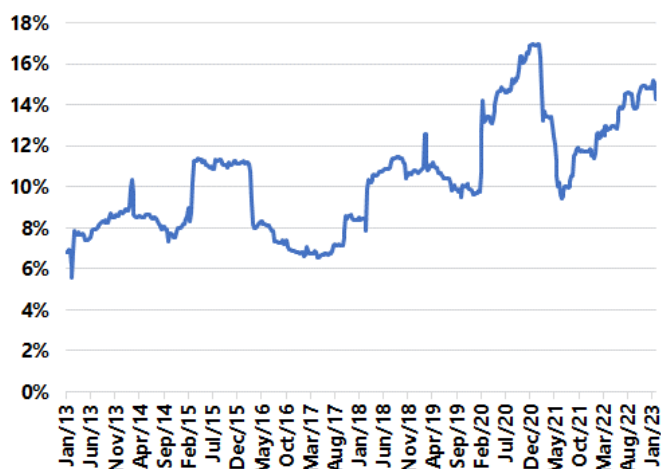# Increased sailing volatility

In an ideal world, there should be a set number of sailings in any given week on any given trade, which would match the number of underlying services offered on the trade. This is however, hardly the case, as vessel delays/early arrivals, blank sailings, and extra-loaders, all increase the volatility in the number of sailings per week. Moreover, the fluctuations have increase sharply compared to before the pandemic.

To illustrate this phenomenon, we calculated the standard deviation of the data (in percentage terms), seen over a rolling 1-year period from January 2012 to January 2023. For Asia-North America West Coast, this is shown in figure 1.

Fig. 1: Standard deviation of weekly vessel departures (Asia-NAWC, Running 1-Year)

The volatility, in terms of how many vessels more or less are sailing from week to week, has increased drastically into North America West Coast. While the apex was reached in early 2021, we begin to see another phase of consistently increasing volatility heading into 2023. On Asia-North America East Coast, the apex was reached in January 2022, and since then, while the volatility has fallen and settled at a slightly lower level, it is still higher than the pre-pandemic period.

On Asia-North Europe, the volatility in the number of sailings was on an increasing slope ever since 2013, making sharp jumps in both early 2020 and summer of 2021. There was a sharp drop in early 2022, with volatility plateauing some 6 percentage points higher than the pre-pandemic period. On Asia-Mediterranean however, volatility is on a declining trend, but still higher than the pre-pandemic period.

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All quotes can be attributed to: Alan Murphy, CEO, Sea-Intelligence.

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