

# 2<sup>nd</sup> Webinar in the Rethinking Regional Attractiveness Series



## Summary of the WEBINAR on

### Ports and Regional Development in the New Global Environment

24 May 2022

The panel's interventions on the diversity of ports and perspectives on the key determinants for regional development are of great value to the OECD's work on [Regions in globalisation](#), and will provide much fertile ground for us to cover in the weeks and months ahead.

Some of the key takeaways to emerge from the presentations, and the Q&A that followed, include:

- Ports are pivot points of international economic activity in terms of organisation and value creation and their development is to be conceived in complementarity with other transport and logistics infrastructure.
- However, the current shipping model, based on the presumption that more, bigger and cheaper is better, has reached its limits. It has resulted in hub and spoke networks, in a context of strong competition among ports that have proved to not be resilient to local shocks: congestion in a few hub ports has resulted in disruption of global supply chains. The large cruise liner industry example underlines the limited positive externalities on local populations and companies and may even lead to negative environmental externalities.
- A shipping model based on smaller ships, more direct connectivity, value added and better environmental performance would help balancing the current “race for critical mass” and could be more aligned to regional development objectives. This renewed approach could allow for new regions and territories to become more attractive to global trade. Short Sea Shipping can be a driver of development for mid-size/regional ports where the focus is more on specialised industries and increasingly supported as part of efforts to nearshore and reduce emissions in shipping. Regions can promote this via their ports policy and could cooperate to transform the working of global transport.
- In order to make it happen, there needs to exist quality partnerships among regions, cities and the private sector to engage with ports and among ports themselves as well as the implementation of appropriate regulations (such as the agreement implemented in Palma de Majorca, Balearic Region, Spain to limit the number of cruise ships per day in 2023).

- Initiatives fostering inter-regional linkages to improve ports inclusive and sustainable impact include:
  - The [Atlantic Maritime Strategy](#) which aims to support the sustainable development of blue economy in the EU countries bordering the Atlantic, as witnessed by Ireland
  - The strategy of the port of Cleveland (US) to restore regional attractiveness to industrial investment through appropriate direct connections with Antwerp (Belgium) in North Europe.
  - The coordination - in governance and investment – between port and non-port regions to benefit from the economic spillovers of large ports beyond their immediate vicinity. *Examples:* the HaRoPa in the “main axes” port strategy of France; the Buenaventura port in Colombia which is looking at articulating more with territories and connecting to the hinterland by rail, road access as well as rivers; and as indicated by academic research on “*The impact of ports on economic activity*”.
  - The green dimension of ports for the sustainable diversification of regional economies (such as investments in renewable energy through a network of regional ports in Ireland, which aims to scale the renewable energy sector through port development beyond Dublin).
- There is a need for recent and more granular data in order to better analyse the economic, social and environmental impact of alternative models of ports and logistic networks to support regional attractiveness policy-making.

*The OECD Regions in Globalisation project*

