

EDITION  
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 GERMAN PORTS

# LOGISTICS PILOT

Magazine for Ports, Shipping and Logistics



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BREMEN | ANTWERP | DUBAI



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# “Best preconditions for innovative solutions”

Florian Schröder, managing director of AHK Baltische Staaten



Dear readers,

Germany and the three Baltic states can look back on a long history of trading together. For example, Riga was founded in 1201 by Bishop Albert von Buxhoeveden of Bremen. At the latest, the sea route established itself as an important part of the trade route from London and Bruges to the Baltic region with the Hanseatic League in the mid-13th century.

Today, Bremerhaven, Hamburg and Lübeck are the German ports with the highest rates of transshipment towards the three Baltic states. The Baltic ports are also of particular interest to the German logistics industry as a part of this, because of the role they play in transit traffic with Russia and Scandinavia. German investors, such as Kühne + Nagel and Göllner from Bremen and Lower Saxony, have also recognised this in the meantime. What is more, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are pioneers when it comes to digitisation. The best conditions for innovative technologies and solutions for the industry.

In the medium term, the development of the three ports with the highest levels of transshipment, Riga and Ventspils in Latvia and Klaipėda in Lithuania, will also depend on relations with Russia and Belarus. Due to their historical role as transshipment points for goods from Russia and Belarus, these ports may have to accept losses in future. On the other hand, however, the Latvian town of Ventspils is hoping to become part of the new Silk Road on the axis that passes through Minsk to Sweden. Corresponding cooperation agreements have already been signed.

The effects of the “Rail Baltica” mega project will also be exciting. The rail link, which will run from Warsaw to Tallinn via Kaunas and Riga with a connection to Helsinki, will connect the three countries to the European rail network by 2026 and also link them to the largest European ports as a result. For which of the Baltic ports this development harbours more risks or opportunities cannot be foreseen yet. However, one thing is clear: port operators and shipowners will have to invest in environmentally conscious and smart logistics in order to remain competitive.

Best wishes, Florian Schröder

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Focus on:  
**Baltic States**

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COVER PHOTO MONTAGE: HEIKE MAY; PHOTO CREDITS: RETO STÖCKLI / NASA EARTH OBSERVATORY/LANCE/ZEISS; RAPID RESPONSE: ADBESTOCK / WELLSIA; ADBESTOCK/VALENTINE/REBE; RB RAIL AS; PIXABAY (LZ); PHOTO ON PAGE 3: AHK BALTIC STATES

# The “Baltic Tiger” arrives on digital paws

**W**hen the Baltic States joined the European Union on May 1 2004, they were often referred to as the “Baltic Tiger” because of the high pace at which reform took place in them and their rapid economic growth in the 1990s. Although the speed of these processes has slowed down considerably in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in recent years due to them adapting to the western industrialised countries, the tiger is still ready to pounce – and especially on digital paws (see page 10).

Germany is one of the Baltic states’ most important trading partners and ranks either first (Estonia) or second (Latvia and Lithuania) among their main suppliers. In terms of main consumer countries, the Federal Republic of Germany is still in 4th and 6th place. The situation is different the other way round: The Baltic states rank in the 40s to 60s (see below) among Germany’s more than 230 trading partners.



## Foreign trading partner ranking for foreign trade for the Federal Republic of Germany 2019

| Exports<br>in €1,000          |             | Imports<br>in €1,000          |             |
|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|-------------|
| 1. United States              | 118,680,140 | 1. People's Republic of China | 110,054,162 |
| 2. France                     | 106,563,521 | 2. Netherlands                | 97,816,180  |
| 3. People's Republic of China | 95,983,949  | 3. United States              | 71,334,115  |
| ...                           |             | ...                           |             |
| 48. Lithuania                 | 3,461,608   | 51. Lithuania                 | 2,107,591   |
| 56. Estonia                   | 1,824,976   | 66. Latvia                    | 871,934     |
| 57. Latvia                    | 1,725,128   | 68. Estonia                   | 814,307     |

SOURCE: GERMAN FEDERAL STATISTICAL OFFICE (DESTATIS), 2020



## The main ports in the region



### Estonia

|  |               |   |                        |
|--|---------------|---|------------------------|
| <b>Capital:</b>  | Tallinn       | <b>Area:</b>                                      | 45,340 km <sup>2</sup> |
| <b>Population 2020:</b>  | 1.3 million.* | <b>GDP/capita 2020:</b>                           | € 20,107*              |
| <b>Most important import goods 2019</b><br>according to SITC as a % of total imports |               | <b>Main supplier countries 2019</b><br>Share in % |                        |
| 1. Chemicals   | <b>11.4%</b>  | 1. Germany  | <b>9.8%</b>            |
| 2. Motor vehicles and parts  | <b>9.5%</b>   | 2. Russia   | <b>9.6%</b>            |
| 3. Petrochemicals  | <b>8.2%</b>   | 3. Finland  | <b>8.6%</b>            |
| <b>Most important export goods 2019</b><br>according to SITC as a % of total exports |               | <b>Main customer countries 2019</b><br>Share in % |                        |
| 1. Machinery   | <b>9.3%</b>   | 1. Finland  | <b>15.6%</b>           |
| 2. Raw materials (except fuels)  | <b>8.0%</b>   | 2. Sweden   | <b>10.0%</b>           |
| 3. Foodstuffs  | <b>7.7%</b>   | 3. Latvia   | <b>8.7%</b>            |
|  |               | ...   |                        |
|  |               | 6. Germany  | <b>6.0%</b>            |

SOURCE: GERMANY TRADE AND INVEST, 2020  
\* PROVISIONAL INFORMATION, ESTIMATE OR FORECAST

### Latvia

|   |               |  |                        |
|---|---------------|--|------------------------|
| <b>Capital:</b>   | Riga          | <b>Area:</b>   | 64,570 km <sup>2</sup> |
| <b>Population 2020:</b>   | 1.9 million.* | <b>GDP/capita 2020:</b>                              | €15,072*               |
| <b>Most important import goods 2019</b><br>according to SITC as a % of total imports    |               | <b>Main supplier countries in 2019</b><br>Share in % |                        |
| 1. Chemicals  | <b>11.8%</b>  | 1. Lithuania   | <b>17.6%</b>           |
| 2. Foodstuffs   | <b>10.9%</b>  | 2. Germany   | <b>10.9%</b>           |
| 3. Electrical Engineering   | <b>8.4%</b>   | 3. Poland  | <b>9.4%</b>            |
| <b>Most important export goods in 2019</b><br>according to SITC as a % of total exports |               | <b>Main customer countries in 2019</b><br>Share in % |                        |
| 1. Raw materials (except fuels)   | <b>14.1%</b>  | 1. Lithuania   | <b>17.1%</b>           |
| 2. Foodstuffs   | <b>13.9%</b>  | 2. Estonia   | <b>11.7%</b>           |
| 3. Chemicals  | <b>9.1%</b>   | 3. Russia  | <b>9.2%</b>            |
|   |               | 4. Germany   | <b>7.2%</b>            |

SOURCE: GERMANY TRADE AND INVEST, 2020  
\* PROVISIONAL INFORMATION, ESTIMATE OR FORECAST

### Lithuania

|  |               |   |                        |
|--|---------------|---|------------------------|
| <b>Capital:</b>  | Vilnius       | <b>Area:</b>                                      | 65,286 km <sup>2</sup> |
| <b>Population 2020:</b>  | 2.7 million.* | <b>GDP/capita 2020:</b>                           | €17,393*               |
| <b>Most important import goods 2019</b><br>according to SITC as a % of total imports |               | <b>Main supplier countries 2019</b><br>Share in % |                        |
| 1. Chemicals   | <b>14.9%</b>  | 1. Russia   | <b>14.5%</b>           |
| 2. Oil   | <b>12.3%</b>  | 2. Germany  | <b>11.7%</b>           |
| 3. Foodstuffs  | <b>9.3%</b>   | Poland  | <b>11.7%</b>           |
| <b>Most important export goods 2019</b><br>according to SITC as a % of total exports |               | 3. Latvia   |                        |
|  |               | <b>7.1%</b>                                       |                        |
| <b>Main customer countries 2019</b><br>Share in %                                    |               |   |                        |
| 1. Chemicals   | <b>15.2%</b>  | 1. Russia   | <b>14.0%</b>           |
| 2. Foodstuffs  | <b>13.0%</b>  | 2. Latvia   | <b>9.5%</b>            |
| 3. Petrochemicals  | <b>11.4%</b>  | 3. Poland   | <b>7.9%</b>            |
|  |               | 4. Germany  | <b>7.6%</b>            |

QUELLE: GERMANY TRADE AND INVEST, 2020  
\* PROVISIONAL INFORMATION, ESTIMATE OR FORECAST

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## COMPACT

**BREMEN.** In November, the **Institute of Shipping Economics and Logistics (ISL)** was commissioned by Bremen's Senator for Economics, Labour and Europe, Kristina Vogt, with a study entitled **"The Maritime Economy in Bremen: Employment and Value Creation 2019"**. The aim is to map the diverse and heterogeneous industry in terms of its economic strength. This ties in with a study for the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi) which is currently being undertaken under the direction of the ISL. In addition to parameters such as employment and turnover, the effects that arise along the value chain are also to be determined. The results were not yet available at the time of going to press.

**BREMEN.** Around 170 participants accepted the **invitation from the Bremen Port and Logistics Association (BHV) to the seventh specialist forum on project logistics in January.** The results of an **industry analysis on project logistics**, which the BHV had conducted in advance, were presented, among other things at the event, which was held virtually for the first time due to the pandemic. Despite increasing cost pressure and the ongoing pandemic, the participants from industry and logistics agreed that the sector's prospects were good. China in particular is viewed as an important growth market.



## "Certificate confirms pioneering role"

**BREMEN/BREMERHAVEN.** In November, Bremen and Bremerhaven had their **exemplary environmental performance certified by Lloyd's Register again in accordance with the PERS (Port Environmental Review System) management standard.** An essential component of the certification process was formed by the 2020 Environmental Report, which presented all the legal and environmental policy requirements in addition to an update to the key environmental figures. "We take our responsibility for the environment seriously," states Bremen's Senator for Science and Ports, Dr. Claudia Schilling. "Ecological concerns play a central

role in the expansion of the ports and their upkeep. For example, in June we decided to create an additional offering for the shore-side supply of electricity in Bremen's ports. As a part of this, eight fixed shore-side power facilities for maritime shipping and two additional connections for inland shipping are to be created by 2023. PERS is an excellent tool for helping ports implement an environmental management programme in line with the recommendations of the European Sea Ports Organisation. As Germany's largest seaports, Bremen and Bremerhaven confirm with the certificate their pioneering role as sustainable ports."



## SBTi confirms BLG climate protection goals

**BREMEN.** The Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) recognised the goals of BLG LOGISTICS to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in November. BLG LOGISTICS claims that it is **the first German logistics service provider and the first company in Bremen to have scientifically recognised climate protection goals.** The goal of BLG is to reduce emissions inside the company by 30 percent by 2030 and outside the company by 15 percent. What is more, investments are being made in selected and certified climate protection projects.



## New subsidiaries in Bilbao and Szczecin

**BREMEN.** The Transport Overseas Group continues to expand. After the company had already announced it was opening new offices in Antwerp, Dubai and Berlin in 2020, it recently added its own subsidiaries in Spain (Bilbao) and Poland (Stettin) at the beginning of this year. **As a full-service logistics partner, this is a further step in our strategy towards serving our customers throughout Europe,"** states Managing Partner Tim Oltmann. The Bremen-based Transport Overseas Group specialises in RORO and project cargo.



## Test run for the smooth flow of goods

**BREMEN.** Since November, **BLG LOGISTICS** and **SecureSystem** have been testing a newly developed service for smooth and secure transport routes within the framework of the “**FastLane**” project. The purpose of the approach is to shorten the time required for customs clearance in destination ports and to simplify the customs process. To this end, BLG LOGISTICS shipped 20 containers equipped with a sensor system from SecureSystem from Bremen to America. If one of the containers is opened without permission during the test run, a message is sent directly to the parties defined beforehand and to the customs authority.



## Innovative online seminar on inland shipping

**BREMEN.** How can **shifting freight transport to inland waterways** help to **reduce greenhouse gas** emissions and relieve the burden on road and rail networks? Answers to these questions were provided in **January in an online seminar held jointly by bremenports and the Maritime Cluster Northern Germany.** Among others, four experts from shipping companies, shippers and governmental organisations presented successful practical examples during the seminar. Another aim of the event was to stimulate the qualified exchange of knowledge and technologies among the participants.



## Pile-driving start for the new Quay 66

**BREMERHAVEN.** Bremen’s Senator for Science and Ports, **Dr Claudia Schilling,** together with **bremenports** Managing Director, **Robert Howe,** gave the **symbolic green light** for the new Quay 66 in November. Costpoint: 17.7 million Euros shared by the state and federal government. “This construction measure is of immense importance for the smooth running of the port,” states Schilling. Following several accidents, the quay, which was put into operation in 1965, could no longer be deemed stable. The sheet pile wall was last damaged in 2017 in an accident involving a car transporter.



## The “Panda Sprinter” rolls up

**BRAKE.** On December 28, the first direct train organised by J. MÜLLER carrying **1,000 tonnes of pulp from Brake to Chongqing reached its destination.** An express connection is to be established with the “Panda Sprinter” that will not only be able to transport pulp, but also other products to China and back quickly and in an environmentally friendly manner in the long term. J. MÜLLER is focusing primarily here on expanding the transshipment of pulp and is looking towards the growth market of Asia and the countries of the former USSR. Over 1.2 million tonnes of pulp are transhipped annually in Brake.



## Floating transshipment in Cuxhaven

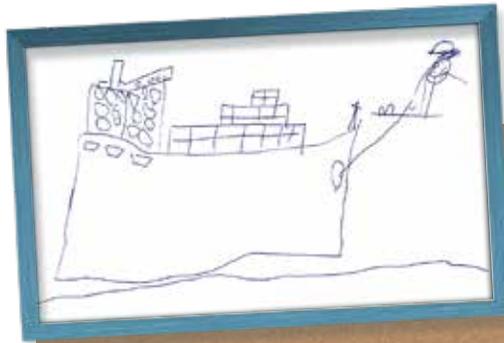
**CUXHAVEN.** In November, the semi-submersible ship “**Rolldock Sea**” took the dredging barge “**Gian Lorenzo Bernini**” on board at Cuxport Terminal in Cuxhaven. To facilitate this, “**Rolldock Sea**” flooded its ballast tanks to the point that the stern submerged so far that the loading area was below surface of the water thus allowing the “**Gian Lorenzo Bernini**” to float in at water level with the help of two tugs. An important prerequisite for **floating manoeuvres** of this type is a large draught, as is available in Cuxport Berth 4 with its draught of 15 metres.

## COMPACT

**OLDENBURG/WILHELMSHAVEN.** At the end of 2020, NPorts announced that it would forego an increase in port and quay dues as of 1 January 2021 as a contribution to

addressing the economic impact of the corona pandemic. The latest tariffs have since been made available on [www.nports.de](http://www.nports.de) in the download section for the respective port. They apply to the ports in Brake, Cuxhaven, Emden, Stade, Wilhelmshaven, Baltrum, Bengersiel, Langeoog, Norddeich, Norderney, Wangerooge, Hooksiel, Fedderwardsiel and Grobensiel. This year port charges at **JadeWeserPort** ([www.jadeweserport.de](http://www.jadeweserport.de)) will also remain at the 2020 level in order to support the maritime industry, which has been affected by the pandemic. This was decided by the supervisory board at JadeWeserPort Realisierungsgesellschaft at its meeting in December.

**BREMEN.** In the future, **Bremer Bereederungsgesellschaft (BBG)** and the **Harren & Partner Group (H&P)** intend to share and expand their competences, fleets and networks in the bulker segment. Both companies made this announcement in December. **The joint activities between the two companies are to be bundled under the new "Harren Bulkers" brand.** Together, BBG and H&P look after a fleet of 23 bulk carriers.



The image depicts a mooring line from a child's-eye view, painted for NPorts.

**NPorts is a family-friendly employer**

**OLDENBURG.** Shortly before Christmas, NPorts was awarded the certificate of the same name by the board of trustees at berufundfamilie Service GmbH. This confirms that in the last three years the port company has successfully implemented the agreed measures and defined further goals. "I am very pleased that we are striking a chord with our employees with our offering. The fact that we have also been **awarded the "berufundfamilie" certificate** again confirms that we have successfully implemented the right measures," states NPorts Managing Director Holger Banik.

**First cars loaded at Mosolf Auto Terminal**

**WILHELMSHAVEN.** Within a year, Mosolf transformed the idea of exporting vehicles from Wilhelmshaven by ocean-going vessel into reality: In November, the Grimaldi Group's first ship, the **Grande Portogallo, moored at Mosolf Auto Terminal to load 600 vehicles.** More transhipments are scheduled to follow. The business segment is being expanded. "We have created a new business practically out of nothing here in just a few months – and that despite the fact that corona has not exactly made things easier," states Dr Jörg Mosolf, CEO Mosolf Group.

**Also on the right course virtuals**

**BREMEN.** For 14 years now, experts have been commenting at the **"Bremen Shipping Congress"** on the current challenges faced by maritime human resources management. The event (here an archive image from 2019) took place for the **first time in early December as an exclusively virtual event.** Four cross-industry workshops addressed the topics of gender equality in the maritime industry, securing young talent, international training concepts and the importance of digitisation for on-board operations. Another highlight of the event were the **prizes awarded by Claus Brandt, Managing Director of the German Maritime Centre (DMZ) in the "Outstanding Academic Maritime Teaching" competition.** These went to Professor Daniela Schwerdt, Professor Michael Thiemke and Ann-Kathrin Lange. The idea behind the competition is for us to promote academic maritime teaching in Germany, increase the visibility of the teaching subjects and support the exemplary commitment of the teaching staff to the teaching and the students, and by doing so strengthen Germany's maritime future in its diversity," states Brandt.





## Hellmann expands in Bremen

**OSNABRUCK/BREMEN.** The full-service provider Hellmann Worldwide Logistics is expanding its Bremen site and building what they describe as a **“state-of-the-art digitised freight forwarding facility”** in Ludwig-Erhard-Straße. **Construction for the project started on November 17** during a ground-breaking ceremony on the previously undeveloped 40,000 square metre neighbouring plot to the current Hellmann site. The new building will have around 1,500 square meters of office space and 8,000 square meters of transshipment space and will be completed in the second half of 2021.

## Successful dock lock

**BREMEN.** In November, bremenports announced that the container ship “Al Kharj” had completed its stay at the Kaiserhafen’s west quay and had left the port. In order to tow the 306-metre-long carrier through the Kaiserschleuse back onto the River Weser, a dock lock had to be performed. **This had to be done, because the ship was longer than the lock.** For a successful passage, both lock gates had to be open at the same time and the water level in the Weser and in the port had to be approximately identical. The dock lock for the “Al Kharj” took just under 40 minutes.



## 3,500 new cars for China

**CUXHAVEN.** For the Wallenius Wilhelmsen Group’s deep-sea RORO liner service from Europe to China, Cuxport loaded over 3,500 premium vehicles onto the ships “Tiger” and “Torino” in November. **Transshipment took place at Berth 4 within a week.** In China, the ships headed for Shanghai, Tianjin and Guangzhou, where the vehicles were distributed to other parts of China. “The economy in China has recovered and demand for quality German vehicles is high,” states Oliver Fuhljahn, Head of Business Development Automobile Logistics at Cuxport.



## Green light for new electric SUVs

**BREMERHAVEN.** At the beginning of January, the start signal was given at the BLG AutoTerminal for unloading the new BMW iX3, the first fully electric SUV from this manufacturer. **The first units of the new model were delivered by the ship “Phoenix Leader” from the shipping company NYK Line,** before being transported by transporter to dealers throughout Germany and Europe – for their initial fitting out as part of the market launch. This year, more new electric vehicles are expected at the BLG AutoTerminal Bremerhaven, where around 2.1 million vehicles were transhipped in 2019.



## 500th offshore wind turbine from Cuxhaven

**CUXHAVEN.** In November, the 500th nacelle for an offshore wind turbine was completed at **Siemens Gamesa** in Cuxhaven. This marked an important milestone **for the plant, which** opened in 2017 and began regular operations in 2018. Cuxhaven is part of the Siemens Gamesa production network together with the rotor blade production facility in Hull (UK) and the installation port in Esbjerg (Denmark). Together with 164 other SG 8.0-167 DDs, the 500th turbine was installed in the UK’s largest offshore wind farm, Hornsea 2.

# Small, but oh my!



PHOTO CREDITS: ADOBESTOCK/VICTOR GROM; ZWICKAU UNIVERSITY

Neither in terms of their area – around 175,000 square kilometres – nor their total population – over six million – can the Baltic states be called real giants. However, they do score points as attractive hubs in east-west trade furnished with well-trained staff and a well-developed infrastructure. Above all, however, they are real pioneers when it comes to digitisation.

**W**hen we talk about the states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, the term “Baltic States” has long since established itself as a synonym. But for Ralph M. Wrobel, professor of economics at the West Saxon University of Applied Sciences of Zwickau and an expert in economics, politics and history, this concept creates a false image in many people’s minds: “There is no such thing as a Baltic region with a homogeneous cultural or economic area. Rather, they are three small states on the eastern Baltic coast with their own characteristics and customs as well as different historical roots.”

The economic fields in which the three Baltic states can score points are correspondingly different. Estonia, the most northerly of the three states, is considered a trendsetter in digitisation. Textiles, furniture, food and machines are also produced there. Shipbuilding and agriculture also play an important role. The neighbouring state of Latvia not only forms the geographical centre of this trio, but, with its capital Riga, also has the most important trade and service centre in the region. The country has made a particular name for itself as an exporter of wood and agricultural products. Other cornerstones of the Latvian economy include the chemical industry, vehicle construction and logistics. Last but not least, Lithuania, as the southernmost of the Baltic states, is Germany’s most important trading partner in the region (see page 4) and is considered an important location for manufacturing

companies in areas of mechanical engineering and metal processing, as well as in the furniture, chemical and textile industries. “Due to their relatively small and open economies, however, all three Baltic states are highly dependent on external economic factors and thus exposed to economic fluctuations of greater proportions,” Wrobel points out.

### Interesting perspectives and “heavenly conditions”.

In his view, an important step towards the current international competitiveness of the three Baltic states was their entry into the European Union (EU) on 1 May 2004 and the associated introduction of the Euro. “That simplifies trade with these countries enormously. However, many German companies often overlook the opportunities available to them in this region because the three states have relatively small markets compared to their neighbour Russia. But it is precisely these that offer interesting prospects for ■■■

“There is no such thing as a Baltic region with a homogeneous cultural or economic area.”

Prof. Dr. Dr. Ralph M. Wrobel,  
Professor of Economics at the West Saxon  
University of Applied Sciences of Zwickau





The corona pandemic has led to a surge in digitisation in many German companies, not just in the form of Zoom conferences. For the Baltic states, digitisation – from birth certificates to establishment of a company – has long been part and parcel of private and business life.

■ ■ ■ German companies,” Wrobel states with certainty. Against this background, he no longer sees the three Baltic states as extended workbench to Western Europe, but rather as players with independent economic structures. Likewise, he considers the process of the often-cited “integration into Western structures” in all three states as already completed. “Now we have to defend these achievements against the sceptics,” states Wrobel.

Dr. Til Assmann, Honorary Consul of the Republic of Estonia in Bremen and Lower Saxony, sees great potential for the development of trade with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. “More and more German companies are relying on the flexibility, innovative strength and focused structures that exist in these states,” Assmann reports. This applies both to the general economic conditions there and the reliable northern European mentality of the people in their day-to-day dealings with one another. “For German entrepreneurs, conditions in the Baltic States are almost like being in paradise – either barely an hour and a half away by plane or in digital terms very close by. This is because what often used to be referred to as the ‘Baltic tigers’ have now become digital tiger states that make entrepreneurship incredibly easy compared to Germany,” states Assmann.

Assmann cites the lively start-up scene in Estonia as a prime example of digitisation in action, in the course of which

“For German entrepreneurs, conditions in the Baltic States are almost like paradise.

Dr. Til Assmann, Honorary Consul of the Republic of Estonia in Bremen and Lower Saxony



five start-ups have already been named “unicorns”. This term is used to describe start-ups with a market valuation of more than one billion US dollars before going public. “This is a unique rate worldwide in relation to Estonia’s population of just 1.3 million,” Assmann points out – well aware that this is just one example of many for Estonia’s digital development. The entire public administration in the country was digitised and the right to Internet access was enshrined in law. “Digitisation in the Baltic states goes so far that about an hour after the birth of a child, the birth certificate, child benefit instructions and even suggestions for possible kindergartens are sent online. Moreover, a private tax return can be completed online in ten minutes and a whole company formed in 18 minutes,” states Assmann. In keeping with the pioneering role of the Baltic states in digitisation, Lithuania is said to have the best developed fibre-optic network in Europe, according to the German-Baltic Chamber of Commerce.

### Infrastructure at European level

In terms of their infrastructure, the Baltic states were initially nowhere near as pioneering as they were in terms of digitisation. However, not least thanks to extensive funding from the EU, associated facilities and structures have been massively expanded in recent years. Hence Assmann attesting to the

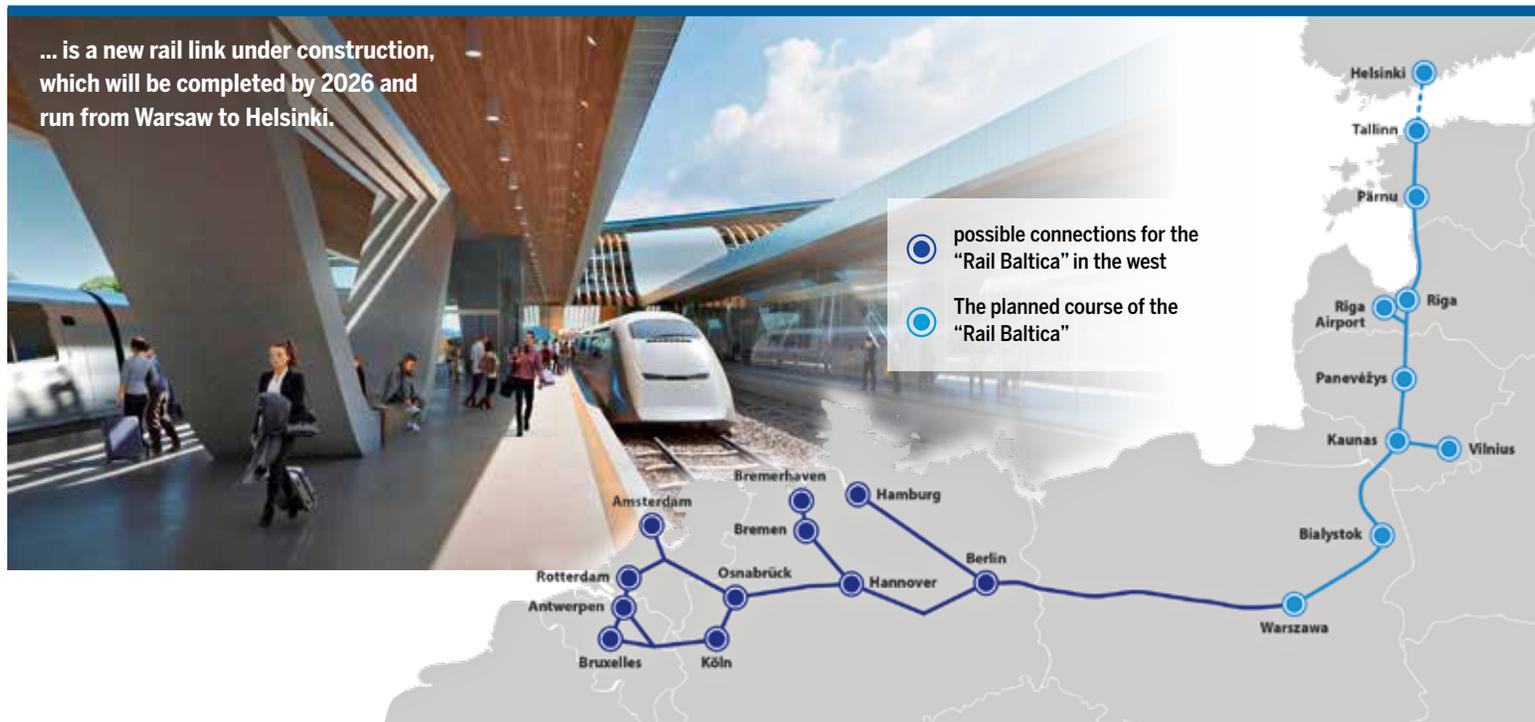
fact that all three nations have “an infrastructure at a high European level”. A central role is played by the ports, in which extensive investments have been made in recent years to ensure their long-term competitiveness. Klaipėda (Lithuania), Riga and Ventspils (both Latvia) and the Estonian capital of Tallinn are considered to be important maritime hubs in particular here. In 2019, for example, Klaipėda handled a total of 46.2 million tonnes, Riga 32.7 million tonnes, Ventspils 20.4 million tonnes and Tallinn 19.9 million tonnes. The most important maritime addressees on the German side are the ports in Bremerhaven and Hamburg. According to information from the German Federal Statistical Office, they handled more than half of the transshipments to the Baltic ports in 2019.

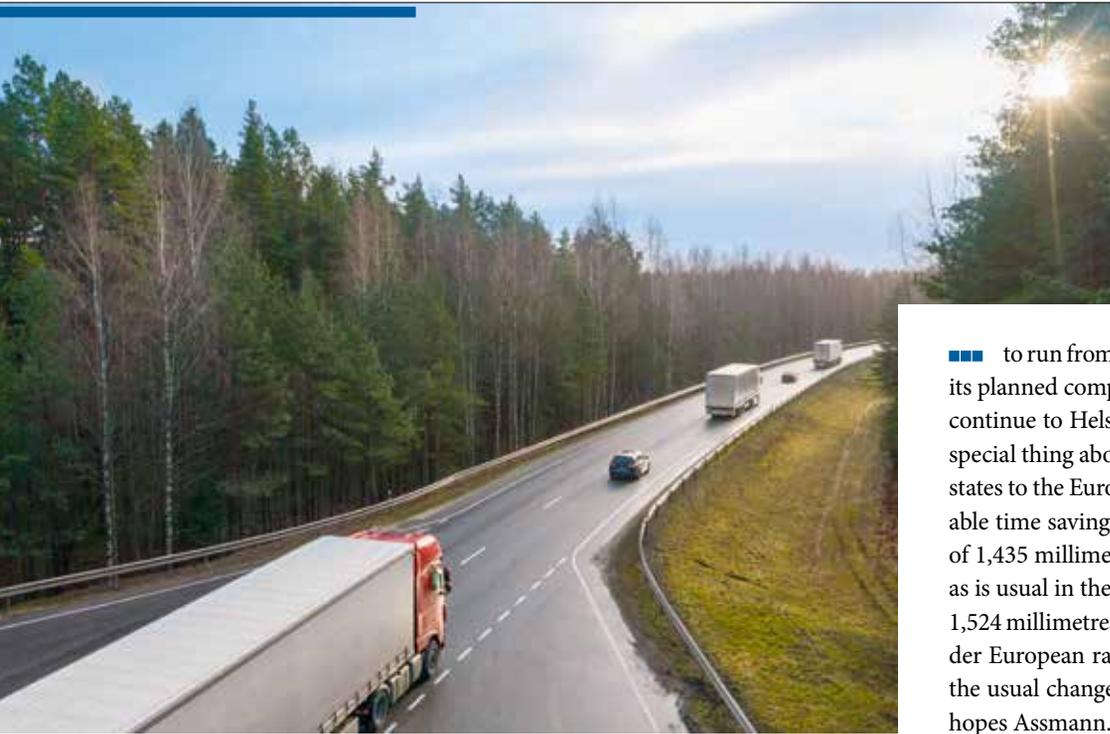
However, it is not only around the ports that investments are being made in infrastructure; numerous major projects can also be found on the agenda for other modes of transport in the coming years. These include, for example, the “Rail Baltica” rail construction project and the “Via Baltica” road construction project, both of which have already started. The EU member states Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Finland are involved in “Rail Baltica. This is a high-speedtrain line (249 km/h for passenger transport and 120 km/h for freight transport) planned over 870 kilometres, which is ■■■

## Three Seas Initiative: Hope for a boost in development

In 2015, Poland’s President Andrzej Duda and Croatia’s President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović launched what is known as the ‘Three Seas Initiative’. The ‘Three Seas Initiative’ is an **association of the twelve Central and Eastern European EU states made up of Bulgaria, Estonia, Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania, Austria, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, the Czech Republic and Hungary**. Its aim is to strengthen cooperation, especially in the areas of infrastructure, energy policy and security, in order to generate more attention for the political interests of the participating states within the EU. The initiative met for the first time in August 2016 in Dubrovnik, Croatia, and most recently in Tallinn in October 2020. The focus of the most recent conference was the expansion of the transport and energy infrastructure. According to the organisers, German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier and US Secretary of State Michael Pompeo were among the participants at the partly virtual summit due to coronavirus in the Estonian capital. Estonian President Kersti Kaljulaid pointed out during a video press conference that the Three Seas Initiative is the least developed, but at the same time, fastest growing part of the EU economically. She hopes that the initiative will give the region a new developmental boost. (bre)

## “Rail Baltica”...





The 1,700-kilometre-long European route E 67, also known as “Via Baltica”, is considered to be the most important road connection in Northern Europe.

■■■ to run from Warsaw via Kaunas and Riga to Tallinn after its planned completion in 2026. From Tallinn it should then continue to Helsinki – possibly even through a tunnel. The special thing about it: The line, which is to connect the three states to the European railway network and ensure considerable time savings, is being developed in the standard gauge of 1,435 millimetres common in Western Europe and not – as is usual in the Baltic states – in the Russian wide gauge of 1,524 millimetres. “This will be a breakthrough for cross-border European rail traffic on the north-south axis – without the usual change of locomotives and wagons at the border,” hopes Assmann.

At the same time, the 1,700-kilometre-long European Route E 67 – the most important road transport link in

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north-eastern Europe – is to be successively expanded over the next few years. The route, also known as the “Via Baltica”, starts in Prague and then stretches from Wrocław and Warsaw to Tallinn via Łazdźaj, Kaunas and Riga. Finally, the ferry continues to Helsinki. The problem in relation: So far, the route has only been upgraded to two lanes in many places and, especially on Estonian terrain, does not yet meet the specifications of a motorway as we know it in Germany. When the trunk road will be expanded accordingly, however, is still unknown.

### “The logistics clocks tick differently there”

Two companies that firmly believe in the Baltic as a logistics location are Vollers Group and PWL Group. For example, the Vollers Group, headquartered in Bremen, is represented in the Baltic market with two subsidiaries – in the port cities of Riga and Tallinn. The two locations play a key role for the logistics company, especially when it comes to storing coffee, cocoa and general cargo for the CIS region (Commonwealth of Independent States), i.e. for the states in the territory of the former Soviet Union. “Latvia and Estonia are optimal hubs between East and West for many merchants who want to bring coffee to Russia, for example. This is because there they are subject to EU law and the European financing system, but, at the same time, are close to Russia without having to pay the customs duties immediately due when entering the Russian market,” explains Christian Vollers, sole owner of Vollers Group since 2013. In Riga and Tallinn, the subsidiaries store the coffee and cocoa, sometimes for months, before it is transported further east: by wide-gauge railway to destinations more than 1,000 kilometres away, and by truck to destinations such as Moscow or St. Petersburg, which can be reached more quickly.

“The logistical clocks tick completely differently there and can in no way be compared with local logistical processes,” states Vollers. For example, the local quota for coffee in the

Baltic states is around five percent, while in Germany it is around 95 percent. This means that while the share of goods in this country remains largely in the metropolitan region of the respective port, the relatively small markets in the Baltic states serve mainly as transit countries. A scenario that can also be transferred to other commodities, such as cotton and foodstuffs, and which brings with it special challenges. “Of course, it is not the ‘Wild East’, but you should make sure you have reliable staff and partners in the region who ■■■

“For many traders, Latvia and Estonia are ideal hubs between the East and West.”

Christian Vollers,  
owner of the Vollers Group

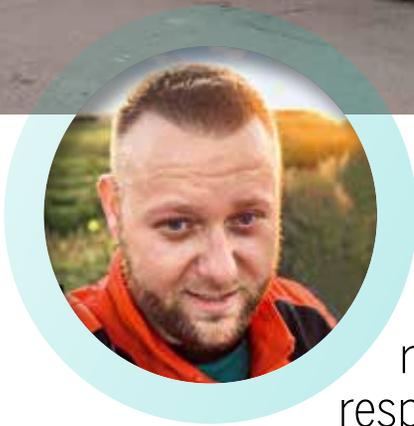


Well-stocked coffee warehouse from the Vollers Group for onward transport to the Baltic States and Russia. The Bremen-based company also transports cocoa and general cargo to the east.





Here PWL handled a shipment of rotor blades to Africa via the Latvian port of Liepāja.



“The market is very dynamic and requires a short response time and a high degree of flexibility.”

Sebastian Dörr,  
Director PWL Worldwide Logistics

■■■ can speak Russian, so that you can easily contact the appropriate intermediaries in case of possible disruptions,” states Vollers. This is why, for him, good documentation of the transport chains and professional expertise are the most important factors of survival in the markets east of the Baltic.

### A handshake still counts in the Baltic States

The PWL Group has also been active in the Baltic States since 2014. The Bremen-based shipping and transport sector service provider has primarily specialised in exporting commercial goods and food shipments from Europe, but also covers project shipments to the region. “The market there is very dynamic and requires a short response time and a high degree of flexibility. We often we receive an enquiry one week and the shipment needs to reach its destination by the

week after,” reports Sebastian Dörr, Director PWL Worldwide Logistics. Most recently, for example, used clothing was brought to Estonia and Latvia, where it was processed and sold in second-hand shops. On the other hand, specially coated cardboard packaging for foodstuffs and adhesive films for industry have also been seen on the company’s to-do list recently. “We make sure that the cargo arrives safely at its port of destination, regardless of whether it is Klaipėda, Tallinn or Riga. However, since Russia also belongs to our Baltic network, the port in St. Petersburg is also served, too,” states Dörr. The PWL Group then commissions a reliable freight forwarder for the onward carriage. “Experience has shown that it is best when you know your partners here personally. Moreover, when trading with the Baltic states, a handshake still counts,” states Dörr, identifying two more customs in the market there.

### “The future starts now”

In contrast to the Vollers Group and the PWL Group, and despite the good conditions in the Baltic States, relatively few players have ventured into the region so far. Assmann makes a critical remark accordingly: “Since 1991 and in principle until today, companies from Bremen and Lower Saxony have paid respect to the diverse opportunities available in the Baltic States, but have mostly limited their involvement to consulting, cooperation and trade relations, hence hardly taking advantage of the real opportunities”. As examples of companies that have implemented large-scale measures there, he cites Kühne + Nagel (IT centre in Estonia), Continental Automotive (industrial production in Lithuania), Knauf and Schwenk (building materials in Latvia) and Hamburger Hafen und Logistik AG (HHLA, container terminal in Estonia). His emotional appeal to local companies is therefore: “All port locations with their logistics service providers in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania offer optimal opportunities. Do not wait another 30 years – the future starts now!” (bre) ■■■

PHOTO CREDITS: PWL, PRIVATE, ŽALGIRIS (2)

# “I haven’t experienced an anti-corona demonstration in Lithuania yet”.

Born in Bremerhaven, Arne Woltmann started his basketball career at the age of twelve with 1. BC Bremerhaven and later even made the leap into the Bundesliga. After the end of his active career, the 2.02-metre-tall centre player was drawn to the coaching bench – among other things for the German national team and the Eisbären Bremerhaven. Woltmann has been assistant coach at Žalgiris Kaunas in Lithuania since August.



## LOGISTICS PILOT: Mr Woltmann, what tipped the scales in favour of your commitment to Žalgiris Kaunas?

**WOLTMMANN:** Basketball has a completely different status here in Lithuania than in Germany. Lithuania is a major international force in this sport, similar to Brazil and Germany when it comes to football. And Žalgiris Kaunas is considered to be the most successful club in the country. We play in the Euro League with our team, which is the second highest class in the world. In short: when an offer like this comes along, you just can’t turn it down.

## What impression do you have of Lithuania and its people after the first few months?

That’s difficult to gauge because, as I said, basketball is the number one sport in this country. My proximity to this sport has probably made it easier for me to quickly gain a foothold here and it has certainly opened up opportunities for me that others don’t have. What I can certainly say is that the people here were open and friendly towards me straight away and that Lithuania is an ambitious and progressive country that is developing rapidly towards the west.

## What makes you say that?

Many different things. For example, the fact that almost all the products I can buy in Germany can also get in the supermarkets here. Or that the skyline in the capital of Vilnius is characterised by myriad new buildings on which the logos of major international brands and companies can be found emblazoned similar to those in Frankfurt. The German retail sector is also clearly represented here with important players. And as far as the

Internet is concerned, I sometimes even have a better connection here than in Germany. On the other hand, however, clear differences in the quality of the roads do exist, which are new and very good in the larger cities. A little bit outside, though, their state would no longer allow them to be called roads in Germany.

## And how do you rate economic development in Lithuania?

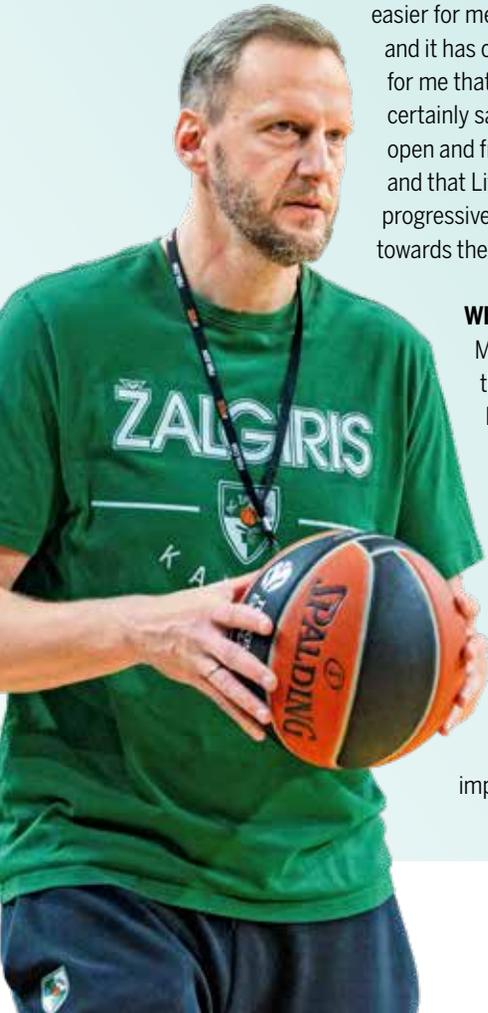
I think Lithuania is on the right track and is doing everything it can to make people forget the time they spent behind the Iron Curtain. But you can tell that the country has undergone major structural changes in the past 20 years and that many of its youth have emigrated. With a population of just under 2.8 million people, Lithuania is also a relatively small market, which cannot match the level of Germany, although it does have its strengths in mechanical engineering and furniture production and is also an important location for the chemical and textile industries.

## You spent your first months in Lithuania under the influence of coronavirus, didn’t you? How did you find that?

The people here are highly disciplined and constantly adhere to the rules set by the state and which regularly adapted to the situation. For example, when I leave my apartment I have never seen someone not wearing mouth and nose protection. This is probably one of the reasons why the number of corona cases in this country are lower than in many others. This discipline was also evident at our start of the season in September, when we were permitted to play in front of a reduced number of spectators. Back then, people queued for hours in front of the hall to patiently endure having their temperature measured and then kept to the safe distances in the hall. However, we have been playing without spectators since November. And another thing that speaks in favour of how disciplined the Lithuanians are: I haven’t experienced any anti-corona demonstrations here yet.

## But before that you were cheered when you stopped at a red light once. How did that come about?

I was driving my car through Kaunas and the day before we and our team had won the Euro League against the top Turkish team Anadolu Efes from Istanbul. When I stopped at the traffic lights, the people in the car next to me recognised me and suddenly began to cheer and blow their horn. Something like that has never happened to me in Germany. (bre)



# Don't see things through the glasses of your own culture

The culture in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania may be similar, but each country attaches great importance to its own independence. Business travellers are therefore best advised to avoid using the collective term Baltic States during their stay.

**A**wareness of one's own background is one of the keys to successful intercultural encounters. Another is an appreciation for all things unfamiliar. But what does this mean when you set out on your first business trip to the former Soviet states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania? "Treat people the way you would like to be treated," says Tobias Koch, a communication scientist who, among other things, has published an audio book on business etiquette in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. This always applies in principle, of course, but in a special way here as well: "Respect is very important in all three countries, because back

in the time of the Soviet Union as mini appendages of it, they received little appreciation." The need to break away from this overpowering state at the end of the 1980s was correspondingly great. The enormity of the will for independence and freedom was shown by the human chain formed on 23 August 1989 by two million Balts through the then Soviet republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, to demonstrate for their independence. To this day, the three cultures are marked by a high degree of national consciousness and solidarity with their homeland. But be careful: "One shouldn't talk of the Baltic States," emphasises Koch. "The people in these countries



Only those who throw off their own cultural influences can clearly recognise a foreign culture without any blurring.

value their national identity highly and have emancipated themselves economically at high speed through digitisation; all three countries are paragons in this respect.”

## But don't get too personal right away

However, digitisation and in particular the start-up mentality that is anchored in the minds of many younger people should not hide the fact that a too casual approach does not go down well. In Estonia, for example, caution is advised at first when it comes to personal topics: “Family topics are far too private on first contact,” Koch points out. A far better approach would be to discuss more harmless topics like sports – and, of course, basketball, which is very popular there, for example. “Electronic voting, e-voting, and electronic tax, e-tax, are also well suited as warm-up topics, as the people there are very proud of them.” On the other hand, it would be an absolute mistake to confuse the capitals of the three countries: “That would be like stepping on a landmine,” states the expert. However, there are no particular pitfalls for Germans: “Germany is valued far more than Russia.” And in general it is helpful to point out similarities.

The countries also cooperate economically, not least in order to remain politically and culturally independent. Networking is also very important in the three states: “Everyone knows everyone,” states Koch. And that doesn't just apply to Latvia as the smallest of the three countries. “Especially in Lithuania, personnel policy is dominated by who you know; this is still intergenerationally anchored in the culture, so to speak, because without relationships it was very difficult to survive in the Soviet Union.” Although the Balts may feel themselves to be Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians overall, they see their future more in Europe than in Russia.

## Communicating in English is best

The fact that not everyone speaks Latvian or Lithuanian, and that Estonian as a Finno-Ugric language is particularly difficult to learn, is something that the Balts are quite aware of, of course. That's why they appreciate it all the more if visitors learn a few words in the national language – although no one expects perfection. “English is spoken fluently almost everywhere and makes for the best common denominator,” states Koch. Some, including older people, also speak Russian, of course.

Regardless of the language, conversations about beer are always a good starting point in Lithuania. “The Lithuanians

“Respect is very important in all three countries.”

Tobias Koch is a trained carpenter and head of a communications agency in Munich with a master's degree in communications science.



love beer, and it really is their national drink par excellence,” states Koch. Another ice-breaker is to get to know the respective country and its customs in advance. “The aim should be to find something that the country or company in question can do really well, that they do faster and better than the competition,” explains Koch. “It can just be a small thing but should also come across authentically, without overdoing it, of course.” If you can convey that you have understood that a small country can be more agile than a larger one, you are also likely to score points for sympathy.

## Lucidity and dispassion go down well

However, drawn out small talk is not required in any of the three countries: “You shouldn't rush into things, but you can – without being pushy – clearly formulate what your intentions are and state your own goals in concrete terms. Other than in Russia, directness and a business-like approach go down well. “You can score points here with integrity and by not rambling on,” states Koch. “That actually suits the German mentality and work ethos very well and forms a good foundation.” However, there is one special thing you should note here: “You should know that in Lithuania a compromise can be interpreted as a sign of weakness,” states Koch. “That comes from the time of the party cadre where whoever conceded lost.”

In terms of cuisine, the proximity to Nordic cultures is again evident. “The cuisine is more Scandinavian,” Koch reports. More proximity to the northerners also exist with regard to the mythological background, for example Christmas. Likewise, vodka does not have the importance it has in Russia. Quality is more important than quantity when it comes to souvenirs. In the end though, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania come down to being three entirely independent cultures. (cb)

PHOTOS CREDITS: MONTAGE: ADOBESTOCK/NIKIITAUSM, SHUTTERSTOCK/GAU MON, OLYA/FREEPIK; TRIVERO KOMMUNIKATION



# Change as a constant

Since it was founded in 1990, Samskip has continuously expanded its service portfolio. The company, which started by providing logistics services around the island of Iceland, now offers transport and related services on water, land and air –all around the globe. In the Baltic States as well.

**T**hirty-one years ago, Samskip started its operations with a handful of employees with the aim of establishing container services to and from Iceland and the Faroe Islands. Today, it is one of the largest European transport companies with around 1,700 employees and branches in 35 countries. “We have grown continuously over time – both internally and through strategic acquisitions,” explains Sönke Thom, Head of Baltic States & Central Asia Services at Samskip. He sees the acquisition of the Dutch multimodal transport company Geest North Sea Line and the associated entry into the British market along with the

takeover of the Van Dieren Maritime Group including the already existing rail transports to and from Scandinavia as the most important acquisition milestones of the past years. Samskip is headquartered in Rotterdam and, according to its own information, moves around 800,000 TEU a year, with the container inventory for the multimodal sector currently comprising 17,000 units.

## Four main pillars of business

“In principle, Samskip is based on four main pillars,” states Thom. “These are, on the one hand, integrated logistics across the North Atlantic, from which we originally emerged, and, on the other, multimodal transports, where we not only try to find a cost-efficient, but also an environmentally friendly solution by optimally combining short-haul, road, rail and inland waterway services. Our service package is rounded off by global logistics including temperature-controlled goods and European project shipments,” explains Thom. Thom is responsible for multimodal transports to the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, as well as Finland.

They form the onward carriage to the Samskip Baltic Container Express (SBCX), which takes in cargo from all over Europe and serves the main ports of Hamburg and Rotterdam at least once a week before continuing on to the ports along the Baltic coasts. Samskip operates this liner ser-



“We have grown steadily over time”

Sönke Thom, Head of Baltic States & Central Asia Services bei Samskip

PHOTO CREDITS: SAMSKIP (5)



The logistics services from Samskip cover the entire range of transport modes – from short-haul and road activities to rail and inland waterway services. According to the company, it moves around 800,000 containers a year.

vice together with long-standing feeder partners and vessels carrying between 900 and 1,700 TEU. Via Riga, Klaipėda and St. Petersburg, they deliver the goods for the entire Baltic Sea economic region, which are then transported on to Moscow or Central Asia using the desired mode of transport. Samskip has its own branch offices in the destination ports and countries referred to, which then implement the corresponding transport solutions. The company also has its own fleet of trucks in the Latvian capital of Riga, which covers the Baltic region.

### Increased focus on the environment

Samskip uses the SBCX to ship an entire range of goods – from food and high-tech products to agricultural and forestry products. “In the export segment, the cargo volume focusses on products that are manufactured in the Baltic region. Traditionally, forest products, paper and peat in particular pass through the quays there to all over the world, while, in return, mainly vehicle parts, machines and food are imported,” states Thom. Although he has observed the intensive impact that the corona pandemic is having on the local economy in the Baltic states in recent months, at the same time, he has also continued to record stable flows of goods from the Baltic states and Russia at a good level. However, things don’t always go as planned in the maritime industry

either. In the summer of 2019, Samskip began a new weekly container service that was supposed to connect the ports in Cuxhaven and Hamburg with various shortsea markets between Norway and the Baltic states. However, this had to be discontinued during the pandemic. “The market did not accept this option in the way that we wanted because of the alternative overland routes available between Norway and Lithuania,” states Thom.

In recent years, the manager has identified the most important developments in his markets as being the increasing environmental orientation of customers and a strong trend towards digitisation. “More and more companies have green shipping on their agenda and are asking us to find a solution which releases as few emissions as possible. However, even if the environmentally friendly option only takes a little longer than the fastest option, some people’s environmental awareness quickly reaches its limits,” Thom reports from his experience. According to the information he has, the goods usually take about four days to travel by sea from Germany to Klaipėda and Riga, and five days from Germany to St. Petersburg, before they continue their journey by multi-modal transport. He is also seeing an increasing demand for digital options for controlling goods on their way from the manufacturer to their final destination. EDI solutions for electronic data exchange and new company customer portals are currently very popular. (bre)

### FACTS

#### Samskip

**Established:** 1990

**Headquarters:** Rotterdam

**Employees:** 1,700 in 35 countries in Europe, North and South America, Asia and Australia

**Sales:** 677 million Euros in 2018

More information:  
[www.samskip.com](http://www.samskip.com)

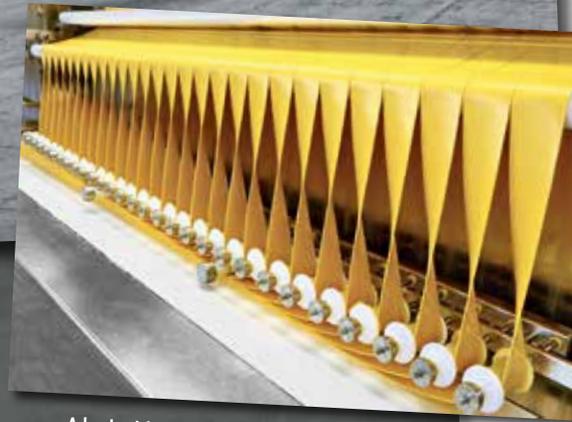
# MENU



and much more.



Heuer Logistics covers a wide range of services: A reachstacker transports a refrigerated container with food (l), while steel pipes are loaded in a dry container right next to it.



A look at how processed cheese slices are produced at Hochland

# Cheesy Story? Not at all!

Last year, Heuer Logistics started distributing goods for cheese manufacturer Hochland around the globe. Not only does the medium-sized logistics company specialise in transporting cheese, it also handles maritime logistics for totally different commodities.

For decades, a great deal has revolved around the banana at Heuer Logistics in Bremerhaven. Until the second decade of this century, for instance, no less than two refrigerated ships a week moored at the terminals in Bremerhaven to deliver large quantities of the Germans' favourite fruit. "But that is all history now. Since the beginning of 2019, the reefer ships have said goodbye to German ports and, as part of our diversification strategy, we

have spread our range of services over a number of different pillars of business," states Jan Zobel, authorised signatory at Heuer Logistics. A new pillar added in August 2020 involves the transportation of goods for the food producer Hochland in 24 countries on every continent. The family-owned company from Heimenkirch in the Allgäu is one of the largest private producers of cheese in Europe and produces the entire range of fresh and processed cheese, hard and semi-hard cheese, and feta and herb quark. "We store the products destined for overseas export in our refrigerated warehouse and then load them into containers," says Zobel, outlining the responsibilities of Heuer Logistics.

According to the Allgäu-based company, the growing sales figures have made it necessary to set up an overseas distribution centre. Zobel formulates the reasons for the cooperation as follows: "On the one hand, Hochland's warehouse in southern Germany was too small for the company's expansion plans, and on the other, we can understand-

ably offer more favourable container lead times from our warehouse. This is how we came into the picture.” With the help of a freight forwarder, Hochland now ensures that the goods are loaded onto a truck equipped with appropriate refrigeration technology in southern Germany in the evening, and arrives at the refrigerated warehouse in Bremerhaven’s free port the very next morning. There, 15 climate-controlled rooms equipped with some 8,000 pallet spaces are available, which Heuer Logistics is certified to use according to the IFS food, product and service standard, among others. “As soon as we receive the confirmation of sale, the cheese products are usually loaded into sea containers without a pallet and shipped to their respective destinations,” states Zobel.

## From consignments of small fruits to project cargoes

In the context of its fruit and food activities, however, Heuer Logistics also focuses on commodities other than cheese. Bananas, for example, continue to occupy a high share of their daily business, but are now transported in containers instead of on refrigerated ships. Other core competencies from Heuer Logistics in this segment include the professional transportation of citrus fruits, grapes and pineapples at the correct temperature, as well as potatoes. Maritime logistics for chicken eggs also recently became part of the company’s portfolio.

Speaking of eggs. One of the important guiding principles of Rudolf-August Oetker, the long-time head of the Oetker Group who died in 2007, was, “Never put all your eggs in one basket.” This is how the food expert described his strategy of risk diversification, according to which all

the eggs that would have been in the one basket could have broken in a bad economy. Heuer Logistics acts in a similar way by distributing the company’s range of services across several mainstays of business. In addition to the fruit and food logistics mentioned above, the company’s three other areas of business cover general cargo, project shipments and vehicles. While the former involves general cargo of all kinds, such as plywood and sawn timber, project shipment covers the entire high and heavy range. In the case of vehicles, on the other hand, everything revolves around the shipping and receipt of cars – ranging from classic cars to used cars and luxury cars.

“This versatility allows us to minimise dependencies,” explains Zobel – also with a view to the developments in the past twelve months: “The corona pandemic hit us hard in some areas.” For example, our project business collapsed significantly, whereas an upward trend was noticeable in food. “People simply buy more in advance so that they have enough food in their larder in the event of a crisis. Conversely, less investment in new factories and plants takes place in uncertain times like these, which is clearly reflected in the declining rate of project shipments. However, Zobel hopes for an improvement in the current year, especially in the latter segment. “There will also be a time after coronavirus. I’m sure that the business segments that got into trouble during the pandemic, like project shipments, will pick up again.” Regardless of this, he wants to acquire additional new customers in the fruit and food segment this year in addition to the activities undertaken for Hochland. “Our cheese business runs like clockwork,” says Zobel with a wink. “So there’s no reason why there shouldn’t be any room for more new business on our logistics menu.” (bre)

More information:  
[www.heuerlogistics.de](http://www.heuerlogistics.de)

## FACTS

### Heuer Logistics

Established: 1967

The Heuer Group comprises: Heuer Logistics, Heuer Port Logistics, Heuer Transport Logistics, Schiffahrts- und Speditionsgesellschaft Meyer & Co.

Employees: 80

Turnover 2019: 14.7 million Euros



Heuer Logistics has founded a separate company, SSG Quality Services, for the quality control of fruit here, such as bananas.

# New paths for bills of lading

The digitisation of bills of lading has been in the works for years. Thus far, however, the solutions have always had a catch. Two research projects, “eCONBiL” at the Bremerhaven University of Applied Sciences and “HAPTİK” at the University of Oldenburg may change all that now.

Every year, B/L goods shipments with a total value of 3.8 billion US dollars are safeguarded.

For a long time, the centuries-old system of bills of lading has been closed to digitisation. After all, the requirements are great: a solution is being sought that is internationally accepted, on the one hand, but at the same time secure and simple. And although many processes have also been digitised in shipping in the meantime, the breakthrough in ocean freight bills of lading still seemed a long way off until recently. Therefore, what is hardly imaginable for some is still possible: In the case of letters of credit, which form the basis for international trade and payment transactions, it is still the rule today that a B/L, as a bill of lading is abbreviated, is brought by courier, for instance, from the port in Bremerhaven to the bank in Bremen, flown from there by plane to Shanghai and then transported by car to a bank and then to the recipient in the port to release the container. What is obvious is that this is complex and neither efficient nor sustainable.

Accordingly, the industry has been endeavouring to digitise bills of lading for decades. As early as 1990, for example, the Comité Maritime International (CMI), a non-governmental organisation for the harmonisation of the maritime law, developed the necessary rules. However, since their application would have to be agreed separately by the contract-

ing parties, this has not yet become established. The same applies to cloud-based solutions from individual shipping companies and the systems from various providers on the market, which have also found little acceptance to date due to their closed nature with regard to the companies connected to them.

A neutral approach, which should be open to all market participants, is being pursued in the joint research project “HAPTİK”, short for tradability of physical goods through digital tokens in consortium networks, under the direction of the Center for Law in the Information Society (ZRI) at the University of Oldenburg. The project is funded with a total of 1.4 million Euros by the German Federal Ministry of Economy. Since 2013 and until the end of 2021, the researchers worked on replacing cargo-specific transport documents with electronic equivalents using a blockchain, i.e. a decentralised database.

## Low carbon sea freight documents

The way in which the use of digital solutions such as blockchain for digital sea freight documents affects the environmental balance is being investigated in the “eCONBiL” research pro-

More information:  
[www.econbil.de](http://www.econbil.de)  
[www.haptik.io](http://www.haptik.io)

ject at the Institute for Logistics Law & Risk Management (ILRM) at Bremerhaven University of Applied Sciences, which follows on from the “HAPTİK” project. Under the leadership of Thomas Wieske, a professor of law at the university and director of the ILRM, the project group has been working on the electronic dispatch of documents under the aspect of CO<sub>2</sub> since 2019. Also involved are the international SAP service and product provider Abat from Bremen, Kühne + Nagel as a pilot user as well as DZ Bank, which operates as a letter of credit bank in international business, and Kravag, which belongs to R+V Versicherung, as a risk carrier in the transport industry.

First, Bremerhaven analysed how great the environmental impact of B/Ls currently is. The outcome: “The CO<sub>2</sub> emissions for sending sea freight bill of lading documents are comparable to those of a medium-sized small town in Germany,” reports the research assistant on the research project, Julian Neugebauer. However, it is not necessarily the case that every solution based on the block-

chain would be better than the analogue transfer of some 400 million sea transport documents in paper form each year. The electronic replacement of sea freight bills of lading, for example by means of the Bitcoin blockchain, which became known primarily through the cryptocurrency of the same name, but also facilitates other applications, leaves a significant CO<sub>2</sub> footprint. “This is mainly due to the fact that the calculation processes required for carrying out transactions within the framework of blockchain technology require a lot of computing power, which in turn causes CO<sub>2</sub> emissions,” explains Neugebauer. Research by the online platform Digi-economist in 2020 shows the dimensions in which these move: Bitcoin mining alone requires more electricity each year than Austria as a whole.

### The goal is 20 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> each year.

“Our project is about determining whether the digitisation of sea freight documents also makes ecological sense,” summarises Wieske. Previously, Neugebauer had already investigated how many emissions are caused by analogue and

## FACTS

### eCONBiL research project

**Project group:** Institute for Logistics Law & Risk Management (ILRM) at the University of Bremerhaven

**Staff:** 10

**Project partner:** Abat, Kühne + Nagel, DZ Bank and R+V Versicherung

**Finanzvolumen:** Approx. 250,000 Euros

**Support:** BIS Wirtschaftsförderung Bremerhaven with funds from the “Applied Environmental Research” funding programme of the former Bremen Senator for Environment, Construction and Transport and with funds from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)

**Period:** May 2019 to September 2021



Along with his team, Prof. Dr Thomas Wieske (left) wants to strengthen the ecological model function role played by Bremen’s ports within the scope of the “Electronical Consignment Note and Bill of Lading (eCONBiL) – Sustainability in Seafreight” research project at Bremerhaven University of Applied Sciences: Donna Kuhn, Julian Neugebauer, Konstanze Kröhn, Malte Garmhausen and Nataly Jimenez (from left to right).

PHOTO CREDITS: SHUTTERSTOCK/BUTUSOVA ELENA, ECONBiL

■■■ digital transfer in his bachelor's dissertation, taking the Maersk shipping company as an example. "By analogy, it's about 130,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per year plus emissions from transportation, but with the Ethereum blockchain, it's one to two million tonnes," states Neugebauer. Nevertheless, the use of the blockchain for the transfer of sea freight bills of lading could make sense. "If you develop the blockchain further, it could be 90 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per annum in the worst-case calculation, but in the best case only two tonnes," reports Neugebauer. This result represented the first important milestone in May 2020. "The solution to this may be the 'Hyperledger' project," explains Wieske. "This blockchain technology, which has only been developed in the past year and a half, could reduce CO<sub>2</sub> consumption by one-thousandth to one-tenth of a thousandth compared to analog document shipping." The research goal now is to demonstrate, both mathematically and practically, by September 2021, that consumption of around 20 tonnes per year is realistic. In the further course of the project, the project partners will investigate what an ecologically sensible technology of this nature should look like and under what conditions its sustainable electronic implementation can be ensured. Fi-

PHOTO CREDIT: SHUTTERSTOCK/BUTUSOVA ELENA

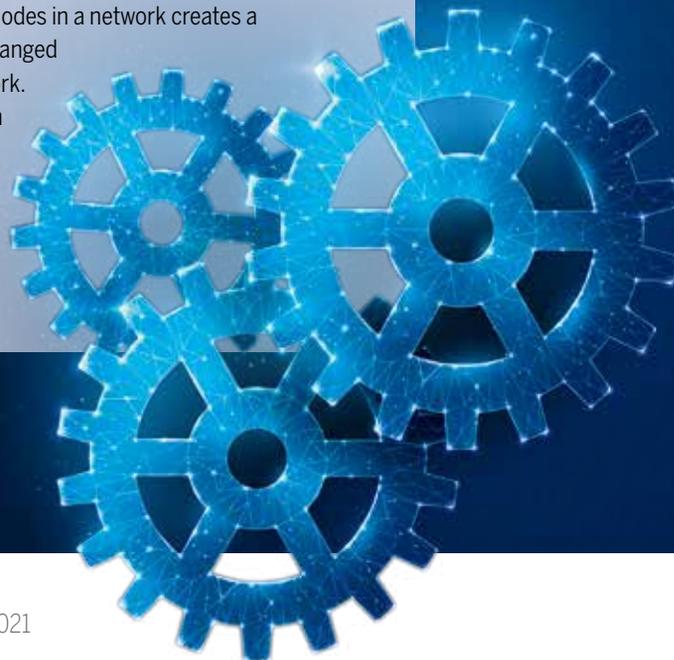
nally, among other things, the solution must be scalable and allow for a sufficient number of transactions, as well as be able to restrict access to authorised persons only and allow the communication that takes place over the servers to be fully encrypted. "The goal of the project is to find the right technology so that the carbon footprint for the electronic implementation is significantly smaller than that of analogue processing by courier," Wieske emphasises.

Besides the calculation methods and recommendations, the technology will then be built and tested in cooperation with the project partners. "The fact that we also have industry partners supporting us with their expertise will help us put the implementation on a larger footing," Wieske hopes. We have already some enquiries from trading companies who have expressed their interest. "Our goal is to implement the results of this research project in a follow-up project," states Wieske. Ideally, a few international partners from different industries would then be added.

Another advantage should also be compelling: Digitisation could reduce the costs per B/L record or letter of credit transaction by at least 50 Euros, which corresponds to total savings of around 300 to 450 million Euros. So it is unlikely that bills of lading in paper form will be around for much longer. The traditional letter of credit is also moving with the times and should become both cheaper and much more sustainable in the near future – thanks to the expertise of the researchers from Bremerhaven and Oldenburg. (cb)

## How does a blockchain actually work?

Blockchain technology allows transactions to be carried out without an authenticating authority, such as an intermediary, bank or notary. Filing identical digital certificates at different nodes in a network creates a distributed database that can only be changed with the consent of the respective network. Very different blockchains exist, of which Bitcoin is the best known. Hyperledger is an open source project from the Linux Foundation which businesses can use to build their own blockchain based on the modules.



2021

February

**3.2.2021** ■ **JadeWeserPort: Review & Outlook**  
<https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/5382320936357179918>  
 digital

**23.2.2021** ■ **Annual press conference of the seaports in Lower Saxony**  
[www.seaports.de](http://www.seaports.de)  
 digital

**10 – 12.3.2021** ■ **Antwerp XL**  
[www.antwerpvl.com](http://www.antwerpvl.com)  
 Antwerp, Belgium

**25.3.2021** ■ **Logistics Talk**  
[www.bremenports.de/veranstaltungen](http://www.bremenports.de/veranstaltungen)  
 Bielefeld, Germany

**14.4.2021** ■ **Logistics Talk**  
[www.bremenports.de/veranstaltungen](http://www.bremenports.de/veranstaltungen)  
 Budapest, Hungary

**15.4.2021** ■ **Logistics Talk**  
[www.bremenports.de/veranstaltungen](http://www.bremenports.de/veranstaltungen)  
 Prague, Czech Republic

**4 – 6.5.2021** ■ **transport logistics**  
[www.transportlogistic.de](http://www.transportlogistic.de)  
 digital

**18 – 20.5.2021** ■ **Breakbulk Europe**  
[www.europe.breakbulk.com](http://www.europe.breakbulk.com)  
 Bremen, Deutschland

**18 – 20.5.2021** ■ **FRUIT LOGISTICA**  
[www.fruitlogistica.de](http://www.fruitlogistica.de)  
 Berlin, Germany

**26 – 27.5.2021** ■ **Real Estate Arena**  
[www.real-estate-arena.com](http://www.real-estate-arena.com)  
 Hanover, Germany

**27 – 28.5.2021** ■ **ESPO Conference**  
[www.espo-conference.com](http://www.espo-conference.com)  
 Oslo, Norway

**10.6.2021** ■ **Logistics Talk**  
[www.bremenports.de/veranstaltungen](http://www.bremenports.de/veranstaltungen)  
 Neuss, Germany

**21 – 25.6.2021** ■ **IAPH World Ports Conference**  
[www.worldportsconference.com](http://www.worldportsconference.com)  
 Antwerp, Belgium

**23.6.2021** ■ **Logistics Talk**  
[www.bremenports.de/veranstaltungen](http://www.bremenports.de/veranstaltungen)  
 Haiger, Germany

**25.6.2021** ■ **International Day of the Seafarer**  
[www.imo.org](http://www.imo.org)  
 Bremen/Bremerhaven, Germany

**15.7.2021** ■ **Logistics Talk**  
[www.bremenports.de/veranstaltungen](http://www.bremenports.de/veranstaltungen)  
 München, Germany

March

April

May

June

July



GERMAN PORTS

# Save the Date

The corona pandemic is currently making it difficult to make reliable statements about when and to what extent events will take place again. The dates listed here for the maritime industry and logistics have changed several times in the recent past – and last-minute postponements are certain to take place even after our editorial deadline in January. We therefore provide the information given here without any guarantee. And we would ask you to check the information again closer to the dates. Thank you for your understanding!

- Trade fairs
- Customer events
- Other highlights

## COMPACT

**HAMBURG.**

After more than twelve years as President, Captain Professor

Christoph Wand left the bridge of the Association of German Captains and Ship's Officers (VDKS) for the last time at the end of 2020 and handed over command to **Captain Willi Wittig**. Wittig has been active in the committees of the VDKS for 20 years – for 16 of them as vice-president – and is closely involved in the work of the association. For 25 years he has represented the VDKS as its delegate at the annual general assemblies of the International Federation of Shipmasters' Associations (IFSMA).

**FRANKFURT/BERLIN.**

At the end of November, members of the German Rail and Transport Workers' Union (EVG) elected **Klaus-Dieter Hommel** as its new chairperson. He received 82 percent of the votes. Hommel had previously held the office on an interim basis after his predecessor, Torsten Westphal, stepped down for personal reasons. During a digital trade union conference, Hommel described his election as a "clear confirmation of our constructive and responsible policy in recent months".

## MCN: Gerdes succeeds Eisenbeis

**NORTHERN GERMANY.** The members of the Maritime Cluster Northern Germany (MCN) elected a new board in November. Since then, the new Chairperson has been **Knut Gerdes (r)**. He succeeds **Dominik Eisenbeis (l)**. Gerdes has been closely associated with seafaring in a variety of functions for

40 years now, and working at the MCN is not new to him either. This is underlined by the fact that he has been an associate member of the association's board since 2018. The deputy chairperson is Christian Cammin (Julius Marine), and the new treasurer Frank Nicolai (Moore BRL).

The board members include: Dr. Iris Hölken (Phi-Stone), Andreas Richter (Department of Economics and Innovation, Hamburg (BWI)), Dr. JensTathoff (biike) and Torsten Westphal (Arkon Shipping). Due to corona-related restrictions the election took place this year by postal vote following the virtual annual general meeting.



### Transformation process with new leadership

**BREMERHAVEN.** From November, **Mikkel E. Andersen** took over the management of EUROGATE Container Terminal Bremerhaven (CTB) in addition to his work as managing director of EUROGATE Container Terminal Wilhelmshaven (CTW). In this move, he replaced the previous CTB managing director Manuela Drews. "We have also decided to reorganise the up-and-coming change process at EUROGATE Container Terminal Bremerhaven in terms of personnel" states Michael Blach, Chairperson of EUROGATE Group Management.



### Frank rises in the ranks at ZIM Germany

**HAMBURG.** Since December, **Sören Frank** has been the new managing director of ZIM Germany, a subsidiary of the Israeli shipping company ZIM Integrated Shipping Services. Frank has been working in the shipping industry for 25 years and has experience in liner shipping and RORO as well as ship management (tankers and bulkers). He has been commercial director at ZIM Germany since 2011, where his duties include responsibility for human resources and finance.





## From Weserport to Rhenus Ports

**HOLZWICKEDE.** On 1 January, **Heiner Delicat**, long-time Managing Director of the Bremen seaport service provider Weserport, moved to Rhenus Ports. There he took over the newly created position of Sales Director in the Seaports division. Since then, the management of Weserport has been operationally led by Rudolf Egbert. In 2005, Delicat joined Weserport as authorised signatory and key account manager. The following year, he was appointed to the management of the joint venture between the Rhenus Group and ArcelorMittal Bremen. In his new role, he will intensify the sales activities of the Rhenus Group's seaport terminals in order to tap into additional market potential.



## Dreeke: "We will face up to the challenges we encounter"

**HAMBURG.** At the turn of the year, the Central Association of German Seaport Operators (ZDS) paid tribute to the successful social partnership in place in the port sector. At the same time, **Frank Dreeke**, President of the ZDS stated, "A difficult year is coming to an end. During the first lockdown, the employees working on the edge of the quay and in the offices once again demonstrated the resilience of the port sector to crises and its ability to adapt. We succeeded in mastering this challenge thanks to our workforce and the close cooperation we have with our social partners. As in the past, we will continue to work together to face the challenges brought about by coronavirus, climate change and the digitisation that lies ahead of us."



## WSC now operating with two leaders at the helm

**WASHINGTON.** Two new chairpersons were appointed to the Supervisory Board of the World Shipping Council (WSC) in November. They are **Rolf Habben Jansen (r)**, CEO of Hapag-Lloyd, and **Jeremy Nixon (l)**, CEO of Ocean Network Express (ONE). Together they will initially take over from the former chairperson Ron Widdows for the next two years. Matson Navigation from the USA and X-Press Feeders from Singapore have recently joined the WSC as shipping companies.

## Mai disembarks after a nearly quarter of a century

**BREMERHAVEN.** After 24 years of service, **Andreas Mai**, long-time port captain and head of the Hanseatic City of Bremen Port Authority, retired at the end of November. Unfortunately, due to the corona pandemic, his official farewell ceremony with numerous guests had to take place in virtual form. Among others, Yoss Leclerc (President of the International Harbour Masters' Association), Ingrid Romers (Executive Director of the European Harbour Masters Committee), Ben van Schepenzeel (Project Officer Port of Rotterdam) and Hamburg Port Captain Jörg Pollmann were on hand. bremenports managing director Robert Howe thanked Mai for his patience, respect and the human aspect of the cooperation – and emphasised: "You did everything you could to ensure that the ports in Bremen developed further in the best possible way." The provisional management of the Port Authority has been taken over by the former head of department of the Bremen Port Authority, Captain Uwe Kraft. The recruitment drive to fill the position is still ongoing.





# Focus: Austria

EDITION  
A P R I L  
2020

## Focus on Austria

It seems to be human nature to enjoy observing one's neighbour with great curiosity. This also applies to the relationship between "Ösis" and "Piefkes". Although trade relations are close between them. In 2019, the bilateral trade volume between Germany and Austria reached just under 110 billion Euros.

Reason enough to take a closer look at the bigger picture...

## Point of View

By Alfred Wolfram, bremenports representative in Austria, on Focus on Austria

Germany and Austria have much more in common than the aspects that separate the two countries. Because of this, a – for the most part – common language and a similar cultural background prepare the ground for good business relations. Germany is and remains by far Austria's most important foreign trade partner. The automotive industry has been the driver of the German economy for many years and has developed into one of the most important industries since the invention of the automobile in 1885 by Carl Benz towards the end of the 19th century. This creates an enormous number of jobs – not only in Germany, but also in Austria due to the strong export of automotive components. Since the vehicle industry is the third strongest industrial sector in Austria, diverse business relationships exist ranging from production right up to the transport and logistics chain. The German aerospace industry also offers interesting business opportunities for Austrian companies, as does the construction industry and mechanical and plant engineering. One of the most important economic sectors in Austria is also tourism. This results not least from the Austria's extremely attractive geography: the country offers lakes, mountains and a wealth of nature over a relatively small area. The infrastructure comprised of public transport, a road network and cycle and hiking trails is extremely tourism-friendly and guarantees unique experiences both in the summer and wintertime. Thanks to Austria's important cultural past, urban tourism in particular enjoys great popularity and every year allows a large number of European as well as Asian, Russian and American guests to immerse themselves in the country's history.



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