

## **Rostock port holds the course**

### **Goods handling on a gratifying high level / slump in passenger traffic**

A total of 25.1 million tonnes of goods passed the edge of the quay at Rostock Overseas port in 2020. This means a slight decrease by 600,000 tonnes or two percent compared to the result of the previous year. Declines in ferry and ro-ro traffic, for instance in paper and liquid goods handling, were almost completely made up for by increases in dry bulk goods. „Despite the constraints and restrictions at many production companies and in many supply chains which were caused by the pandemic in the course of 2020 the well-balanced business model of the port has once again produced a very high handling result which is close to that of the previous year“, Dr. Gernot Tesch, Managing Director of ROSTOCK PORT GmbH, sums up the result. The volume of infrastructure investment at the overseas port amounted to around €25 million last year. According to Rostock's Port and Shipping Authority the other ports in Rostock, such as the cargo and fishing port and the chemical port, together handled another 1.6 million tonnes of goods in 2020. This means that, all told, a total of 26.7 million tonnes of cargo were handled in Rostock last year.

Only a little more than half the number of passengers compared to the previous year were counted on the ferry lines to northern Europe, at 1.37 million. There was only one port call by a passenger vessel with 200 travellers at the Warnemünde cruise port. The plan had been to welcome 207 cruise ships with more than 600,000 passengers.

At the end of November 2020 the German Bundestag allocated the funds for the deepening of the navigational channel in Rostock to 16.5 meters. „For more than 10 years members of the Bundestag and of the state parliament, of the maritime business community and the Waterways and Shipping Office for the German Baltic Sea have supported this measure to improve the competitive position of Rostock Overseas Port“, says Jens A. Scharner, Managing Director of ROSTOCK PORT GmbH. The dredging of the navigational channel from 14.50

meters to 16.50 meters is to start still this year and is expected to take two and a half years. Simultaneously with this milestone, which is of great importance for the economic location, the port operator ROSTOCK PORT will begin to deepen and upgrade berths in the dry bulk division of the port.

### **Handling results at the Overseas Port**

All told, Rostock overseas port logged 7,573 port calls by ferry and ro-ro vessels, tankers, freighters and cruise liners last year, of which 5,672 port calls were made by ferry and ro-ro vessels.

**Dry bulk handling** was an enormous 14 percent above the level of the previous year with a total of 6.75 million tonnes handled. Especially the export of wheat showed an increase from 1.7 to 2.7 million tonnes. On the other hand there were losses of amounts handled in coal (minus 300,000 tonnes) and gypsum (minus 50,000 tonnes). The fertilizer handling achieved more or less the same level as in the previous year, at 665,000 tonnes. There were increases also in the handling of cement (plus 40,000 tonnes), barley (plus 15,000 tonnes) and rapeseed (plus 50,000 tonnes). With an annual result of 3.7 million tonnes (+42 %) grain is the dominant dry bulk cargo at the overseas port.

At 2.45 million tonnes the handling of **liquid goods** was about 560,000 tonnes or 19 percent below the level of the previous year. The really quite positive handling result for liquid goods in 2020 is however somewhat distorted by the extraordinarily high crude oil imports by sea of nearly a million tonnes during the first half of 2019 caused by pipeline problems on land. Last year more rapeseed oil, biodiesel, fuel oil and especially petroleum (naphtha) were handled than in 2019, for instance.

Handling of high-value-added **general cargo** was significantly above the level of the previous year at 620,000 tonnes (+9 %). While the loading of pipes and wind power plants increased and the handling of crane facilities remained on the level of the previous year, the amounts of sheet metal and zinc handled went down.

## **Wheeled cargo**

The result in wheeled cargo, i.e. ferry and ro-ro goods, declined in 2020. All told the volume went down by 900,000 tonnes to 15.3 million tonnes (-6 %). Thus the share of wheeled cargo in the total handling at Rostock Overseas port was 61 percent last year. The number of truck units carried on the ferry and ro-ro connections to and from northern Europe went down only slightly from 379,812 in 2019 to 367,927 last year. That is a minus of 3 percent. By contrast the number of trailers handled even increased from 125,306 to 126,183 last year.

The coronavirus pandemic caused a strong decline of 41 percent in the number of cars and mobile homes carried, to 327,000.

The number of railway wagons ferried to and from Trelleborg continued to show a gratifying increase from 18,388 to 19,205 units (+4 %). Rostock Overseas port is a major railway port on the German Baltic Sea coast. Around 20 % of all hinterland traffic to and from our port is carried by rail in the modal split. 625,000 tonnes of paper and cellulose were handled at the overseas port in 2020, which was 110,000 tonnes less than in the previous year.

## **Positive trend in intermodal and container transport**

Handling of intermodal load units in Intermodal Transport at Rostock Overseas port increased impressively to 94,800 units (plus 7 percent) in 2020. Currently there are 35 intermodal trains operating weekly to and from Verona (18) in Italy, Brno (3) in the Czech Republic, Bratislava (2) in Slovakia, Dresden (5, formerly Lovosice), Wuppertal (2) and Halle (1) in Germany, Bettembourg (3) in Luxemburg as well as Curtici (1) in Romania.

“We are glad that two new intermodal services are starting their operation from Rostock at the turn of 2020/2021, to Bettembourg and Bratislava. This highlights in particular the efficiency of the railways as a transport system and of intermodal transport also in times of crisis, especially in cross-border transport”, says Dr. Gernot Tesch. The Bettembourg train will run as a mixed operation, i.e. apart from intermodal units it will also consist of conventional wagonload units that are being ferried on the service to and from Trelleborg. By creating the connection to and from Bettembourg, it is possible to reach destinations in southern France and Spain on the one hand as well as destinations in Great Britain via the North Sea ports, on the other. The new

connection to Bratislava clearly demonstrates the potential of intermodal transport on the axis to south-eastern Europe that is becoming ever more important for Rostock.

Another gratifying point is the trend on the Silk Road corridor which has seen continuous growth in its first year and offers further potential for rail freight transport. Thus the Silk Road services have also contributed to the increases in intermodal traffic volume. Additional cargo volume to and from China via Rostock stabilise existing and enable new intermodal transport services. Via Rostock as a hub the China traffic is currently connected, for instance, to the Ruhr area, the Netherlands, northern Europe, Italy and the Czech Republic.

„We have been able to record a very positive trend in container handling. This growth is in particular driven by the containers carried on the Silk Road between China and Europe by rail and by ship between Kaliningrad and Rostock. This prevents long waiting times at the border between Belarus and Poland and thus assures a high reliability and short transportation times for the goods, most of which are capital-intensive“, explains Dr. Gernot Tesch. While this traffic started with one train per week from Xi'an in April 2020 it has been running in both directions since the middle of last year. With every container vessel arriving in port, up to five trains are currently loaded at the General Cargo Terminal. In this traffic Rostock Overseas port acts not just as a place of transshipment, but also as a collecting and distribution centre. All in all 23 countries are being served at the European end so far, with Italy and northern Europe representing the main source and destination points of these established regular services.

### **Projects and investments**

„Last year ROSTOCK PORT has invested around 25 million Euros in upgrading the infrastructure and further improving the processes at the port“, Jens A. Scharner explains. The investments were on the one hand apportionable to those projects completed in 2020, such as the new-building and/or upgrading of berths 23, 50, 62 and 63, and on the other hand to the land preparation of an area of seven hectares in the southern port area which is to be completed until the summer of 2021. Also last year ROSTOCK PORT started the refurbishment of berth 18N on the north-western tip of pier 4. The foundation work was started in autumn 2020. Until the spring of 2021 the refurbishment is to be completed.

An all-EU tender for the basic renewal of berths 31/32 at port basin B is to be put out in the immediate future. These quay facilities on the eastern side of pier 2 are more than 60 years old.

Last year the planning department of the Hanseatic and University City of Rostock as the responsible authority has conducted the construction of a shore power installation to supply ships at berths P7 and P8 in Warnemünde. A declaration of intent to this effect on the joint promotion of environmentally friendly and sustainable cruise shipping had been signed with AIDA Cruises, the federal state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, the Hanseatic and University City of Rostock and ROSTOCK PORT in September 2018. The aim is to start the test operation as soon as possible.

In order to improve the quality and safety of cruise shipping in Warnemünde the federal state, the Hanseatic and University City of Rostock and ROSTOCK PORT have invested in the new-building of an additional terminal building at berth P8. The *Warnemünde Cruise Center 8*, which is 186 meters long and 30 meters wide, is to be used for cruise passenger traffic from the start of the cruise shipping season this year.

One of the most demanding and comprehensive compensation measures in the history of ROSTOCK PORT was successfully completed in October 2020 with the issuing of the recognition order for the upgrading of the *Diedrichshäger Moor* wetland area by the local nature protection authority, the Rostock Office for urban green spaces, nature protection and landscape conservation, to Rostock Port GmbH. Since 2014 ROSTOCK PORT invested three million Euros in the improvement of this wetland area, which is situated west of the urban motorway between the northern border of the Lichtenhagen housing district and the southern edge of Warnemünde. The improvement of this wetland area is an exemplary compensation measure that has shown how the economic interests of the port and industrial location of Rostock can be reconciled with the requirements of environmental and nature protection while complying with all legal regulations.

## Cruise shipping

„We are confident that cruise tourism in Warnemünde and the Baltic Sea will start again in the second quarter of this year. The precondition for this is an easing of the intensity of the pandemic in Germany and Europe and the consequent lifting of national and international travel restrictions. Implementing comprehensive hygiene and safety concepts for passengers and ships' crews on board and in the cruise ports will play a decisive role in the successful restart of cruise shipping“, says Jens A. Scharner.

## Statistics of Rostock Overseas port

Main cargo types	2019 (t)	2020 (t)	trend in %	share in %
Ferry & ro-ro goods	16,200,000	<b>15,300,000</b>	-6 %	61 %
Dry bulk goods	5,930,000	<b>6,750,000</b>	+14 %	27 %
Liquid goods	2,980,000	<b>2,430,000</b>	-19 %	10 %
General cargo	570,000	<b>620,000</b>	+9 %	2 %
<b>total</b>	<b>25,680,000</b>	<b>25,100,000</b>	-2 %	100 %

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