Corsica the opportunity to access a job upon completing their studies.

To boost the upward mobility of young seafarers, La Méridionale will introduce an ambitious plan to promote members of front-line staff into officer roles by validating

the experience they have gained and running special maritime training programs.

Lastly, career opportunities will also be offered to young officers on deep-sea routes operated by CMA CGM's fleet.

(CMA CGM)