

Successfully through the pandemic – 2021 cargo handling in Rostock reaches all-time high

A total of 30.48 million tonnes of goods passed the edge of the quay, more than ever before in the history of the ports of Rostock.

The lion's share of 28.68 million tonnes was handled at the Overseas Port of Rostock which scored an increase of 14 percent or 3.58 million tonnes compared to 2020, notching up another record. "This result is remarkable on the one hand because all four handling divisions contributed to it, and on the other because it shows a considerable increase above the level of activity in 2019, the year before the crisis, by a respectable 11.7 percent. In contrast to the global transport chains those across Europe also work in times of a pandemic", says Dr. Gernot Tesch, Managing Director of ROSTOCK PORT. The strongest growth was achieved in the handling of wheeled cargo in ferry and ro-ro traffic. „The steady development of the ferry and railway network over the last few years, for instance by strengthening the existing ferry services and establishing a new ferry destination as well as several new railway destinations, is clearly paying off“.

Gratifying growth rates were also achieved in intermodal transport and in container traffic which runs by rail between China and Europe and by ship between Kaliningrad and Rostock. "The men and women working at the shipping companies, public authorities, cargo handling and service businesses in Rostock have produced a remarkable double-digit result in difficult circumstances. This trend clearly shows the high operative capability of Rostock Overseas Port as a business location", states Jens A. Scharner, Managing Director of ROSTOCK PORT.

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 1.8 million tonnes of goods in 2021.

At 1.7 million passengers on the ferry lines to and from Northern Europe there was an increase by 330,000 compared to the first Corona year 2020. And cruise shipping also managed to pick up speed again over the previous year with 47 port calls and 100,000 passengers. All in all the 2021 passenger traffic was however still below the level of previous years.

The volume of investments in infrastructure at the Overseas Port was around nine million Euros in 2021.

Cargo handling results at the Overseas Port

All told, Rostock overseas port logged 7,551 port calls by ferry and ro-ro vessels, tankers, freighters and cruise liners last year, of which 5,733 port calls were made by ferry and ro-ro vessels.

Dry bulk handling was two percent above the already very high level of the previous year with a total of 6.9 million tonnes handled. Grain is the dominant dry bulk cargo at the Overseas Port with an annual result of 3.4 million tonnes.

At 3.1 million tonnes the handling of **liquid goods** was as much as 27 percent above the result of the previous year. More biodiesel, gas oil, petroleum (naphtha) and crude oil was handled, to name just a few.

Handling of high-value-added **general cargo** was twelve percent above the level of the previous year at 680,000 tonnes. While the loading of containers, zinc and cellulose increased, the amount of project cargo handled went down slightly.

The result in **wheeled cargo**, i.e. ferry and ro-ro goods, achieved an all-time high with a handling result of 18 million tonnes (+2.7 million tonnes or +18 percent). Thus the share of wheeled cargo in the total handling at Rostock Overseas port was 63 percent last year.

The number of truck units carried on the ferry and ro-ro connections to and from Northern Europe increased from 367,000 in 2020 to 407,000 last year, a growth of eleven percent. The number of trailers handled also increased from 126,000 by 27 percent to 161,000 last year.

Private travel also recovered partly after the sharp decline in 2020. The number of cars and mobile homes carried between Northern Europe and Rostock was 429,000, an increase by 31 percent.

The number of railway wagons carried to and from Trelleborg increased by an enormous 41 percent, from 19,200 to 27,100 units. Rostock Overseas Port continues to grow in importance as a traditional railway port on the German Baltic Sea coast.

676,000 tonnes of paper and cellulose were handled at the Overseas Port in 2021, which was 51,000 tonnes more than in the previous year.

Steady growth in intermodal transport

The handling of cargo units in intermodal transport at the terminal of the operator Rostock Trimodal GmbH increased significantly to over 121,000 units (+33 percent) in 2021. Currently there are 42 intermodal trains operating weekly to and from Verona (15) and Bologna (3) in Italy, to and from Bratislava (5) in Slovakia, to and from Dresden (10), Herne (5) and Halle (1) in Germany and to and from Bettembourg (3) in Luxembourg.

„We are very glad that we have again achieved a very positive trend in intermodal transport at the location in Rostock, considerably exceeding the sound barrier of 100,000 units. This once again demonstrates to us how right and important it is to focus on intermodal transport. With the turn of the year 2021/2022 some clients will again extend their existing services from Rostock. This shows the trust of our clients in the operative capability of our location“, says Dr. Gernot Tesch.

The train to Bratislava for instance will now operate five times per week, which just goes to show what potential there is on the axis to South-East Europe. Further increases in capacity will be achieved by stepping up the number of weekly connections between Dresden Alberthafen and Rostock Overseas Port to ten. In addition to Verona, Bologna is now another Italian railway hub that has joined the network.

Rostock Overseas Port has established itself as a hub for Silk Road transport

In April 2020 the first 49 containers with industrial goods and medical supplies from Xi'an in the central Chinese province of Shaanxi arrived at Rostock Overseas Port by rail and sea over the New Silk Road.

This rail transport uses the route from China via Kazakhstan, Russia, Belarus and Lithuania to the Russian port of Kaliningrad. There the cargo is taken over by the shipping company Mann Lines and carried to the General Cargo Terminal of the cargo handling company Euroports Germany at Rostock Overseas Port. Here the containers are hoisted off the ship and most of them are directly loaded on block trains heading for Duisburg and Hamburg. This particular rail service is organised by DB Cargo Eurasia. But other operators also use Rostock as an alternative to exclusively land-based transport routes of the Silk Road.

The decisive advantage of this route lies in using already existing transport connections by sea and land to and from Rostock. Its close-knit intermodal network of more than 40 weekly train connections as well as the high frequency of ferry and ro-ro connections to Denmark, Sweden and Finland with up to 20 departures per day, make Rostock Overseas Port an ideal transport hub to collect and distribute containers to northern and continental Europe.

The high demand for container transport is also reflected in trans-Eurasian train services and thus also by the Short Seas alternative between Rostock and Kaliningrad. It has been possible to increase volumes last year by stepping up the frequency on existing rail routes and establishing new ones.

Additional railway capability is necessary to improve the cargo handling efficiency and allow for further growth. To this end another track is currently being upgraded at the General Cargo Terminal. The additional option of loading and unloading a train not only creates capacities for containers but also for other general and project cargo suitable for rail transport.

Projects and investments

With the completion of the road underpass under the road 'Am Seehafen' in July 2021 and the connections created among plots in the southern port area at the same time another milestone was reached for commissioning the new ro-ro

terminal at the entrance to the port. With the support of DB Netz two efficient branch tracks for the terminal area were also completed. Until the end of the year the work on producing the traffic areas was largely completed and thus another environmentally friendly rail connection was implemented for cargo passing through the port. The operator of the new logistics terminal furthermore invested in two double-decker loading ramps at the ends of the tracks. The company also plans to build a bridge for cars crossing Ost-West-Strasse to berth 50 this year.

At the Intermodal Transport Terminal an additional option for servicing trains up to 740 m in length was created last year by rearranging spaces in the track area. This activity was co-financed by the Federal Railway Authority on the basis of the guideline for promoting cargo handling facilities of intermodal transport. "By investing in the extension and the strengthening of environmentally friendly means of transport like shipping and railways the stakeholders together with the railway port of Rostock exercise their responsibility for a more sustainable development and a better linkage between modes of transport", underlines Jens A. Scharner.

The new building of berths 31 and 32 was commissioned in November 2021 after an all-EU tender. Thus we will be able to tackle the complete renewal of the oldest berths at Rostock Overseas Port on the eastern side of pier 2 this year. The construction site is 400 metres long. Building work will start in early 2022 and will be completed by the end of 2023.

Another works contract awarded at the end of 2021 was for the complete new building of the middle section of Ost-West-Strasse up to the port entrance. The road section to be rebuilt covers the full width of the road plus its shoulders and is about 530 metres long. Together with the new building of the road a new system of drainage ditches and pipes for draining the southern areas will be integrated via berth 30 at port basin A. The pipe route will have to intersect two tracks of Deutsche Bahn. Road construction work will begin in the spring of this year and is expected to continue until the end of 2023. This construction project is part of the 2nd construction stage of activities for improving the traffic flow subsidised by the state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. Rostock Public Utility and Nordwasser, the water supply and disposal company, will use the building site to renew their line system and piping in one go.

Planning permission for the construction of a new junction with federal motorway A19 having been granted last year after preliminary planning work by ROSTOCK PORT, the federal Autobahn GmbH as the client has put out a public tender for the main construction work. The building project is to begin in early 2022 and to be completed until October.

These three construction projects meant to start in 2022 have a total investment volume of 30 million Euros.

In order to ensure sustainability the port of Rostock is investing in the development of new fields of business and in infrastructure. We would like to point out the fact that the IPCEI application of the HyTechPort of Rostock has been considered during the pre-evaluation of building up the German and European hydrogen strategy. This project in Rostock aims at building up a hydrogen production by several partners here. Rostock plans to use green electricity for a 100 MW electrolysis facility to produce hydrogen or its derivatives.

„The successful shift from fossil sources of energy such as coal to non-fossil energy sources like hydrogen concerns many parts of the port. A determined move into building up a hydrogen economy in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern can phase out fossil energy sources and help decarbonise the region. By initiating the project of the HyTechPort we want to continue to set the pace for a climate-friendly and sustainable port economy“, points out Jens A. Scharner.

Cruise shipping

A total of 47 port calls by cruise vessels with just under 100,000 passengers was welcomed in Warnemünde last year. In 2019, the last year before Covid, there were more than 600,000 cruise travellers boarding or disembarking during 196 port calls. “All parties involved are very well prepared for the resumption of cruise shipping this year“, says Jens A. Scharner. „We are proud to have provided safe cruise shipping last year together with the shipping companies, public authorities and service businesses. Against the background of differing travel regulations and changes at short notice we thank all our partners for their trust and cooperation during a difficult time“.

With the shore electricity installation for cruise liners commissioned in Warnemünde in May 2021 the port of Rostock has pointed the way for a positive

and sustainable future in maritime tourism. Two cruise liners can now receive shore power from sustainable sources simultaneously at berths P7 and P8 in Warnemünde. During the pandemic the first vessel to receive shore power was *AIDA Sol*. After synchronisation tests the cruise liner *AIDA Prima* was then successfully connected to the new shore electricity installation in Warnemünde for the first time at the end of June.

Thank you to the men and women working at the port of Rostock for their special efforts

All through a whole year of the pandemic the port remained 100 percent operational and efficient in 2021. The port operator ROSTOCK PORT thanks all men and women working at the companies and public authorities at the port for having kept the transport and supply chains up and running and having contributed to this good result with their exceptional efforts and commitment.

Outlook

Apart from the investment projects already mentioned, ROSTOCK PORT will focus on energy transformation this year and intends to establish the first Hydrogen project at Rostock Overseas Port together with partners. We take our responsibility seriously to make a contribution to climate protection and to develop activities that will contribute to the climate neutrality of the port and the region, for instance by supporting railway infrastructure projects. ROSTOCK PORT is confident that passenger travel on ferry and cruise vessels will once again reach a higher level in the further course of the pandemic.

Statistics of Rostock Overseas Port

Main cargo types	2020 (t)	2021 (t)	trend in %	share in %
Ferry & ro-ro goods	15,300,000	18,000,000	+18 %	63 %
Dry bulk goods	6,750,000	6,900,000	+2 %	24 %
Liquid goods	2,430,000	3,100,000	+27 %	11 %
General cargo	620,000	680,000	+12 %	2 %
total	25,100,000	28,680,000	+14 %	100 %

For further information please visit www.rostock-port.de