

Argentina is back – says Plate Trade's Sebastián Zalaya

# New opportunities

Latin America is on the rise again. In a recent conversation Sebastián Zalaya, the managing director of the Argentinian enterprise Plate Trade, elaborated on how he as a project cargo logistician assesses the opportunities in his steadily liberalising country.

"After twelve years of protectionism, Argentina is now opening up to the world again through its long-term economic policies," Sebastián Zalaya told the *ITJ* in a frank discussion we had recently, "with the government now abolishing hurdles to foreign investment." The managing director of the firm Plate Trade, named after the capital city's Río de la Plata, or river of silver, sits at the source of local project logistics activities in his Buenos Aires headquarters. He believes the sector can look forward to some good times in the short-term future.

#### Some sectors surging strongly

In energy matters the country's RenoVar Plan – triggered by its commitment to the

Paris climate agreement – has pledged to increase renewable energy's share from 2% today to 20% by the year 2025. The first round saw 17 projects awarded in this context, with the investment volume for the construction of windmills, photovoltaic and biomass plants coming to around USD 1.8 billion.

As for infrastructure, a transport plan for 2016–2019 envisages investments of more than USD 33 billion for the transformation of the rail network, cargo railways, ports and airports. The plan has been extended to 2027, with more investment in the road network, which will cover 11,400 km of highways, 13,000 km of safe routes and 15,600 km in an optimal state. A long-term

Photos: Plate Trade



Plate Trade's **Sebastián Zalaya** reports that new programme

railway plan scheduled to run until 2035 foresees the completion of the country's railfreight network with USD 15 billion of investment. "Argentina has one of the largest rail networks in the world," Zalaya elaborates, "which facilitates access to ports and production areas."

#### Unconventional resources

Unconventional oil production is the star. USD 2 billion of shale oil investment has been planned for this year. "The oil and gas industry is being reactivated, so that Argen-

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s offer investors plenty of opportunities in Argentina.

tina can once again become an exporter,” Zalaya elaborated. State mining policies have been updated, with Argentina’s great reserves of gold, silver (*argentum*), copper and lithium promising much.

Plate Trade is one of the most important logistics partners in Argentina, according to Zalaya, with a strong regional presence too, with offices in Uruguay, Paraguay and Bolivia. He believes it is well-positioned, “having completed project cargo tasks for cement and oil plants, and railway enterprises, as well as handling goods such as



rice, wheat, maize or barley for export.”

#### Barges in the portfolio

One Plate Trade investment underlines that it is betting on the recovery of the Argentinian market. “We purchased Fluvialmar, an Argentine-flag ship-

owner, which will enable us to serve bilateral Argentinian-Brazilian trade, river transport as well as our extensive maritime coastal areas.” Plate Trade’s good relationships with a series of leading regional steel, construction, oil and gas enterprises also push the firm’s growth.

“Becoming a member of the WWPC enables us to access a global consortium of project cargo specialists and generate long-term synergies,” Zalaya added. He closed by pointing out that Plate Trade is ready to supply all the necessary transport needs in Argentina, which is the regional country that the World Bank expects to record the largest economic growth in the short-term future. *Christian Doepgen*

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