

# Freight Expectations

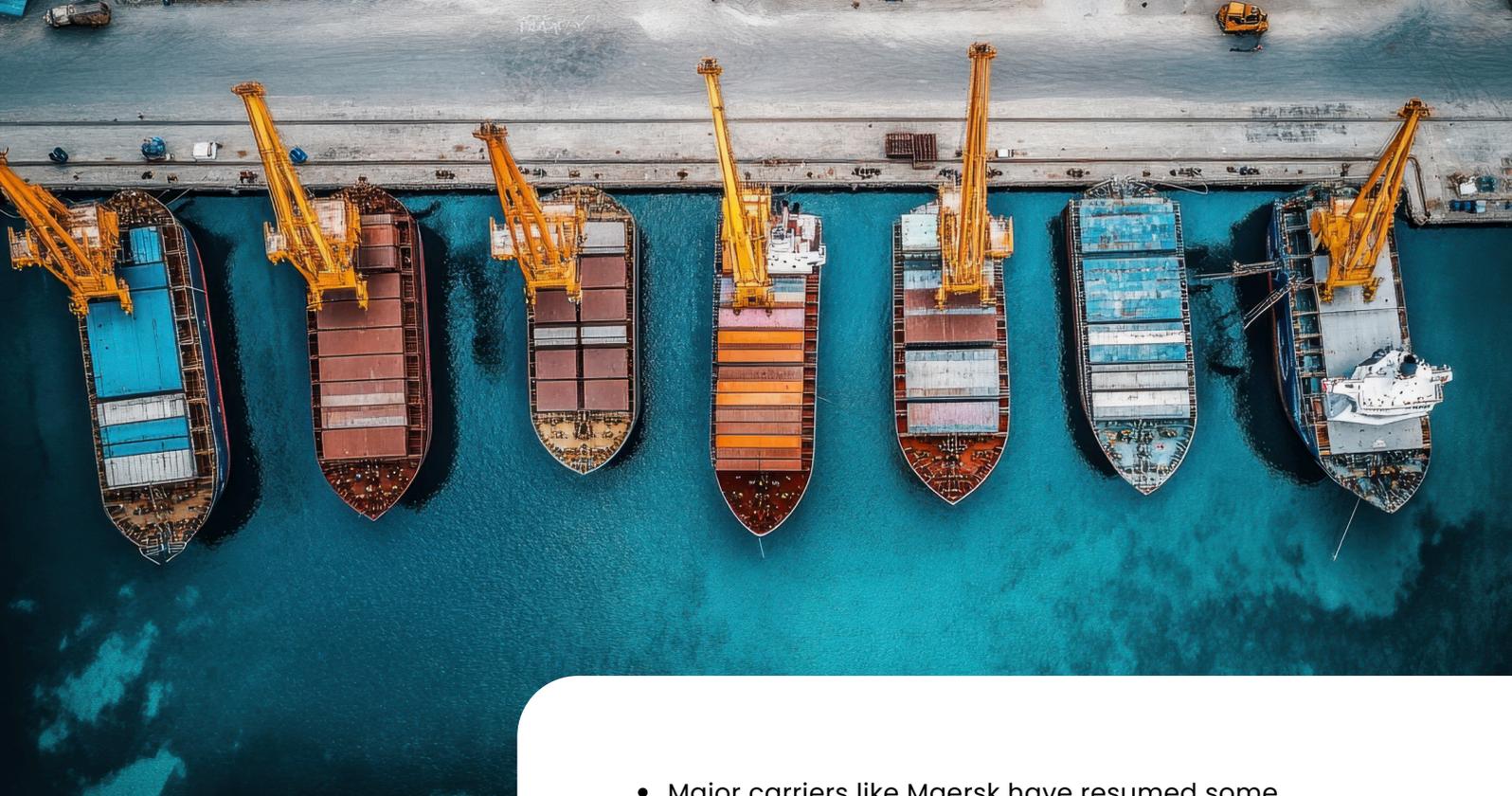


## Supply Chain & Logistics Update

Suez Canal Reopening:  
What it Means for Shippers

Global Shipping in 2026:  
Suez, Tariffs and the New  
Rules of Global Trade

Greenland Dispute  
Highlights Policy Risk



# At A Glance Monthly Market Update

- Major carriers like Maersk have resumed some transits through the Suez Canal as of mid-January 2026, signalling increased confidence in Red Sea security and interest in shorter east-west routings.
- Webinar: **Global Shipping in 2026: Suez, Tariffs and the New Rules of Global Trade.** Join us to gain a realistic view of how global shipping networks are being redesigned in response to Red Sea risk, Suez uncertainty and wider geopolitical tensions.
- U.S. tariff threats on several European countries over Greenland briefly raised uncertainty in transatlantic trade, prompting the EU to pause a broader trade framework.
- In the Gulf, Iran's actions around the Strait of Hormuz raise risk for oil and LNG flows, while rising U.S.–China competition near Taiwan threatens container traffic and critical trade routes.
- Spot rates are high but uneven, global capacity is ample, and local equipment shortages or route changes are still causing temporary delays.
- As the Chinese New Year holiday approaches in mid-February, supply chains face their annual stress test. Factories across China begin shutdowns days or even weeks before the official holiday, and logistic hubs tighten, creating long delays for ocean shipments.



# From the Managing Director



I'm incredibly proud to share some positive news from within our teams. Last month, we were honoured to receive the Staff Development Award at the BIFA Awards, recognising our commitment to nurturing talent and building expertise across our business.

This month, our Irish team has been shortlisted for the Customer Focus Achievement Award and Logistics & Transport SME Company of the Year at the Irish Logistics and Transport Awards – a testament to their dedication and the value they bring to our clients.

Looking at the shipping landscape, from the ongoing uncertainty around Suez Canal routes and Red Sea disruptions, to geopolitical tensions affecting trade lanes and tariff risks, it's clear that shippers need to stay agile and informed to navigate these challenges.

At the same time, capacity and equipment imbalances, seasonal peaks, and pre-Chinese New Year planning mean that every decision – from routing to freight contracts – has real implications for cost and reliability.

As always, our goal is to combine deep market insight with practical guidance so that our clients can make confident, informed decisions. I hope you find this update useful and insightful as you plan for the weeks ahead.



**Staff  
Development**

*Thomas Kuehn*

MANAGING DIRECTOR

# Red Sea Reopening: Current Status of the Suez Canal

*Major carriers like Maersk have resumed some transits through the Suez Canal as of mid-January 2026, signalling increased confidence in Red Sea security and interest in shorter east-west routings.*



However, overall traffic remains well below pre-crisis levels — still around 60% lower than before the Red Sea crisis — as carriers cautiously balance safety, insurance and operational predictability.

## **Why the slow return?**

Carriers prioritise risk management, crew safety, and insurance costs. Even with improved security conditions, many liners are phasing back gradually rather than reverting immediately to full Suez use.

## **What shippers should expect:**

- Faster transit times can improve schedule reliability and reduce working capital tied up in transit.
- Lower bunker consumption per voyage reduces overall freight cost pressure.
- Rates could briefly rise if congestion spikes initially overwhelm port handling capacity and schedules bunch up.
- Once flows normalise and vessels are redeployed efficiently, markets may see a softening in rates.
- Shippers should anticipate potential congestion at major EU hubs, longer dwell times, and bottlenecks in hinterland connections during the transition phase.
- Schedule changes for liner services still optimised for Africa routings.
- Repositioning empty containers currently out of alignment due to detours.
- Insurance and risk-premium recalibration tied to Red Sea safety status

MUST WATCH WEBINAR

# Global Shipping in 2026: Suez, Tariffs and the New Rules of Global Trade

From Red Sea disruptions and Suez Canal uncertainty to tariff threats and shifting trade alliances, global shipping has entered a far more complex and politicised phase.

We're offering a rare, carrier-side perspective on how these decisions are really being made. Drawing on decades of experience running global shipping networks, our guest speaker will explain how geopolitics, security risk and trade policy are reshaping routing choices, capacity deployment and pricing – and what that means for cargo owners trying to plan with confidence.

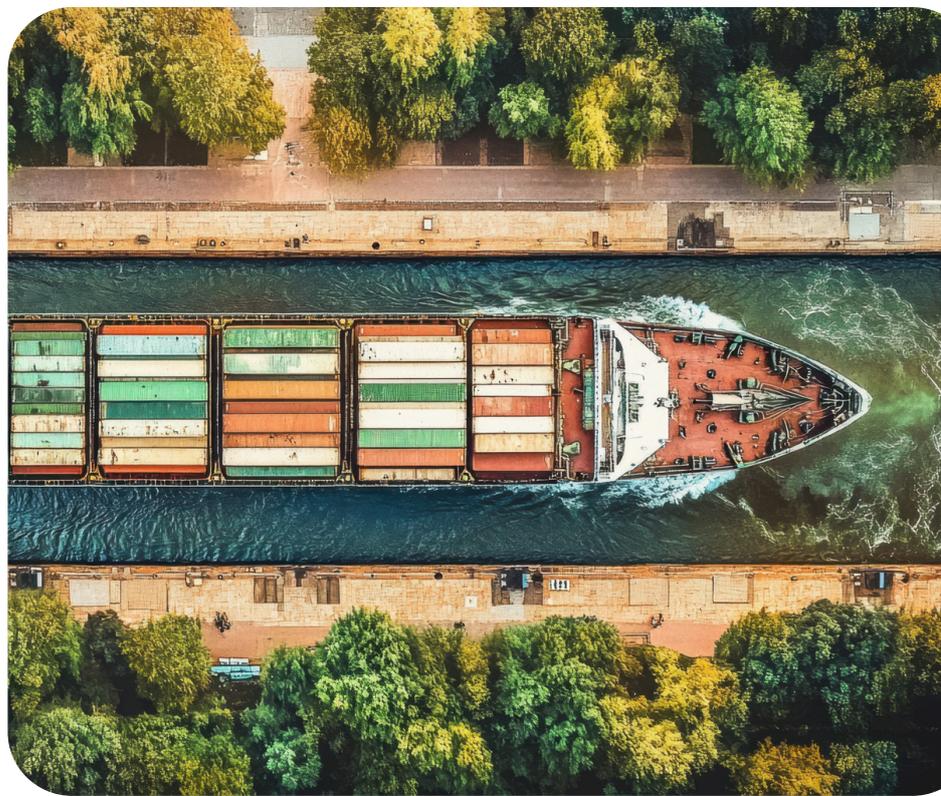
## What you will take away from this free webinar?

- A realistic view of how global shipping networks are being redesigned in response to Red Sea risk, Suez uncertainty and wider geopolitical tensions
- Clear insight into how overcapacity, alliances and policy shocks (including tariffs) are likely to influence freight rates and service stability through 2026
- Practical guidance on structuring freight contracts and carrier partnerships that can withstand volatility, disruption and sudden shifts in routing

**Thursday 12<sup>th</sup>  
February 2026**

[Click here to register](#)

[Don't miss it—register early to secure your spot.](#)



# Greenland Dispute Highlights Policy Risk for Shippers

*Temporary U.S. tariff threats over Greenland underline how geopolitical risk can quickly disrupt costs, contracts, and shipping plans, making flexibility essential for shippers.*



## Get in touch

Our team is ready to review your specific supply-chain needs and implement fast, seamless routing solutions.

Last month U.S. President Donald Trump said he would impose 10% tariffs (rising to 25% by June) on imports from eight European countries – including Denmark, Germany, the UK, France, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Finland – unless they supported U.S. aims regarding Greenland.

The European Union temporarily suspended its efforts to ratify a broader U.S.–EU trade framework in response to the tariff threat, highlighting how trade policy and geopolitics are now interlinked.

Following discussions at the Davos Forum and diplomatic engagement, Trump later said he would not impose the tariffs as scheduled on February 1, citing progress toward a future framework on Greenland and Arctic cooperation.

- Potential duty increases quickly alter the landed cost of goods, affecting pricing, margins and forecasting.
- Shippers may need to adjust contracts, pricing models and buffer margins to cope with tariff risk.
- This uncertainty makes budgeting and tendering more challenging, particularly for goods crossing U.S.–EU trade lanes.
- Shippers and freight forwarders may build tariff contingencies into rate structures or include clauses related to duty changes.



# Iran and Taiwan: Maritime Risk

**In the Gulf, Iran's actions around the Strait of Hormuz raise risk for oil and LNG flows, while rising U.S.–China competition near Taiwan threatens container traffic and critical trade routes.**

## **Iran and the Strait of Hormuz**

The Strait of Hormuz remains one of the world's most critical chokepoints for energy and shipping. Roughly 20% of global crude oil and a significant share of LNG trade pass through this narrow passage, connecting the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea. Any disruption here reverberates through fuel markets and freight costs.

- Ongoing regional tensions — particularly between Iran, Israel and the U.S. — have elevated risk perceptions for vessels transiting the Gulf.
- Fuel price volatility and higher energy costs feed directly into freight contracts and inventory carrying costs.
- Insurance and risk surcharges raise the cost of passing through Gulf choke points.
- Routing flexibility and contingency plans are increasingly essential in logistics planning.

## **Taiwan and the Taiwan Strait**

Tensions across the broader Indo-Pacific — particularly in the South China Sea — are intensifying amid U.S.–China competition, creating uncertainty. While there has been no active closure or blockade of Taiwan's shipping lanes, persistent tension keeps risk premiums elevated on routes through or near the strait, with broader implications for Pacific-Asia freight.

- Lead times and reliability become less predictable
- Supply chain diversification — such as alternate sourcing and stock buffers — becomes even more critical
- Disruptions or even temporary shutdowns of this corridor would impact the flow of electronics, machinery and finished goods, amplifying delays and pushing up freight costs.
- Supply chain interruptions here would cascade into manufacturing sectors worldwide.



# Current Trends in Freight Rates, Capacity and Equipment

*Spot rates are high but uneven, global capacity is ample, and local equipment shortages or route changes are still causing temporary delays.*



## **Spot rate levels hold elevated but uneven**

Recent weekly freight data shows Asia-US West Coast rates holding around ~\$2,675 per FEU, with East Coast around ~\$3,928 per FEU and Asia-Europe near ~\$2,926 per FEU as of late January. Some Mediterranean lanes have softened slightly.

## **Pre-Chinese New Year seasonal bumps**

Spot rates were supported in January by pre-Lunar New Year demand, leading some carriers to maintain pricing discipline rather than discount into the traditionally quiet period – part of a strategy ahead of 2026 contract negotiations.

## **Global vessel capacity remains abundant**

Global vessel capacity is currently higher than the demand for shipping. While there are some local equipment shortages, overall, there is plenty of space on ships, giving shippers more options for routing and scheduling.

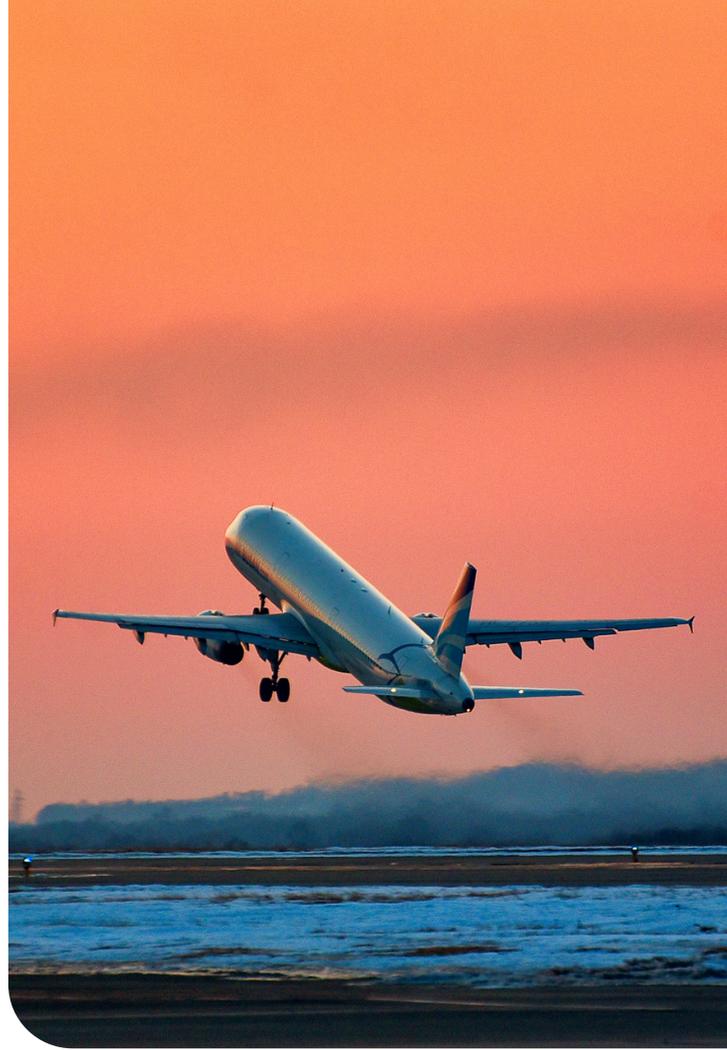
## **Ongoing repositioning challenges**

Analysts have noted that shifts in import/export patterns, front-loading ahead of tariff deadlines, and longer ballast voyages (e.g., due to rerouting around the Cape of Good Hope) are still slowing equipment cycles, creating temporary local shortages even when global capacity is ample.

AIR FREIGHT

# Air Freight: The Smart Option

**As the Chinese New Year holiday approaches in mid-February, supply chains face their annual stress test. Factories across China begin shutdowns days or even weeks before the official holiday, and logistic hubs tighten, creating long delays for ocean shipments.**



For shippers racing against time, air freight has emerged as a reliable alternative to avoid congestion and keep goods moving.

While air freight rates have softened slightly since late 2025, capacity remains tight on key Asia-US and Asia-Europe lanes, particularly for high-priority shipments. Industry data shows global air cargo demand is strong, and forwarders report that early bookings are essential to secure space before the peak window closes.

Air freight not only avoids bottlenecks at ports but also ensures lead-time reliability, making it especially valuable for time-sensitive or high-value goods like electronics, parts, and critical inventory.

With ocean space increasingly constrained and port schedules disrupted ahead of the holiday, shippers who plan and book air cargo now can bypass the typical delays that affect ocean shipping at this time of year. Even at a premium, air freight provides certainty and speed when timing is critical — making it a smart, strategic choice for pre-Chinese New Year shipments.

## **Get in touch**

Our team is ready to review your specific supply-chain needs and implement fast, seamless routing solutions.



**Questions? Speak to our team based at London Heathrow for dedicated air freight expertise.**



# Speak to Justin today.

No two logistics challenges are the same. I understand this and I'm here to tailor solutions to meet your specific needs. I can work closely with you to develop strategies that address your unique challenges effectively and efficiently, offering guidance that allows you to plan and adjust logistics strategies accordingly.



**Want to get in touch.**

[Click here if you want to get in touch with me about any queries or concerns you have.](#)

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TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

