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TO OUR CUSTOMERS / AGENTS

CONTAINER WEIGHING

Customers are hereby informed that, following the meeting held on May 30 2016 at the Headquarters of the Italian Port Authority, it has been established that – effective 1 July 2016 – all the containers to be boarded shall bear the VGM Certification (Verified Gross Mark packed container), thus rejecting several requests to consider said date as the date of "gate-in" in the relevant terminal.
Thus, we deem it necessary to summarize the following.

In essence and as already communicated, the new Solas regulations (Safety of Life at Sea) provide that the shipper (i.e. the entity indicated in the bill of lading) shall have to verify the container gross mass (Verified Gross Mass), and that the Verified Gross Mass shall have to be communicated in reasonable advance to the ship Commander (through the shipping agent) and to the terminal, so to allow the processing of the stowage plan. Lacking these indications, the container cannot be loaded on the vessel.

The shipper may obtain the Verified Gross Mass through two methods:

- Method 1: the shipper - once the packing is concluded - weighs the container, packed and sealed.
- Method 2: the shipper - or a retained third party - may weigh each items to be loaded, adding the relevant weight to the container's net weight, according to the following steps:

o Step 1 – weighing of the packages and cargo items: the weight of each packages and cargo items is determined by the relevant certifications. In case the weight cannot be unequivocally determined by the certifications, it shall have to be determined by the shipper through certified and calibrated weighing instruments.

o Step 2 – weighing of the pallets, securing materials and dunnage: the weight is determined through the information provided by the supplier.

o Step 3 – container net weight determination: the shipper shall have to determine the container net weight (reference to be made to the CSC plate).

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The sum of the weights obtained in each of the 3 steps above shall be the container's Verified Gross Mass.

Based on the information in our possession, the weigh stations located in the territory, or in the in-land deposits, or in the intermodal centers appear to be insufficient to manage, in fixed period of time, the export traffic of our ports based on the current flows; thus, we deem it useful to recommend our customer to make aware the shippers – to the extent possible – to widen the loading time frame, so that the weighing operations are better diluted prior to the arrivals at ports.

We presume that, at least during the first weeks of effectiveness of the new rules, loading operations and the relevant containers allocations may be more difficult and risky in particular during the last days of the vessels arrival (as it currently happens) and, most of all, close to the weekends when the vessels traffic in the ports is higher.

Moreover it should be advisable that - in order to reduce at most the number of weighing operations to be made according to the method 1 – those shippers that are able to provide the gross weight of the goods in the "booking phase", add to said weight the net weight of the container; the above in order to obtain the weight according to the method 2 and taking advantage of the transition period regarding the certification of the weighing instruments, as granted by the Ministry until 30 June 2017 (Management order "Decreto Presidenziale" n. 447/2016).

Instructions will follow as to the modalities of the communication of the VGM to us.

We remain at your disposal for any clarification you may need.