



Interview with Bengt van Beuningen

Port of Hamburg Marketing Regd. Assn.

In 2015, SRM carried out a scientific mission in Hamburg with the aim of gaining a better knowledge of the strategies and the issues regarding the maritime sector in a country like Germany, which is considered one of the top European countries as for maritime logistics. During the mission, SRM interviewed **Bengt van Beuningen, Head of Communication & Information, Port of Hamburg Marketing Regd. Assn.**

What is your outlook on the port's future?

We expect to handle a record volume of seaborne cargo, although figures from 2014 have not been compiled yet, for the first 9 months we had a strong increase on import and export, 5-7% growth amounting to more than 140 million tonnes. However the future is not easy to predict; the ISL (Institute for Shipping Logistics and Economics) quotes 25 million TEUs for 2025, but a new study from 2014 which has not been published yet makes an adjustment to 16.45 million TEUs, a lower figure. However, we did record a growth of 7.4% in the last quarter.

7.4% increase in a quarter is an important figure, can it be better?

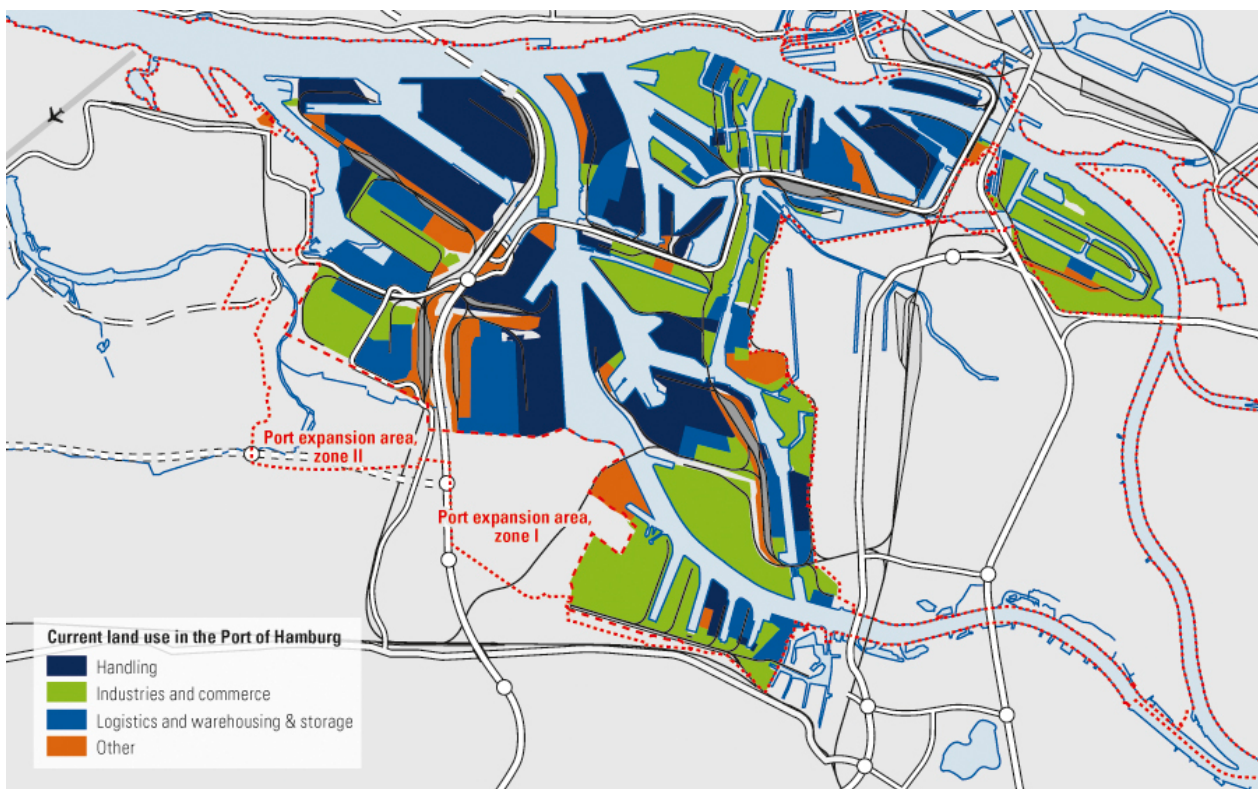
We could handle a capacity of 12-15 million TEUs, we are now at the end of the year with 9.8 - 9.9 million TEUs for 2014 therefore, we are able to handle more without any new terminals but to handle 16 million or more we need to increase our handling capacity.



If you look at the Plan (*Hamburg is staying on Course. The Port Development Plan to 2025*, October 2012)¹ it will give you a picture of the port. We have 4 container terminals: HHLA Container Terminal Altenwerder (CTA), HHLA Container Terminal Burchardkai, which is the biggest, we have HHLA Container Terminal Tollerort (CTT) and then Eurogate. It is possible to extend Eurogate to 6 million as well as Burchardkai and CTA. There is a potential for expansion and for offering

more capacity in the existing terminals. If you look at the figure on the plan you will see a green area which marks the expansion. Capacity is not a problem but what can limit the port's potential is the infrastructure which handles the large good flows; consider that we handle this 11,000 TEUs container ship in only 3 days.

On the one hand, the infrastructure is the problem of the port authorities, but there is also the city owned administration which is responsible for planning and in-



¹ <http://www.hamburg-port-authority.de/de/presse/broschueren-und-publikationen/Documents/port-development-plan2025.pdf>

vestment in the port. In Hamburg we also have the Federal State which is responsible for the streets surrounding the port and belonging to the city. The third level is made up of the federal owned infrastructure like the railways and motorways and so on. If a plan involves infrastructure as well as green issues it takes a lot of time to involve all these parties you have to contend with.

It doesn't matter what plans we want to implement if we cannot get the agreement of all these parties, Hamburg has been waiting for more than 10 years to extend the river Elbe, but we have not had the green light yet. We need to improve the river by adding another meter to be able to handle large ships. There is a regulation that prevents ships from passing at the same time if they exceed 45 meters each, the second ship must wait to keep a distance of at least 90 meters between them. Furthermore, the deepening of the river Elbe, which is a federal project, needs to be implemented, therefore we hope to start the dredging soon.

We are the last large port in the Northern Range and we have more than 160 weekly feeder services mainly to the Baltic Sea area. We have more than 200 cargo trades per day going to all these spots in the hinterland by combined traffic and more than 7,000 truck companies offering transport. However, you can see that the routes to the Czech Republic are not being used to their full potential because of the container services on the river Elbe which need to be expanded. Before the years of the Iron Curtain this was one of the busiest shipping areas, now it is difficult to fully utilize this wonderful intermodal transport.

Does the plan contain private or public investment?

Only public. The areas offering cargo handling services such as the storage of containers are run by private companies responsible for their own investments, while the changes to the land and the infrastructure for HPA or the city of Hamburg are public. Another interesting topic is that of the Olympic Games. Soon it will be decided whether to include Hamburg or Berlin. If it is Hamburg, our city will give areas of the port to the city for development which will mean that some companies will have to move to other areas.

What are the principal target areas of Hamburg's trading?

If we look at container trades in all the markets, in the Far East and China we are very strong, they are among Hamburg's top 10 container trading partners. Looking at 2030, if China decreases, as its transshipment volume is worth the double we lose the double. Russia is also decreasing due to the economic sanctions which are having a negative impact on import-export.

What is Germany's perspective within the Northern Range?

In the comparison of container ports in our range, Rotterdam is the leader in container trade, we are the second and then other German ports follow. Further development in the future will focus on guaranteeing reliable conditions to attract large and very large container ships. For this reason we need the dredging, so that we can offer better navigation conditions. We have tidal restrictions and today the depth is 15.10 meters if you come to Hamburg and 30.8 meters if you leave in a north-east direction. With another meter we can offer a greater tidal window to ships.

Why is there a difference if they leave towards the north-east river stream?

Because of the speed of the tidal stream; if you have a high tide wave through the port it goes against the natural river stream, if you leave in the direction of the sea you are flowing with the normal speed of the river, this is why you need less time. When you enter the river it is very wide but it becomes increasingly narrow. When we dredge we will not have to dredge the entire river; the river has different drafts from Hamburg to the open sea. There are peak areas and the profile of this river is like a mountain valley. We need to dredge in order to cut these peaks.

In the first three quarters there was more than 20% increase in container ships calling at our ports, so at the end of the year they were more than 2 million TEUs and we tried to bring more containers to rail and, of course, we are interested in bringing more cargo to the river system but we need the infrastructure improvements in order to do this.

The last question: can you tell us about the National Terminal Coordination (NTK)?

It is an organization created to facilitate the arrival and departure of the large and gigantic vessels. This new service, created by the terminal operators and by HPA, provides assistance to shipping lines and terminals. It allows finding the best time window to arrive or leave the port. If you receive a guaranteed time to arrive in Hamburg and you are in Rotterdam or Felixstowe, this service aids you to plan your arrival effectively, meaning that you do not have to go into high speed, or wait on arrival. The other interesting point for the port is arranging the right time for vessels to pass by each other, analyzing ships' size and speed so that they can offer the best timing to approach Hamburg, thus avoiding the restrictions. In combination with the pilots, shipping lines and terminals we are trying to avoid problems and waiting times but this implies a lot of IT and many minds at work to create the schedules.