

AssArmatori chairman calls for Morandi bridge to be replaced urgently

Andrew Spurrier | 21 August 2018



Stefano Messina, chairman, AssArmatori. Credit: Angelo Scorza

The motorway bridge, which collapsed on 14 August, causing 43 people to lose their lives, fell on to one of the main access routes to the port of Genoa, Italy.

Messina, who is chairman of Genoa-based Gruppo Messina but who was speaking in his capacity as chairman of [breakaway Italian shipowners' organisation AssArmatori](#), said a new bridge needed to be built urgently to restore the port's east-west road links.

This should be done, he said, regardless of work currently in progress on other major infrastructure projects designed to ease the heavy congestion in and around the city of Genoa and its port.

At the same time, he said, work on these other projects – the high-speed Genoa-Milan rail link and Genoa motorway by-pass – should be accelerated.

Messina also called for the launch of a series of urgent provisional measures to speed up rail services in and out of the port, as well as the introduction of a European Union bonus scheme to speed up the development of motorways of the sea and measures to regulate the movement of exceptional loads.

He pleaded, too, for the appointment of a special commissioner with extraordinary powers to ensure that the measures he had proposed were actually carried out.

In the meantime, he joined other leading maritime personalities in assuring that the port of Genoa was “fully operational” even though it is acknowledged that some negative impact on port activity is inevitable.

Ports of Genoa authority chairman Paulo Emilio Signorini estimated that the port could lose up to 10% of its expected container throughput this year after having seen traffic increase 15% last year and 5% so far this year.

He told Euronews last week that the port's ability to cope with the impact of the bridge collapse would depend on its ability to establish an alternative truck route into and out of the port along the Ligurian coast.

"We estimated that Morandi Bridge was crossed by 1,000–1,500 trucks per day," he said. "These trucks will now have to use a new alternative, one that I mentioned earlier. If this alternative were to work properly, in terms of port traffic we could deal with the damage caused by the collapse of the bridge. Otherwise we will have serious congestion on other existing alternative routes and this could cause a greater loss."

He added that the port was also hoping to be able to introduce a 24-hour operating system at its terminals, enabling them to handle trucks throughout the night.

AssArmatori chairman Messina, whose association is backed among others by Mediterranean Shipping Company, said that the organisation was confident that the port and city of Genoa would rise to the challenge and ensure that terminal activity levels were maintained.

"On this basis," he said, "despite the negative economic consequences that partner companies will inevitably suffer, it confirms the continuity of all services based in the port and the presence of all ships which were and are expected to call at the port."