

Press release

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A welcome from HAMBURG EXPRESS to the Jade Schutzgemeinschaft Deutsche Nordseeküste e.V. (SDN) welcomes the first major change in container traffic on the German North Sea coast

German coast. 'For the very large ships with a deep draught, there is an ecologically sensible and yet economical alternative on the German North Sea coast,' recalls SDN Chairman, Mayor Gerd-Christian Wagner, recalling the warning his conservation organisation has been sending to German port operators for years. 'Unfortunately not for nature!' The new 'Gemini Cooperation' alliance between the two shipping companies Maersk (60%) and Hapag-Lloyd (40%) now shows that container traffic on the north German coast can be organised not only more economically and more quickly, but also in a more environmentally friendly way. Almost a true 'Port of Northern Germany'. And all this using the only German deep-water port with a draught of up to 16.50 metres, where ships of all common sizes can be served regardless of the tide.

Hub-and-spoke concept

The shipping company alliance has established a network of around 15 central ports worldwide, which serve as strategic container hubs for its fully loaded mega container ships such as the HAMBURG EXPRESS. These include the Jade-Weser-Port in Wilhelmshaven and the container port of Bremerhaven as an alternative hub. A very long, costly and time-sensitive territorial voyage to Hamburg by ships that are far too large via the Elbe, which is too narrow and shallow, would therefore no longer be necessary. Onward transport would then be carried out by much smaller shuttle ships via the spokes to the respective destinations.

Sensible transport routes

'The SDN sees this new concept from the two major shipping companies as more than just confirmation of the criticism it has levelled against the deepening of the Elbe for many years. Moreover, they have not yet triggered any new trade dynamics,' says the SDN chairman happily. It has taken a long time, but now the increasing gigantism in container shipping seems to lead almost automatically to economically and logistically more sensible decisions. And there is good reason to hope that, sooner or later, other shipping companies will also adapt their delivery concept and use significantly less risky transport routes. 'However, it should not be overlooked that this only further reduces the possibility of a serious accident, but does not rule it out.' For example, all mega-ships would have to use the German Bight-Western Approach deep-water route away from the coast and a clearly structured and preventative emergency response system is urgently needed that recognises risks as early as possible and can immediately deploy qualified technical and personnel assistance.

With kind request for publication,
SDN Schutzgemeinschaft Deutsche Nordseeküste e.V.



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Die Schutzgemeinschaft Deutsche Nordseeküste e.V. (SDN)

is a supra-regional, non-profit environmental protection umbrella organisation that was founded in 1973 in response to extensive pollution of the North Sea. Since then, the organisation has been committed to the protection of the North Sea as a living, economic and natural environment in a professional and cross-party manner. It serves around 200 municipalities, administrative districts, nature conservation organisations, institutes, associations and individual members as a mouthpiece for the public as well as the ministerial administrations and parliaments of the federal government and the four North Sea coastal states. The common goal is to protect the unique features and beauty of the North Sea, the Wadden Sea and the neighbouring coastline from harmful human intervention and to find solutions to the problems of North Sea protection.

Some of the measures in recent decades in which the SDN has represented the interests of the coast as a lobby organisation and which are now considered to have been largely dealt with are the dumping of dilute acid, waste and sewage sludge, the emergency towing concept, antifouling, air monitoring, ballast water, tank cleaning, MARPOL I to IV and the acquisition of modern emergency tugs for the North Sea and Baltic Sea, as well as the Lower Elbe at present.

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