

Port of Cherbourg, 17 July 2025

PRESS RELEASE (VERSION EN)

Inauguration of the rail terminal at the Port of Cherbourg completing the Cherbourg-Mouguerre multimodal motorway linking Spain to Ireland, and to the UK

On Thursday 17 July, at the invitation of Hervé Morin, President of Ports de Normandie and President of the Normandy Region, Philippe Tabarot, Minister for Transport, Niall Burgess, Irish Ambassador to France, Jean-Baptiste Gastinne, Vice-President of the Normandy Region, responsible for transport, Jean-Marc Roué, Chairman of the Supervisory Board of Brittany Ferries, and Pierre Vogt, President of the Cherbourg Port Local Public Company, inaugurated the rail freight terminal at the Port of Cherbourg. It opens a new multimodal motorway connecting Cherbourg and Mouguerre (Pyrénées Atlantiques) linking Spain with Ireland - and the UK. This initiative – known as *ferroustage* in France - marks a major step forward for the future of freight transport in France and Europe, promoting a modal shift to rail and sea.

CHERBOURG, A KEY PORT FOR IRELAND AS WELL AS THE UNITED KINGDOM

The Cherbourg terminal handled 91,866 trailers in 2024, including 84,500 to and from Ireland. Since 2021, the port has established itself as a strategic platform for trade with Ireland and the UK, with annual traffic stabilising at around 90,000 trailers.

The freight ferry market is evolving and facing new challenges. The drive to more sustainable transport, Brexit and the increase in ship size must all be taken into account. These have led to a trend towards more limited use of "all-road" transport, favouring the growth of unaccompanied trailers (those that travel without a driver) and alternative, mass land transport.

By investing in a "ferroustage" terminal, Ports de Normandie and Cherbourg Port are responding to this demand, offering hauliers an alternative and complementary multimodal solution to transporting goods by road. In doing so, they are also taking the first step towards decarbonising port activity. Finally, they are affirming their desire to extend the port's area of influence to Spain, Ireland and the United Kingdom.

A COLLECTIVE INVESTMENT THAT WILL SHAPE THE FUTURE OF THE REGION

Following 17 months of construction, the Cherbourg terminal was completed at the end of 2024, and on 20 May 2025, the first train carrying trailers loaded with goods arrived at the port of Cherbourg. Equipped with LOHR technology and located no more than 1,000 metres from ferry departure ramps, it can accommodate trains up to 750 metres long and load/unload 12 trailers simultaneously.

This construction represents a total investment of €11.2 million, financed by:

- Normandy Region: £2.9 million
- The Department of La Manche: €1 million
- Cotentin Urban Community: €340,000
- Fees (advanced by Ports de Normandie): €5.5 million
- European Union: €1.4 million

In addition, SPL Cherbourg Port, a company owned by Ports de Normandie (90%) and Cotentin (10%), are investing an additional €4 million in equipment and superstructure.

Finally, the State and Ports de Normandie contributed to the regeneration of the railway line, at a cost of €3.9 million:

- State (France Relance): €1.5 million
- Ports of Normandy: €2.4 million, of which:
 - ✓ Normandy Region: €1.45 million
 - ✓ Manche Departmental Council: €0.7 million
 - ✓ Le Cotentin urban area: €0.25 million

A EUROPEAN AMBITION SERVING THE ECOLOGICAL TRANSITION



Designed with CO₂ reduction in mind, the Brittany Ferries ferroutage project is the first service operating from the Cherbourg rail terminal. It is fully in line with French government and European Union ambitions for greener and more sustainable logistics. The service will eventually enable up to 25,000 trailers per year to be transferred from road to rail-and-sea, thus avoiding thousands of long-distance road journeys.

The gradual ramping-up of the service should see six return trips per week, by September 2025.

objective: to offer a regular daily return rail service operated by two trains, representing 320 return trips per year.

By 2030, Brittany Ferries has set a clear

AN INNOVATIVE LINE OPERATED BY BRITTANY FERRIES



The line linking Mouguerre to Cherbourg, operated by BAI Rail, a subsidiary of Brittany Ferries, will enable the combined transport of unaccompanied trailers to the United Kingdom and Ireland. In Mouguerre in the Pyrénées-Atlantiques, BAI Rail Immo, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Brittany Ferries, has financed and coordinated the construction of a dedicated terminal on land acquired for this purpose.

BAI Rail has also invested in 47 Lohr-type wagons, specifically designed for operation on this rail motorway. A five-year framework agreement has been signed with SNCF Réseau for the reservation and management of the necessary rail routes.

Philippe Tabarot, Minister for Transport: *"By enabling the launch of an additional transport link from Cherbourg, the new ferry-rail terminal strengthens the strategic position of our ports in European freight transport. This multimodal motorway, operated by Brittany Ferries, is also a pioneering service: the first land-based transport of semi-trailers on the Atlantic arc in France, a major freight corridor. It will help reduce CO₂ emissions by shifting traffic to rail and sea, and*

will relieve congestion on roads, contributing to more sustainable logistics. The project has strong support from the government, which is contributing to improvements to the national rail network in line with the National Strategy for the Development of Rail Freight.

Paloma Aba Garrote, Director of CINEA (European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency) - Established by the European Commission:

"It is with great pride that we are attending today's inauguration of the Port of Cherbourg's ferry-rail terminal. Through its support, the European Union is confirming its commitment to decarbonising transport through multimodal solutions that facilitate the transfer of traffic from road to rail and sea. The Cherbourg-Mouguerre multimodal motorway (Pyrénées Atlantiques) presents real opportunities for sustainable trade in Europe, but also for the development of ports such as Cherbourg, whose commitment to greener transport, energy transition and local development I welcome."

Hervé Morin, President of Ports de Normandie, President of the Normandy Region:

"In a context where environmental concerns, the increasing size of ships and Brexit are having a major impact on cross-Channel traffic patterns, the Region, Ports de Normandie and Brittany Ferries decided to respond to these various challenges by developing this alternative mode of transport. The project is ambitious and will expand the hinterland of the Port of Cherbourg. It will enable it to continue its development without compromising cross-Channel traffic in other Normandy ports, while offering a complementary and environmentally-friendly alternative. This strategic development marks a turning point in the decarbonisation of freight, which we are pursuing with electrification of quays. It is a massive investment embodying a strong ambition: to make Cherbourg an essential link in the freight chain."

Jean Morin, President of the Department of La Manche:

"The Department of La Manche welcomes this major step forward, which reaffirms our region's central role in logistics and energy transition. By supporting the development of the new ferroustage line, we are making a choice for the future: a more resilient, greener model that is more connected to major European links."

The project is also proof that the Channel is capable of innovation and anticipation, looking beyond its borders. It positions Cherbourg not only as a strategic hub for freight, but also as a symbol of a region that embraces economic development alongside environmental standards. For our businesses, our citizens and our future partners, this new asset reinforces the Channel's appeal. It is a source of collective pride."

Christèle Castelein, President of the Cotentin Urban Community:

"The port of Cherbourg is a real tool for affirming the maritime identity of the Cotentin region. Its activity continues to grow, and the ferroustage service is a concrete example of this. It strengthens our region's strategic position on the Channel-North Sea coast in terms of trade and maritime traffic. By offering a relevant alternative to road transport, it responds to significant environmental challenges. As France's leading port for trade with Ireland and a stronghold for the development of marine renewable energy, the port of Cherbourg is now the first port in the Channel to offer direct rail-to-ship freight transfer. This environmental asset is a showcase for our region and a driver of new economic dynamism."

Jean-Marc Roué, Chairman of the Supervisory Board of Brittany Ferries:

"2025 is the year of decarbonisation for Brittany Ferries. In spring, the first two large hybrid ferries in the European Union, powered by LNG, BioLNG and electricity, joined our fleet. And today, with this first section of the multimodal motorway now connecting Ireland, the United Kingdom and Spain by rail and sea, a new page is turning for Brittany Ferries and its public and private partners. It is a page that is more decarbonised, increasingly ambitious and, as always, dedicated to the economic vitality of the regions of Normandy that it serves. That starts with Cherbourg-en-Cotentin and its port, a real economic and tourist hub for our company."

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