

APERTURE & FOCUS

WEEK 14 | 5 APR 2024



GLOBAL APERTURE

The diversion of mainline vessels around the Cape of Good Hope due to unresolved security concerns in the Red Sea [has led to significant shifts in port activity across the Mediterranean](#) as East and Central Mediterranean ports experience decreased vessel call capacity in contrast with more stable conditions in the West Mediterranean. The strategic importance of other global hubs has also been influenced by the situation, with Colombo emerging as a crucial transshipment hub, adapting to new maritime routes and experiencing notable increases in vessel capacity and throughput.

The International Maritime Organization [has approved the creation of two new Emission Control Areas \(ECAs\)](#) in Canada's Arctic waters and in the Norwegian Sea in an effort to reduce emissions from international shipping. These ECAs will cap sulfur content in ship fuel and are expected to significantly reduce air pollution, improving air quality and reducing environmental impacts in these sensitive regions.

REGIONAL FOCUS – AMERICAS

United States: In the wake of the March 26th collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge in Baltimore, the US Government [allocated \\$60 million for emergency bridge reconstruction](#), expediting the approval process through the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration. The accident has led to [extended delays for ro-ro services](#) along the US East Coast, resulting in suspended bookings and congestion at ports where shipments are being rerouted. After a temporary channel opened on April 1st to facilitate the movement of some trapped tugs and barges, [a second temporary channel was established](#) near Hawkins Point on April 2nd to allow additional navigation options for essential commercial vessels. Complete restoration of commercial shipping, however, remains limited as [inclement weather conditions](#) hamper recovery efforts.

Chile: On April 4th, workers [staged protests at ports across Chile](#) that involved blocking roads and a planned 24-hour strike over layoffs and safety conditions. The strike affected operations at ports including Iquique, Antofagasta, and San Antonio with further protests likely on the horizon.

REGIONAL FOCUS – ASIA-PACIFIC

China: Hong Kong's status as a premier container gateway and transshipment hub is in question as [major shipping lines exclude the port of Hong Kong from east-west alliance services](#) in 2025, favoring other North Asian ports like Shanghai. The reduction in direct port calls and the shift towards larger hubs reflect a broader trend of network consolidation and efficiency optimization in the maritime industry.

REGIONAL FOCUS – EUROPE, MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA

Saudia Arabia: On April 1st, the Saudi Ports Authority revealed the introduction [of a new shipping service called 'NRS'](#) by Folk Maritime to Jeddah Islamic Port. This service aims to establish connections between Saudi Arabia and multiple ports along the North Red Sea to meet increasing demand in the region amid ongoing Red Sea disruptions.

France: The local dockers' union at the port of Montoir/Saint-Nazaire [has announced a notice for a new strike from April 4th to April 8th](#), impacting loading and unloading operations for containers, RORO, and bulk cargoes.

United Kingdom: The Port of Southampton completed a major channel-widening project that enables the accommodation of the world's largest container vessels. [The initiative involved](#)

[removing 900,000m³ of material over a 2-kilometer stretch](#) and supports the UK's container handling capabilities.
