



## **Italian versus Northern Range port competitiveness: a transportation cost analysis in Chinese trade**

**Dionisia Cazzaniga Francesetti<sup>1\*</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>*University of Pisa, Italy*

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### **Abstract**

The paper presents an analysis of the costs of shipping containers from four Chinese ports to representative central European destinations. It is demonstrated that the sum of costs by sea and costs over land, using both truck and rail transport, clearly favours the Italian ports, above all those of Genoa and Trieste for a geographic range that does not include all the Northern countries of the European Union and Russia but does cover a considerable portion of the southernmost cities of these countries such as Milan, Munich, Vienna, Budapest, Bern, Lyon, and Kiev.

Other Italian ports can compensate for the handicap of the greater distance from this range of production and consumption zones, if they are appropriately reorganized with lower costs in direct competition with the Northern European ports, particularly the port of Naples, where COSCO has set up operation. However, despite the evident advantages in terms of distance and costs, Italian ports are unable to compete with those of Northern Europe on account of inefficiency affecting both their internal structure and inland transport. The purpose of the paper is to define costs in each sector (shipping costs, port costs and inland distribution costs) and to compare the relative port positions.

*Keywords:* Ports; Inland costs; Intermodality; China; Northern range ports; Competitiveness.

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### **1. Introduction**

This paper presents an analysis of the costs of shipping containers from four Chinese ports to representative central European destinations. It demonstrates that the sum of costs – in terms of generalised costs *stricto sensu* (i.d.  $GC=M+V*T$ , see World Bank) - by sea and costs over land, using both truck and rail transport, clearly favors Italian ports, above all those of Genoa and Trieste for a geographic range that does not include all the Northern countries of the European Union and Russia but does cover a considerable portion of the southernmost cities of these countries such as Milan, Munich, Vienna, Budapest, Bern, Lyon, and Kiev.

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\* Corresponding author: Dionisia Cazzaniga Francesetti (dcf@di.unipi.it)