



WEEK 14

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APERTURE & FOCUS

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GLOBAL APERTURE

Schedule reliability is at its highest since 2020 according to new data from Sea Intelligence [that showed a 26% year-over-year increase in February](#), closing the gap between present day and pre-pandemic ability to maintain shipping timetables. Air cargo also showed signs of improvement in February, [with demand up 2.9% over pre-pandemic volumes](#) and capacity up 8.6% year-over-year thanks to added belly capacity from the return of passenger flights. In addition, [industry analysts are pointing to an increase in long-term contracts between shippers and freight forwarders](#) as a sign that the market is continuing to stabilize. However, the majority of supply chain managers [expect that warehouse inventories will remain high through 2024](#), adding further inflationary pressures as the market remains in decline.

REGIONAL FOCUS - AMERICAS

USA: Despite the nationwide downturn for both imports and exports, [the Port of New York and New Jersey was the busiest port in the US during the months of January and February](#), beating out the Port of Long Beach and the Port of Los Angeles by 27,000 and 83,000 TEU respectively— a trend that [experts predict will continue](#) with 76% of the population living closer to the east coast of the US.

As the FMC begins to enforce new carrier regulations brought on by the Ocean Shipping Reform Act of 2022, several shipping lines, including Maersk, HMM, and MSC, [have opted to refrain from charging detention and demurrage fees to truckers and cargo owners on days where terminals are closed](#).

Mexico: Intermittent issues with customs IT systems at the US-Mexico border in [El Paso have resulted in hours-long backlogs for commercial trucks](#). While the US side says their systems are once again working as intended, the Mexico side has backlogs of up to eight hours and expects them to last through April 7.

Canada: Negotiations have stalled between port operators and unions at Canada's West Coast ports [after their five-year contract expired on March 31](#). Less than two weeks since the start of the negotiations, [federal arbitrators have been called to mediate the talks](#).

REGIONAL FOCUS – ASIA-PACIFIC

Hong Kong: In spite of Covid restrictions that significantly reduced freighter operations for many carriers operating out of Hong Kong and China, new reports show that [Hong Kong International Airport was once again the busiest cargo airport in the world](#) in 2022, though they experienced the largest volume drop out of all the top ten airports outside of Shanghai.

Vietnam: Less than two-years after the China-Laos railway opened to boost intra-Asia trade, Vietnam announced [a new investment in a rail line that connects their own Vung An port to Vientiane in Laos](#), completing a circular transport corridor that connects Vietnam and Laos with major hubs in Chongqing and Chengdu.

India: Glitches in India's new national electronic data interchange platform "Icegate" have left shippers unable to secure customs clearance, [leading to container backlogs at ports across India](#). To make matters worse, tariff hikes at private terminals that handle the majority of cargo passing through Nhava Sheva port [have caused upset among carriers](#) who are voicing concerns about the size of the rate increases and the lack of notice ahead of implementation.

REGIONAL FOCUS – EUROPE, MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA

Transport ministers from [23 countries met in Poland to discuss major changes of Eastern](#)

[Europe freight transportation](#). According to the International Transport Forum, the meeting addressed the vital need for land transportation that links Ukraine with Western Europe following Russia's invasion, which significantly restricts Ukraine's export ability.

UK: In a move aimed to facilitate post-Brexit trade, British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak announced that [the UK had joined the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership \(CPTPP\)](#) on March 31.

Netherlands: Citing the success of its fully automated facility with zero carbon emissions, [APM Terminals announced an expansion at the Port of Rotterdam's Maasvlakte II terminal that would nearly double its capacity by 2026.](#)

France: Flights at French airports, including Paris-Orly, Toulouse-Blagnac, and Bordeaux-Merignac, [are expected to be reduced by as much as 25%](#) as air traffic controllers join future industrial action, including the April 6 strike, in protest of the country's proposed pension reform.