

EDITION  
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 GERMAN PORTS

# LOGISTICS PILOT

Magazine for Ports, Shipping and Logistics



## North Africa – potential for growth despite current stagnation

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# MEMORANDUM

## on the future of the Outer and Lower Weser

The River Weser is a defining feature of the North German landscape. For centuries, this river has been the lifeline and a vital connection for the people who live and work on its banks.

Global trade with its division of labour is dependent on efficient waterways. Hydraulic engineering measures are currently necessary to improve the tidal and non-tidal accessibility of the ports of Bremen/Bremerhaven and Lower Saxony for international shipping. This has a direct impact on the overall economic power of the region and its labour market potential. The Federal Waterways and Shipping Agency has initiated projects for the Outer Weser and Lower Weser North to address this task.

### THESE PROJECTS ARE EXPLICITLY WELCOMED BY THE SIGNATORIES, WHO SIMULTANEOUSLY ENDORSE THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES:

The natural condition of the river and its tributaries as well as the sites on the right and left banks must be protected, whilst simultaneously satisfying the legal requirements of the Waterway Development Act and the Federal Transport Infrastructure Plan 2030 that apply to the River Weser as a federal waterway.

Negative impact in connection with the fairway adjustment has to be avoided or appropriate compensatory mitigation measures taken. Compensation shall be in compliance with, for instance, the European Water Framework Directive, the Habitats Directive, the Birds Directive and the Impact Mitigation Regulation. The basic specifications for doing so are available in the form of management plans.

Prompt adjustment of the Outer Weser and Lower Weser North fairways will also make a major contribution towards achieving the federal government's climate targets: in accordance with the Federal Transport Infrastructure Plan, the fairway adjustment will lead to a significant reduction in pollutant emissions. Positive effects are anticipated in particular owing to the avoidance of road freight transport or the modal shift of this transport to eco-friendly waterways. Moreover, the Wesermarsch Master Plan, the compilation of which will be co-funded by the Federal Waterways and Shipping Administration in respect of the Weser adjustment, offers a unique opportunity for resolving problems which have existed for decades. This will also pursue targets for dealing more effectively with the consequences of climate change and proactively addressing these challenges.

### INITIAL SIGNATORIES ↓

Brake (Unterweser) <b>Michael Kurz</b> Mayor	Bremerhaven <b>Melf Grantz</b> Mayor	Handelskammer Bremen – IHK für Bremen und Bremerhaven <b>Janina Marahrens-Hashagen</b> President	Oldenburgische Industrie- und Handelskammer <b>Gert Stuke</b> President
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MSC Gate Bremerhaven GmbH & Co. KG <b>Florian Brandt</b> Managing Director	North Sea Terminal Bremerhaven GmbH & Co. <b>Christian Lankenau</b> Managing Director	DGB Bremerhaven <b>Lutz Bock</b> Chairman	IG Metall Weser-Elbe <b>Doreen Arnold</b> Manager
ver.di Bezirk Bremen-Nordniedersachsen <b>Markus Westermann</b> District Manager	EUROGATE Container Terminal Bremerhaven GmbH <b>Hasan Özer</b> Chairman of the Works Council		
North Sea Terminal Bremerhaven GmbH & Co. <b>Jann Focke Ufen</b> Chairman of the Works Council			

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**#WESER**

Unser Fluss. Unser Land. Unsere Arbeit.

# “The North African market is definitely growing.”

Christoph Kannengießer, chief executive, Afrika Verein der deutschen Wirtschaft



Dear readers,

The countries of North Africa are not only one of the central trade hubs of the entire African continent; they are also becoming increasingly important as a sales market. Many German companies have long recognised this potential and are investing accordingly. Most of the trade is done by ship, for which North Africa has well developed infrastructure. Egypt is our largest market in North Africa and the third largest on the African continent after Nigeria and South Africa. Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia act as bridge markets to the rest of the continent, to Europe and the Middle East. Having a base there is becoming increasingly important because Egyptian and Moroccan companies are expanding strongly in sub-Saharan Africa and are often looking for German partners.

Three sectors stand out: energy, automotive and pharmaceutical. German investment in these markets is rising steadily, as is the North African market itself, and more and more German and other European companies are recognising North Africa's potential as a manufacturing base. Goods produced there can be exported not only regionally, but also to the rest of the continent and to Europe.

Trade between Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia has also received a boost from the fact that these three countries have become part of the G20 initiative known as Compact with Africa. Reforms to improve investment conditions are therefore being given more priority.

All in all, the conditions for an even closer partnership with North Africa look promising. To ensure that more ships from Bremerhaven and the other locations in northern Germany leave for or arrive from Africa once the pandemic is over, we look forward to working with you to seize the opportunities there.

Best wishes, Christoph Kannengießer

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**North Africa**

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# Different speeds, different perspectives

With a total of 55 countries, Africa is characterised not only by its great cultural diversity, but also by a variety of different speeds – especially when it comes to economic development. This also applies to the five North African nations that we highlight in this issue: Egypt, Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia.

The only country in the region that seems likely to survive the pandemic without a recession is Egypt, but the other four nations are struggling with a range of problems, from a drop in tourist numbers to declining international demand for oil and gas. Some experts therefore advise giving North Africa a wide economic berth for the time being. The Bundesverband mittelständische Wirtschaft (BVMW) takes a different view. It sees five reasons why German companies should invest there: huge economic potential, infrastructure that meets international standards, a well trained and productive workforce, a good business environment and considerable tourism potential.

### Morocco

<b>Capital:</b>	Rabat	<b>Area:</b>	446,550 km <sup>2</sup>
<b>Inhabitants 2020:</b>	36.9 million*	<b>GDP/capita 2020:</b>	3.158 US \$*

<b>Main import goods 2019</b> as % of imports overall	↓	<b>Main supplier countries 2019</b>
1. Petrochemicals 10.5 %		1. Spain 15.6 %
2. Plant 10.2 %		2. France 12.2 %
3. Chemical products 10.2 %		3. China 10.1 %
	↑	4. Germany 4.9 %

<b>Main export goods 2019</b> as % of exports overall		<b>Main customer countries 2019</b>
1. Food 20.0 %		1. Spain 24.1 %
2. Chemical products 16.3 %		2. France 21.6 %
3. Electronics 15.6 %		3. Italy 4.7 %
		4. Germany 3.2 %

<b>German exports to Morocco 2020</b> as % total exports		<b>Germany's imports from Morocco 2020</b> as % of imports overall
1. Vehicles and parts 18.7 %		1. Food 27.8 %
2. Chemical products 15.1 %		2. Textiles/clothing 27.3 %
3. Electronics 13.9 %		3. Electronics 16.2 %

### Algeria

<b>Capital:</b>	Algiers
<b>Inhabitants 2020:</b>	43.9 million*
<b>Area:</b>	2,381,740 km <sup>2</sup>
<b>GDP/capita 2020:</b>	3.263 US \$*

<b>Main import goods 2017</b> as % of imports overall	↓
1. Food 17.2 %	
2. Plant 16.5 %	
3. Chemical products 13.0 %	

<b>Main export goods 2017</b> as % of exports overall	↑
1. Gas 40.0 %	
2. Crude oil 36.1 %	
3. Petrochemicals 18.3 %	

<b>Main supplier countries 2017</b>	
1. China 18.1 %	
2. France 9.3 %	
3. Italy 8.2 %	
4. Germany 7.0 %	

<b>Main customer countries 2017</b>	
1. Italy 16.0 %	
2. France 12.6 %	
3. Spain 11.7 %	

<b>German exports to Algeria 2020</b> as % total exports	
1. Chemical products 22.9 %	
2. Vehicles and parts 17.6 %	
3. Plant 17.0 %	

<b>Germany's imports from Morocco 2020</b> as % of imports overall	
1. Crude oil 58.7%	
2. Petrochemicals 36.4 %	
3. Chemical 2.5 %	



SOURCE: ALLE GTAI 2021  
\*PROVISIONAL DATA, ESTIMATE OR PREDICTION

## Tunisia

<b>Capital:</b>	Tunis	<b>Area:</b>	163,610 km <sup>2</sup>
<b>Inhabitants 2020:</b>	11.8 million*	<b>GDP/capita 2020:</b>	3.323 US \$*

### Main import goods 2019

as % of imports overall

1. Chemical products	11.6 %
2. Electronics	9.6 %
3. Textiles/clothing	9.3 %

### Main export goods 2019

as % of exports overall

1. Electronics	21.5 %
2. Textiles/clothing	17.6 %
3. Chemical products	7.5 %

### German exports to Tunisia 2020

as % total exports

1. Electronics	27.5 %
2. Chemical products	12.9 %
3. Textiles/clothing	11.7 %

### Main supplier countries 2019

1. Italy	15.4 %
2. France	14.2 %
3. China	9.5 %
4. Germany	6.8 %

### Main customer countries 2019

1. France	29.1 %
2. Italy	16.2 %
3. Germany	12.8 %

### Germany's imports from Tunisia 2020

as % of imports overall

1. Electronics	44.7 %
2. Textiles/clothing	25.5 %
3. Shoes	6.9 %

## Libya

<b>Capital:</b>	Tripoli	<b>Area:</b>	1,759,540 km <sup>2</sup>
<b>Inhabitants 2020:</b>	6,7 million*	<b>GDP/capita 2020:</b>	3.281 US \$*

### Main import goods 2019

as % of imports overall

1. Plant/transport goods	53.5 %
2. Raw materials	16.0 %
3. Food/livestock	11.2 %

### Main export goods 2017

as % of exports overall

1. Hydrocarbons	95.0 %
2. Other	5.0 %

### German exports to Libya 2020

as % total exports

1. Plant	23.1 %
2. Chemical products	18.1 %
3. Food	15.3 %

### Main supplier countries 2017

1. Eurozone	20.7 %
2. China	13.5 %
3. Turkey	11.3 %

### Main customer countries 2017

1. Italy	19.0 %
2. Spain	12.5 %
3. France	11.0 %
4. Germany	8.6 %

### Germany's imports from Libya 2020

as % of imports overall

1. Crude oil	97.4 %
2. Petrochemicals	2.4 %
3. Raw materials (excl. fuels)	0.2 %

## Egypt

<b>Capital:</b>	Cairo
<b>Inhabitants 2020:</b>	102.3 million*
<b>Area:</b>	1,001,450 km <sup>2</sup>
<b>GDP/capita 2020:</b>	3,587 US \$*

### Main import goods 2020

as % of imports overall

1. Food	17.5 %
2. Chemical products	15.1 %
3. Raw materials (excl. fuels)	8.7 %

### Main export goods 2020

as % of exports overall

1. Chemical products	17.5 %
2. Food	16.4 %
3. Gold	10.9 %

### Main supplier countries 2020

1. China	15.0 %
2. USA	6.7 %
3. Saudi Arabia	6.3 %
4. Germany	5.8 %

### Main customer countries 2020

1. UAE	10.7 %
2. Saudi Arabia	6.4 %
3. Turkey	6.2 %

### German exports to Egypt 2019

as % total exports

1. Plant	25.9 %
2. Vehicles and parts	17.3 %
3. Chemical products	16.9 %

### Germany's imports from Egypt 2019

as % of imports overall

1. Crude oil	32.8 %
2. Food	19.4 %
3. Textiles/clothing	18.4 %



PHOTOS: PEXELS, KAIPO ZED, VECTORSTOCK, GREBESHKOV/MAXIM

## COMPACT

**NORTH GERMANY.** In an online event in June, the **Maritime Cluster Norddeutschland (MCN)**, the ZIM network Green Meth and the GreenShipping Niedersachsen skills centre showcased projects and **ideas on how methanol can help reach climate targets.** „We need renewable electricity, renewable gases and sustainably produced fuels like green methanol and paraffin,“ said Olaf Lies, Lower Saxony's Minister for the Environment, Energy, Building and Climate Protection. „And we now need a consistent move towards big solutions to achieve the transformation of the economy, transport and shipping and to reach climate targets.“

**BREMEN.** **bremenports published its seventh sustainability report** in July. Certified by TÜV Nord, the 140-page report provides an overview of Bremen's ports in the areas of corporate governance, the economy, the environment, working conditions and social responsibility. The report is based on international GRI standards. The online version, which includes a review of ten years of green ports and interviews on the subject of the ideal port for 2030, can be found at [www.bremenports.de](http://www.bremenports.de)



## „Ports remain engine of Bremen economy“

**BREMEN.** Bremen's Senator for Science and Ports, Dr Claudia Schilling, launched the dialogue process for the further development of Bremen's port concept with a digital kick-off event in May. „By updating the Bremen Port Concept, we want to strengthen the competitiveness of Bremen's ports and create the basis for new growth,“ said Dr. Schilling. At the beginning of the event, Bremen's mayor Dr Andreas Bovenschulte paid tribute to the achievements of the ports there

during the pandemic: „Our ports have proven their efficiency even in these difficult times. This was only possible because the private and public sectors did a superb job together.“ He added that the ports will continue to be of central importance in the future. „The ports remain the powerhouse of Bremen's economy,“ he said. Bovenschulte also announced that around half a billion euros would be invested in the infrastructure of the local ports over the next ten years.



## Making shipping cleaner

**OLDENBURG/BREMEN/WILHELMSHAVEN.** In June, NPorts, bremenports and JadeWeserPort signed up for the ZeroEmission@Berth project. From September onwards, the port partners will be aiming to find additional and alternative measures for fixed shore power systems. The aim is to help reduce emissions while ships are at berth. To achieve consistency across all parts of the industry, the project is to be implemented in conjunction with the shipping companies that use the German seaports. The joint project has been initiated by the North German Seaport Network and will involve cooperation between environmental experts from the nine seaport companies of the five North German coastal states. Other partners include the Hamburg Port Authority, Brunsbüttel Ports, Port of Kiel, NPorts, Rostock Port, Lübeck Port Authority and Seehafen Wismar. The project is supported by the Maritime Cluster Norddeutschland and will run for seven months.



## Crane operations in Brak harbour repositioned

**BRAKE.** In 2020, NPorts invited tenders for a concession to operate cranes and carry out handling services in the port of Brake as part of a Europe-wide tendering process. In June, the contract was signed with port services provider J. MÜLLER, which emerged as the best bidder. „This development is full of benefits,“ said NPorts Managing Director Holger Banik. „NPorts will be able to concentrate even more on port infrastructure, and the entire handling process will be carried out from a single source.“



## Wagons take to the road

**BREMERHAVEN.** On behalf of bremenports, heavy-goods operator Kübler removed 28 railway wagons from Columbus Island by road in May. They had been trapped there without a siding after the dismantling of a defective railway swing bridge. Since it is currently unclear when a replacement bridge will be built over the canal, the wagons were driven onto special heavy-duty trailers and transported in convoy via the Kaiserschleuse and the Zolltor Rotersand and placed back on the tracks of the port railway at the head end of Kaiserhafen III.



## THW works with bremenports on flood protection

**BREMEN.** bremenports and the Bremerhaven Federal Agency for Technical Relief (THW) will cooperate even more closely on flood protection in future. To this end, the previous partnership has been regulated in a formal agreement, which was signed in June by bremenports Managing Director Robert Howe and the heads of THW Bremerhaven, Torben Tietjen and Andre Schröder. Contact between the partners already existed before this agreement, which now gives bremenports access to THW's specialist staff in exceptional situations.



## More space secures port development

**CUXHAVEN.** bremenports has secured a compensation area in the Geesten lowlands near Ringstedt through a contract with the nature conservation foundation of the district of Cuxhaven. The foundation will take over planning, the securing of permits and the implementation of compensation measures required in the course of port-related construction projects in Bremerhaven on an area of 100 hectares. „This contract creates an important element of security for port development for the 2020s,“ said bremenports Managing Director Robert Howe.



## Sights set on larger cruise ships

**BREMERHAVEN.** As part of the 80 million euro redevelopment of Columbus Quay, new passenger bridges will also be needed for the cruise terminal in the next few years. bremenports invited tenders in June for the planning, construction and delivery of three new passenger bridges. These are to be longer and wider than the previous ones so that in future larger cruise ships with up to 6,500 passengers can dock at the terminal. The first bridge will be ready for operation in February 2023, the other two by August 2023.

## COMPACT

**BREMERHAVEN.** Before the **old Columbusbahnhof in the Überseehafen area** has to make way for a new building, the historic site will play **host to the Farewell Festival** from autumn 2021 to summer 2023. Behind the project, which aims to bring the history of Columbusbahnhof to life with a series of cultural events, are bremenports and theatre group Das Letzte Kleinod. Their artistic director Jens-Erwin Siemssen says of the location: „World history has been written here. Elvis, the Queen and the King of Thailand have all been visitors in the past.“

**OLDENBURG.** Under the banner of **One Universal Port – Nine Alternatives, the first online conference of the Seaports of Niedersachsen** took place in July. After the welcome by Seaports Managing Director André Heim and moderator Tim Oliver-Frische (DVV Media Group), five experts provided information on how the port group has fared so far in the pandemic and how the issue of green energy is dealt with at the nine locations. Uwe Schiemann (J. MÜLLER), Oliver Fuljahn (Cuxport), Claus Hirsch (AG Ems), Dr Jörg Niegsch (Nord-West-Oelleitung) and Marcus Schlichting (Elbclearing) all gave presentations at the event.

## New turning point for ships at Oldenburg

**OLDENBURG.** Since the beginning of May, seagoing and inland vessels on the Hunte near Oldenburg have been benefiting from a new high-performance turning facility. This has a diameter of 165 metres, which is one and a half times the maximum length for a seagoing vessel on the Hunte. „The new turning facility brings clear advantages to shipping and helps make freight shipping greener,“ said Enak Ferlemann, Parliamentary State Secretary at the Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure.



## First train for Nordfrost port terminal

**WILHELMSHAVEN.** Wilhelmshaven. Nordfrost's new 2 km long railway facility was inaugurated in a small ceremony in June. It connects the company's seaport terminal at JadeWeserPort with the public rail network. The first train (in the background) to pass through the gates comprised 18 wagons loaded with around 200 new cars. The frozen food logistics company (based in Schortens near Wilhelmshaven) intends to use the facility to handle combined transport for its customers as part of its supply chain management.



## Maritime industry against plastic waste

**OLDENBURG.** At an NPorts webinar in June entitled The Challenge of Plastic Waste in Ports, five speakers from research, environmental protection and maritime business gave presentations on the issue of plastic waste – from how it gets into the oceans to how to deal with the problem in the ports. Björn Fuhlendorf and Romina Hanisch (both NPorts) spoke of their experience using the Seabin marine litter bin, which is currently in use in the ports of Emden, Wilhelmshaven and Cuxhaven.



## Award invested in solar panels

**BREMERHAVEN.** Bremerhaven. bremenports 2020 has been awarded the NorthwestAward by the Bremen/Lower Saxony Metropolitan Region for its consistent sustainability policy. With the prize money of 10,000 euros, the port management company had a photovoltaic system with battery storage installed at the Welcome Club in Bremerhaven's overseas port. This was officially put into operation in a small ceremony in time for Seafarers' Day in June. With the new system, the Seamen's Mission can meet a large part of its energy requirement.





## NPorts bolts port at Brake

**BRAKE.** Lower Saxony's Minister of Economic Affairs Dr. Bernd Althusmann, Parliamentary State Secretary Enak Ferlemann, NPorts Managing Director Holger Banik and the head of the NPorts Brake branch, Harald Ludwig, launched construction work on the second large ship berth in Brake in June with a first pile driving. The port company is investing 8.5 million euros in the project, which is scheduled for completion in 2023. At the same time, another 1.5 million euros will be used to restore the jetty that was damaged by the Mount Hope accident.



## J. MÜLLER pledges 200th anniversary donations

**BRAKE/BREMEN.** As part of the celebrations for its 200th anniversary, J. MÜLLER presented nine organisations in Brake and Bremen with a donation of 5,000 euros each in May. The grateful beneficiaries were the Arp Schnitger Gesellschaft, the Blauer Elefant Kinderschutzbund, Brake Tourismus und Marketing, the Centraltheater Brake, Kultur vor Ort, the Lebenshilfe Wesermarsch for people with disabilities, the Tafel Brake, the Rudi Rotbein Club and the Waller Umweltpädagogik Projekt.



## Port cuts CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 43 %

**EMDEN.** About two years ago, NPorts implemented an innovative lighting concept for railway tracks in the port of Emden. By coupling digital and sensor technology, emissions were cut by 43 per cent. This is shown in the final report presented in May. „We've managed to reduce the CO<sub>2</sub> footprint and save energy costs at the same time,“ said Holger Banik, managing director of NPorts. Further projects for intelligent lighting are currently being planned and implemented.



## Bremen ports increase total throughput

**BREMEN/BREMERHAVEN.** Despite the pandemic, Bremen's ports increased their total throughput in the first quarter of this year by 3.1 per cent to 17,482 million tonnes compared to the same period last year. Some interesting trends have emerged. Container throughput with China overtook the US volume for the first time. A total of 5,978 ships were handled in Bremen's ports in the first quarter of 2021, including 2,359 container ships, 1,295 general cargo vessels and 1,091 RoRo or vehicle carriers.



## Kloosterboer takes over Columbus Spedition

**BREMERHAVEN.** Dutch cold logistics company Kloosterboer took over Columbus Spedition, based in Bremerhaven's fish port, in April. According to Mark Ketelaar, Executive Director Port Cold Stores at Kloosterboer, the acquisition was a logical step in the strategy to expand Kloosterboer's integrated logistics network. Columbus Spedition, which specialises in temperature-controlled food logistics, organises the transport of food containers, the management of imports and exports, and transport preparation and post-processing.

# Significant growth potential despite current stagnation

The experts all agree: although the pandemic has been slowing down development in North Africa for over a year, Egypt, Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia will continue to expand their role as Germany's trading partners over the long term.

**V**olker Kröning, Honorary Consul of the Kingdom of Morocco for Bremen, Lower Saxony and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and former member of the Bremen Senate and the German Bundestag, summarises the current situation as follows: „These countries play an important role not only for trade and tourism in Europe, but also for prosperity throughout the Mediterranean. They are also of central importance for Germany as a sales market.“ Almost half of all German exports to Africa, with a goods value of around 9.5 billion euros, went to these five countries.

Martin Kalhöfer, head of the Africa/Middle East division at the economic development agency Germany Trade & Invest (GTAI), also attests to North Africa's enormous potential. „The African Continental Free Trade Area, AfCFTA for short, adopted in 2019, will create the largest free trade zone in the world, which should lead to a reduction of around 90 percent in customs duties in the region.“ However, this is still a pipe dream, as the Maghreb is currently one of the world's least integrated economic areas. „Our partners in sub-Saharan Africa and Europe can also benefit significantly from stronger ties within the region, whether in investment, trade or infrastructure development,“ says Kalhöfer.

### Pioneering projects across the region

From a European perspective, Egypt in particular two unique selling points: the largest sales market in the region and the Suez Canal as a bridge to Asia. An average of 50 ships per day pass through the sea canal, transporting about twelve percent of the world's trade volume. In addition, the country's 38 commercial seaports, headed by Alexandria, handled around 156 million tonnes of goods last year. „Currently, the Egyptian government, with the support of international donors and Chinese investors, is investing heavily in the expansion of its ports, especially in Alexandria and Ain Sukhna. In addition, nine more dry ports are set to be added, of which DB Schenker will develop and operate the 6th of October dry port,“ says Kalhöfer.

„Further west, Morocco, along with South Africa, has now become the most important market for the automotive industry. But when it comes to textiles, agriculture, aviation

„These countries play an important role in the wellbeing of the entire Mediterranean.“

Volker Kröning, Honorary Consul of the Kingdom of Morocco for Bremen, Lower Saxony and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania



and renewable energies, the country also forms an important interface between Europe and Africa,“ says Kröning. At the same time, he points to the modern port in Tangier and the high quality infrastructure for rail and road there. Other hub ports in the country are located in the metropolis of Casablanca and the tourism hotspot of Agadir. In total, Morocco has thirteen ports authorised for foreign trade, many of them set to be expanded in the next few years.

To this end, the Agence Nationale des Ports (ANP) has earmarked investments totalling 360 million dollars from 2020 to 2022.

„Also well positioned to consolidate its position in international supply chains is Tunisia. At present, it is mainly preliminary and finished products for the automotive industry, and textiles and foodstuffs that come to us from there,“ says Kalhöfer. ■■■

PHOTOS: ISTOCKPHOTO: RUSSIESE 0 (3), ADOBESTOCK: RANGZEN (2)

„Created in 2019, AfCFTA is the world's largest free trade area.“

Martin Kalhöfer, Sector Manager, Afrika/Nahost Germany Trade & Invest (GTAI)



One of the most important arteries of world trade, the nearly 200-kilometre-long Suez Canal connects the Mediterranean with the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean.



■ Although infrastructure quality and handling efficiency have declined since the Arab Spring (see page 18), there are plans to push ahead with the modernisation of the ports here as well. „This includes the restructuring of the port of Radès, for which the US state-owned Millennium Challenge Corporation will be providing around 325 million US dollars, or the deep-water port planned for Enfidha, to which other international companies are expecting to contribute,“ says Kalhöfer.

In Algeria too, although project delays are standard there, Kalhöfer has identified sea freight opportunities. A key project is the deep-sea port of El Hamdania, about 90 kilometres west of Algiers. „This has been in the planning stage for years, but construction work is due to start soon,“ says Kalhöfer. If everything goes as planned, it would make the port one of the largest on the Mediterranean, with 23 terminals designed for a handling capacity of 6.5 million TEU per year. At the same time, the government wants to expand the country’s rail network from the current 4,200 kilometres to 6,500 kilometres in 2023 and 12,500 kilometres by 2030.

Libya occupies a special position among the countries of North Africa. „The country has the continent’s largest oil reserves and substantial gas deposits, which could usher in a lasting upswing if political stability returns,“ says Kröning. But as far as Libyan infrastructure is concerned, he sees considerable pent-up demand, especially in terms of electricity and water supply. „The infrastructure there is

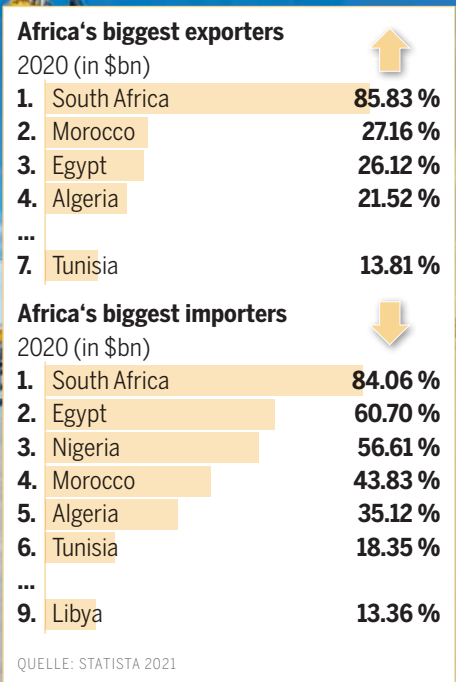
geared solely to domestic trade, which is mainly handled through the ports. In international trade in goods, Libya plays no role as a transit country.“

### Detailed regional knowledge required

Under these challenging conditions, Carl Ungewitter Trinidad Lake Asphalt has been doing business in Libya for around forty years. The Bremen-based logistics provider has had a presence in the North African state since 2001, the first German freight forwarder to come here. Today, in addition to its other core business of importing natural asphalt from Trinidad, the company also coordinates the worldwide procurement of spare parts for the Libyan oil industry. The goods range from cranes, rotors and generators to chemicals for separating oil and gas to PPE for staff on site. „We transport these goods either via sea, air or courier service from all over the world. For time reasons, there is often a combination of different modes of transport,“ explains Birgit Gerrelts, freight manager at Carl Ungewitter. The most important ports of call for onward transport to the interior of the country are the seaports and airports in Mitiga, Misrata and Benghazi. The regional oil industry mainly uses the ports in Marsa el Brega and Ras Lanuf. „Onward transport is solely by road. The rail connection from Misrata to Bengasi, which was planned before the revolution, hasn’t yet been completed,“ says Gerrelts.

PHOTOS: CARL UNGEWITTER

Used to dig trenches for cables, pipes or drainage, this 73-tonne trencher was recently shipped from Bremen to Libya by Carl Ungewitter.



„For all African destinations, you need detailed knowledge of regional logistics,“ says Gerrelts. In the case of Libya, there are extremely strict import requirements. These include the presentation of original documents to customs and the requirement for authenticated certificates of origin, some of which need to be approved by the Libyan embassy. „But these are only a few reasons to check the documentation of exports before shipping,“ says Gerrelts. It’s equally important to stay up to date with local regulations. For this reason, Carl Ungewitter not only trains its own staff but also offers its Libyan customers transport and logistics seminars (these are currently on hold due to the pandemic). „Demand for the logistics seminars is still high, and we’re going to start them again as soon as our Libyan clients are allowed to travel again,“ says Gerrelts. Of the general situation in the North African country, she concludes: „Unfortunately the infrastructure there has suffered greatly after ten years of civil war, so it will take some time and considerable investment to allow the country to return to its past prosperity.“

„Ten years of civil war have seriously damaged Libya’s infrastructure.“

Birgit Gerrelts, Dispatch Manager,  
Carl Ungewitter



## A piranha with an appetite for cars

A relatively new presence on the North African market is the Wilhelmshaven-based company Jade Car Logistics, which was founded in 2020 and specialises in transporting used vehicles from Germany to Libya. „After a successful test phase last year, we established a fixed liner service in

February this year with our partner Clapotis Maritime DMCC and car carrier Pelagic Piranha, which we use to ship cars and trucks for the African market,“ says Josef Nasr, Managing Director of Jade Car Logistics and AML Ship Management. ■■■

## Stark differences in imports and exports

A look at preliminary figures from the Lower Saxony State Office for Statistics for the year 2020 shows, that in the economic data for Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia, there are few similarities. It’s the differences that are significant. There is wide variation in trade volumes, measured as the sum of exports and imports. Egypt clearly leads the five-nation ranking in the exchange of goods with Lower Saxony with a value of around 351 million euros, followed by Morocco (€237m) and Tunisia (€207m). Algeria (€87m) and Libya (€31m) follow far behind. It is interesting to note that, for all the countries except Tunisia, Lower Saxony exported more goods by value than it imported.

Differences can also be seen in the categories of goods traded in 2020. In Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia, cars and motor homes were in high demand from Lower Saxony. Exports of raw tobacco and tobacco products to Algeria dominated in 2020, while for Libya cheese was a major import from Lower

Saxony. Conversely, Germany’s imports from Morocco and Tunisia consisted primarily of equipment for electricity generation and distribution. From Algeria, nuts and dried fruit were particularly in demand, and from Egypt fruit preparations and canned fruit. No provisional figures are yet available for Libya for 2020 for individual product categories, but in 2019 imports of medical equipment from that country dominated. The import of crude oil and natural gas, which still accounted for almost 95 per cent of Lower Saxony’s imports from Libya in 2016, has not appeared in the import statistics of the Lower Saxony State Office for Statistics since 2017.

A stark picture emerged when comparing the export and import figures from 2020 with those from before the pandemic. Only imports from Egypt (up 21.4 per cent) and exports to Libya (up 17.2 per cent) increased; all others fell, in some cases significantly. Imports from Algeria (down 89.7 per cent) and Libya (down 98.6 per cent) experienced the sharpest drop. (bre)



„The demand for cars and HGVs will continue to grow.“

Josef Nasr, Managing Director, Jade Car Logistics  
AML Ship Management

■ The service travels from Wilhelmshaven via Amsterdam, Antwerp and Genoa and then calls at the unloading ports of Misrata and Benghazi in Libya after a journey of 27 to 31 days. „So far, our offer has been extremely well received by the market and we’ve seen a steady increase in the number of vehicles transported. While there were around 700 vehicles on the first two voyages, their number has grown to 1,500 and 1,600 on the last two shipments,“ says Nasr.

When looking at the future development of North African market, however, Nasr is cautious: „With steadily increasing population figures on the African continent, I’m sure that the demand for cars and trucks will continue to grow. On the other hand, the political situation in Libya is so fragile that you can’t assume that everything will run smoothly,“ he warns. As far as Jade Car Logistics is concerned, the company is planning to operate its scheduled service in the long term, though probably soon without the stop in Italy in order to reduce the round trip time. Against this background, Nasr attests that the authorities there have a „good digital level“ when it comes to customs clearance, but at the same time points to considerable weaknesses in the processing of transactions: „As yet, there are no satisfactory options for transferring money from Africa to Europe,“ he says.

27 to 31 days after loading, the vehicles are unloaded in Libyan ports.

### Keeping the cold chain intact

As a logistics provider, Nordfrost has been handling the import of early potatoes from Egypt since the 1990s, initially via conventional reefer ships that unloaded their cargo in the Inner Port at Wilhelmshaven, and since 2016 via container ships moored in the container port of Wilhelmshaven. On behalf of their customer Dankers Daltex Europe, after they have been shipped in a refrigerated container, the imported potatoes are transported by road directly to the neighbouring Nordfrost seaport terminal, where phytosanitary inspection and sampling is carried out by the Lower Saxony Chamber of Agriculture (LWK). „Depending on market conditions, the storage period is about one to two months in state-of-the-art climate chambers,“ says Philipp Brandstrup, branch manager of the Nordfrost seaport terminal. „Nordfrost works to quality standards in accordance with IFS Logistics and IFS Food and is certified for organic products. The potatoes are then transported by road either loose or in sacks within Germany and to neighbouring European countries.“

The potatoes are transported to Europe by sea under strict compliance with cold chain requirements (four degrees Celsius for about two to three weeks). „Since the beginning of 2021, Wilhelmshaven has been the first port of call from Alexandria as part of a North Africa service operated by Sealand,“ says Brandstrup. „This cuts out the transshipments that were previously necessary via Felixstowe and Bremerhaven. This in turn leads to cost savings, which should make this supply chain attractive to other importers in the future.“ Where necessary Nordfrost has also facilitated shipments from the ports in Port Said and Damiette to Wilhelmshaven, mostly from February to May, to supplement domestic potato supplies. All along the logistics chain, Brandstrup attests to the superior operating conditions at the ports in Egypt. „We can see that the connections work. Here in Wilhelmshaven we also have the shortest routes and fastest processes.“ But before the potatoes arrive on the ship and become Nordfrost’s responsibility, they’ve already passed through



PHOTOS: JADECARDIENST, KLABAUTERMANNIMAGES, NORDFROST

several parts of the supply chain in Egypt. „Depending on the location of the farm, the container distances between the empty depot to the ship can vary, which is a special logistical challenge,“ says Peter Dankers, Managing Director of Dankers Daltex Europe.

## Getting set for restructuring and nearshoring

As an old TV commercial from the 1980s used to say, „There’s a lot to do, let’s do it!“ This applies to these companies as well as to the five countries under discussion. Kröning sees several challenges ahead. „In the medium term, it will be interesting to see how these countries succeed in fostering political, economic and social development,“ says Kalhöfer. „It is striking that, due to their different foreign policies, hardly any intra-regional cooperation has developed thus far. This has to change. But just as important for the region will be the extent to which it succeeds in building on the reforms initiated in Morocco and Tunisia, which are already successful manufacturing sites for Germany. Not least due to the pandemic, North Africa will become more important as procurement shifts to nearby regions of the EU.“ Kalhöfer has also noticed that North African countries are already positioning themselves as possible commercial partners for sub-Saharan Africa. „At the moment, a lot of things there are still wishful thinking, but in the medium term, the AfCFTA offers a realistic perspective here for more trade and investment under the banner of the world’s largest free trade area,“ says Kalhöfer. (bre)

„We can see that the connection really works.“

Philipp Brandstrup, branch manager,  
Nordfrost port terminal



Potato storage at Nordfrost



## For Bremen, Egypt is North Africa’s most important trading partner

The figures from the Bremen Chamber of Commerce for 2020 paint a picture that in many areas echoes the situation in Lower Saxony. By total import and export goods, Egypt is the largest of Bremen’s five trading partners in North Africa, with sales of 124.5 million euros, followed by Morocco (€47.02m), Tunisia (€23.05m), Algeria (€11.09m) and Libya (€0.57m). The statistics show considerably less variation when it comes to the number of companies from Bremen that maintain trade relations with these countries. Here too interest in Egypt dominates (with 76 companies from Bremen) ahead of Morocco (65), Tunisia (60), Algeria (54) and Libya (52).

In terms of the most important categories of goods exchanged between Bremen and its trading partners, motor vehicles and automotive parts top the list of exports to Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt. Algeria imports mainly

food and animal feed from Germany, while Libya relies largely on German-made plant. Conversely foodstuffs and animal feed from Morocco, vehicles and parts from Tunisia, agricultural and hunting products from Algeria, and machinery and mechanical equipment from Egypt are highly prized among Bremen’s imports.

All in all, Egypt enjoys a special status not only in Africa and the Far East, but also internationally. It is therefore not surprising that the IMF forecasts economic growth of 2.8 percent for the country in 2020/2021. Only a few other countries achieve that score. A not inconsiderable contribution to the positive trade balance between Bremen and Egypt may also have been made by the fact that the German government approved the delivery of nine patrol boats and one coastal protection boat last year, all built by the Bremen-based Lürssen Group. (bre)

# Specialist skills and the ability to improvise are helpful

If you're doing business in North Africa, remember the continent is a collection of individual countries, each with its own customs and culture. So it pays to do your homework.



**K**arsten Lange, who handled North African business for a Bremen shipping company for many years and was a frequent visitor to the region, sums up the basic requirements for doing business there. „First of all, you have to build up a relationship of trust with your trading partner and maintain it. This doesn't happen overnight and certainly not just with emails, phone calls and video conferences.“ You have to show up in person on site regularly and spend as much time there as possible. „Arabs are usually quite distant at first and take longer to get to know you than westerners,“ says Lange. For business travellers from Europe, this means being patient and holding back early on. Politics and religion are not suitable for the initial stages of the relationship. „Football is almost always a good topic to start with. It brings people together and is very popular in North Africa,“ says Lange. Volker Kröning, Honorary Consul of Morocco, agrees. „A conversation about the African Champions League is possibly a good introduction. Since 2017, the finals have all been North African teams.“ At the same time, he recommends studying the history and culture of each country in advance. „Differences matter as much as similarities. Those who are familiar with both are best equipped to shape business relationships productively,“ says Kröning.



Karsten Lange knows the region inside out, having handled North African business for a Bremen shipping company for many years.





Honorary Consul Volker Kröning (2nd from left) exchanged views with Prince Moulay Rachid of Morocco (2nd from right) at the SIAM agricultural fair in Meknès in 2012.

## „You have the watches. We have the time“

Both these North Africa experts also point out that the clocks in the Maghreb tick differently than in Europe (Arab proverb: „You have the watches. We have the time“). There are often more important things for people there than keeping to exact time slots. Statements like „He'll be back in an hour“ or „Come back tomorrow“ shouldn't be taken at face value. Kröning points out that punctuality is expected of German companies, „but it's clearly a one-way street, because it is rarely kept to by the locals in return.“ Lange advises against scheduling several appointments in quick succession. „Even the first appointment can cause delays that will make subsequent appointments run late,“ says the ex-shipowner manager. Against this background, he also recommends cultural sensitivity. Meetings in the region could well be interrupted several times a day due to prayers. Scheduling meetings during Ramadan may not be advisable, as the hosts might have limited energy due to fasting.

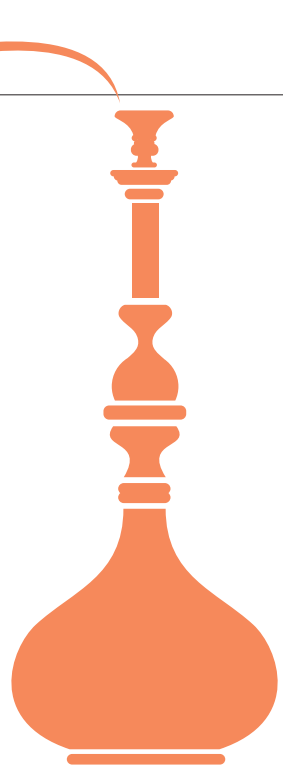
Once the meeting has begun, be respectful, pay attention to non-verbal signals and read between the lines. „Politeness and form are more stringent there than in Germany. You need to act diplomatically and respectfully,“ says Kröning. „You will never hear an unequivocal ‚No‘ in the Maghreb, because it's considered rude,“ says Lange. In the event of a rejection, the people in charge usually talk around things or don't even bring up the issue at all. Everything that is not answered with a clear ‚Yes‘ is considered rejected. „No matter how the issue develops in the course of the conversation, they are always careful to ensure that none of those involved lose face,“ says Kröning.

## Trust is inherited

The two Bremeners also agree that it takes a fair amount of improvisational talent to master the unique challenges on the ground, which are not limited to unclear time slots,

unfamiliar conversation structures or indirectly communicated refusals. „But even this talent is only of limited help if it's not backed up by the appropriate expertise. The right mix of both is crucial,“ says Lange. Job titles on business cards are important. „In North Africa, the exchange of business cards is not as ceremonial as it is in Asia, but here too titles and hierarchies are important. If your title is less senior than managing director, you can only make a very limited difference in the Maghreb,“ says Lange. The beauty of North Africa, however, is that once trust has been acquired there, it is automatically passed on to the next generation, even in the case of business partners. „Due to strong Arab family structures, this trust bonus is virtually hereditary. It's one of the nice things about doing business there.“ (bre)

North Africans are passionate about football. Conversations about the game are often a good way to break the ice. Since 2017, all the finalists in the African Champions League have been North African teams.



# „The hopes for a political turning point have not yet been realised“

Interview with Jochen Tholen, PhD, of the University of Bremen on the Arab Spring.

In December 2010/early 2011, there was a series of protests and uprisings in the Arab region that have gone down in history as the Arab Spring, in the course of which several rulers were ousted. But what have these revolutions actually achieved?



## BACKGROUND

### Jochen Tholen, PhD

teaches at the University of Bremen, focusing on the maritime sector (especially shipbuilding/shipyards and deep-sea mining) and transition societies (Central-Eastern Europe and countries of the former Soviet Union and the Arab region). He also led the EU-funded research project SAHWA, which focused on young people's experience of, and disappointment with, the Arab Spring from 2014 to 2017

It was a revolt, especially by young people, against the lack of opportunities for political, economic and social inclusion. Hundreds of thousands protested against dictators and autocratic rulers. The protesters demanded social justice, freedom and dignity. But the authoritarian regimes in the region were quick to repress them, bolstering their security forces and learning from one another the techniques of repression. The few cosmetic reforms that were granted were always accompanied by preventive measures to guard against further unrest. Today, authoritarian states and repressive systems still dominate the region. The military regime in Egypt and the Gulf monarchies have led the counter-revolution. In Syria, Yemen and Libya, the Arab Spring has ended in fiasco with civil wars and mass emigration.

#### Ten years on, what are the main societal challenges in the region?

**THOLEN:** Mainly demographic change and social and economic injustice. In 1970, there were 128 million people living in the Arab region. By 2010 there were almost 360 million. According to UN forecasts, by 2050, it could be almost 600 million. This would be a fivefold increase in population in less than a century. Rising population numbers bring problems such as water shortages, high unemployment and, above all, a lack of economic prospects for young people. Another problem is the Arab variety of clientelism, called *wasta*. Only by cultivating a relationship with political and economic elites can one have a career that allows one to feed the family and lead a life worth living. The tentacles of the *wasta* system reach far into the functioning of sta-


te-owned enterprises, the civil service and the military. It leads to a small stratum of the population doing very well, but overall to economic stagnation and a lack of international competitiveness.

#### Some people think these countries are worse off now than they were eleven years ago. Is that a view you share?

**THOLEN:** Hopes for a political turning point have not yet been fulfilled. Only in Tunisia has a fragile democracy emerged, but in some places conditions are worse than before. In this respect, the Arab Spring has hardly fulfilled any of the expectations associated with it. That is why, on the one hand, it can be described as a failed revolution, but on the other hand, it has shown for the first time that many people in the Arab world were also prepared to take to the streets for their rights, to abolish despotism and to demand far-reaching reforms.

#### Some say that the majority of Arabs believe that western-style democracy is the best form of government? Do you think there is a realistic chance of that happening?

**THOLEN:** Western-style liberal democracy is not necessarily seen as the preferred form of government by everyone in the region. But if it were, a genuine transformation in the Arab world have to start with free elections. At least as important would be the development of an organised civil society, a change in gender relations and a clear separation of state and religion. But I think that all this happening together is rather unrealistic, especially since many people in North Africa have lost faith in politics and democracy. (bre)



# Connecting the Maghreb

To expand its business with the Maghreb, Cuxhaven-based shipping company BREB relies on finding local partners. The synergies created can benefit everyone involved.

For the Cuxhaven firm of BREB and its long-serving managing director Arne Ehlers, North Africa is familiar territory. The region is served with two liner services from the Adriatic (BREB Adriatic Parcel Service) and from Northern Europe. In 2019, the shipping company also combined the BREB Continental Line with the Scaldic Med Line operated by its Belgian partner Boeckmans to form a joint service from Northern Europe to the Maghreb.

Multi-purpose vessels such as the Richelieu, chartered by the Briese shipping company, are used along with BREB C-class ships with cargo capacities of 4,000 to 9,000 tonnes. These operate every fortnight on rotation from the Baltic Sea via other ports in Germany, Benelux, Great Britain, France and the Iberian Peninsula to North Africa. Freight includes breakbulk cargo such as forest products, steel and bagged cement, project cargo, general cargo and containers. Contractual system transport can also be offered thanks to arrangements for northbound cargo. ■■■

■ ■ ■ A significant advantage is that the company has its own on-board loading gear. „This allows us to handle the cargo ourselves with shipboard cranes,“ says Ehlers. „This gives customers additional flexibility and also means we can transport heavy project cargoes.“

The shipping boss is also encouraged by the level of demand. „At least six of our ships are constantly on the move in these services.“ The breakbulk segment in particular is seeing increased volumes. „In exports from Europe, we’re seeing a lot of construction-related cargo, such as cement and pipes,“ says Ehlers. Exports from West Africa to Europe are mainly chemical products such as palygorskite, also known as attapulgite and formerly known as mountain leather, which is used for heat and sound insulation, and minerals, he said.

Thanks to the collaboration between BREB and Boeckmanns, efficiencies can be achieved. „The ships each operate under the line of the local partner on the routes of the Scheldt and the Elbe or the Weser,“ explains Ehlers. „In addition, we benefit from jointly acquiring new customers.“

### Vessel sharing agreement with Brointermed

Last year BREB formed a second partnership, this time with shipping company Brointermed Lines, which has been connecting North Africa and the Levant with Northern Europe, Portugal and Italy since the early 1980s. „After operating separate liner services from Europe to the Mediterranean for several years, we wanted to combine our activities to offer our customers more options northbound and southbound,“ says

Ehlers. „We therefore formed a vessel sharing agreement.“ Monthly sailings for heavy lift, containers and general cargo can now be offered from Bremen, Harwich, Antwerp and La Spezia to the major Algerian and Libyan ports and back as part of a flexible on-demand service.

„In this service we’re using the BREB Star for the first time as a heavy-lift vessel, which brings the advantage of having a capacity of up to 240 tonnes with two on-board cranes.“ Mainly standard containers are loaded, but also general cargo, project cargo and vehicles. The types of cargo here include consumer goods transported in containers, machine parts, equipment and construction vehicles. Rotor blades for onshore wind turbines are exported to Europe from the Mediterranean, and tower sections from Spain. „From Morocco we also ship phosphate derivatives and fertilisers, and in winter salt for road gritting and fish pickling for Norway,“ says the shipping boss. „But we have also transported contaminated soil to Norway.“

### Additional ship planned

Due to the high demand, Ehlers is currently looking for another ship: „By the time it gets to the North Range, the ship is often already full, and we are currently expanding our customer base.“ However, the freight market is currently almost empty and charter rates are extremely high. Ehlers thinks this market pressure was inevitable. „There was a backlog of maintenance and repair work, which has been exacerbated by the pandemic. It’s all coming together right now.“

„The connection from North Africa to the Mediterranean is quick and easy.“

Arne Ehlers, managing director of shipping company BREB



PHOTOS: BREB GMBH & CO. KG, ISTOCKPHOTO: OLGA KURBATOVA



BREB Cuxhaven ships cement pipes to Brindisi, Italy.

But higher charter rates were overdue anyway. „For breakbulk ships, the rates over the past twelve years often didn't even cover operating costs.“ Nevertheless the shipping boss expects to get hold of additional tonnage in the second half of the year. „I think we have a good chance, especially as we're being supported by our parent company.“

Ehlers thinks there is currently no more cargo on the market. „But judging by the current level of infrastructure

projects, especially in the US and now also in Europe, that will come. They will suck the market dry.“ In addition, previously frozen funds from the Libyan state are now being released. „Tripoli is being rebuilt and the oil industry and airport revived,“ he says. „From the second half of 2021 onwards, our partners are expecting huge volumes.“ And trade is already brisk. Compared to 2019, the increase in volumes – even excluding the oil industry – was at 70 per cent last year.

„We can support this, because Libya offers a stable market, contrary to what one might believe based on the media coverage,“ says Ehlers. The semi-autonomous port of Misrata, like the other Libyan ports, has been in operation throughout the recent upheaval. And social and economic life has also been normal there, while chaos and war-like conditions have raged in other parts of the country. And of course the customers paying for the service are not Libyans, but European exporters.

The market in Algeria, where the government imposed massive lockdowns due to the pandemic, causing volumes to plummet by 20 to 25 per cent last spring and summer, is also now recovering. „In the breakbulk segment, we expect growth of about ten per cent by the end of the year. Morocco, where vaccination has been rapid, is also developing positively.“

Ehlers is therefore confident about the future: „I see two trends. Shipping companies will leave the trade because the traffic is quite uneven - at BREB 80 per cent of traffic comes from Europe. But overall I see growth.“ The real border in Africa is the Sahara. „The connection from North Africa to the Mediterranean is quick and easy,“ the shipping boss says. (cb)



The BREB Star unloads salt for road de-icing in the Norwegian port of Bergen.

## FACTS

### BREB

**Origin:** Bremen shipping company Eilemann & Bischoff founded in 1951

**Head office:** Cuxhaven (since 2014)

**Subsidiaries:** Bremen, Lisbon, Sassnitz and Zeebrugge (BREB Belgium)

**Market:** diversified shipping company with its own fleet and chartering, port agency and port logistics department.

**Fleet:** eleven of its own vessels and additional chartered multi-purpose vessels

**Loading capacity per vessel:** 4,000 to 9,000 tonnes

**Operating area:** three liner services around Europe and North Africa

**Transport volume:** over one million tonnes of cargo per year.  
Hafenlogistikabteilung

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

# From the North Sea to outer space

In just two years' time, these pictures could become reality. Small carrier rockets could then be launched from the North Sea.



It was on 13 April 1970 that NASA's Mission Control Centre was told, „Houston, we have a problem.“ The German Offshore Spaceport Alliance (GOSA), on the other hand, is aiming for everything to go smoothly for its latest project – launching small carrier rockets from a specially designed ship in the North Sea, starting in 2023.

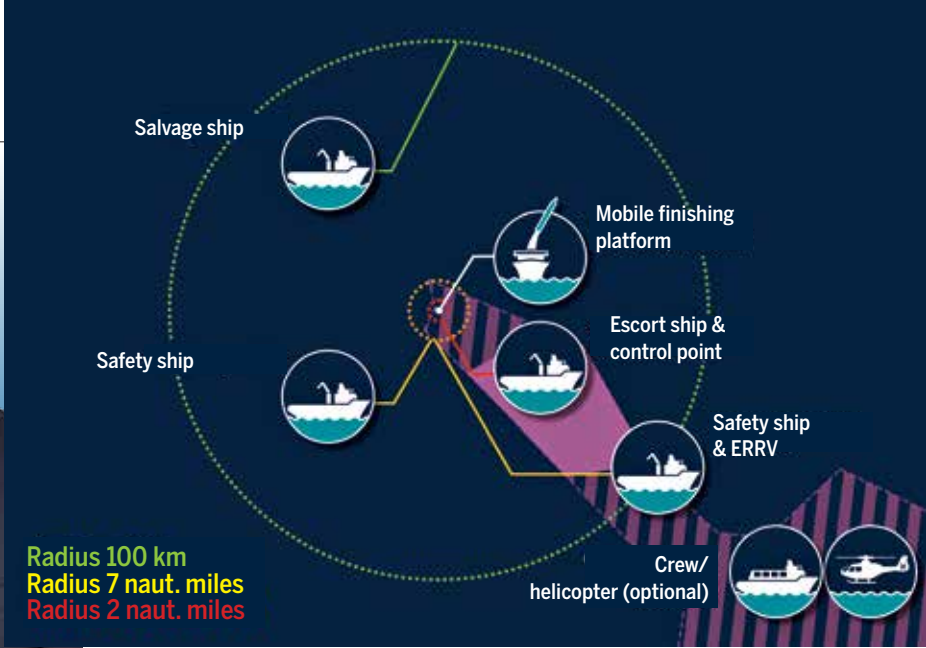
In just two years' time, the futuristic-looking plans for a German spaceport in Bremerhaven are set to become a reality. Shipping group Harren & Partner, the OHB Group, MediaMobil and Tractebel DOC Offshore in Bremen have all joined forces to form an initial consortium and brought Lampe & Schwartz and BLG LOGISTICS on board as strategic partners. „As GOSA, we want to open a new chapter in German and European space travel and launch microlaunchers not from the mainland but from a ship to avoid flying over inhabited areas,“ explains Sabine von der Recke, GOSA spokesperson. According to her, not all the necessary approvals for the project have been received yet from the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy and the Federal Ministry for Transport and Digital Infrastructure.

## Rockets from three different manufacturers

Nevertheless, the partners' plans are already taking shape. An ‚integration hall‘ is set to be built on a site on the ABC peninsula in Bremerhaven, in which the small launchers will be assembled and fitted. „We are currently working with various manufacturers of microlaunchers, including three German companies HyImpulse, Rocket Factory and Isar Aerospace, who will build different rockets up to 30 metres in size that will be able to carry satellites weighing between 400 and 1,200 kilograms,“ says Dr Andreas Stamminger, GOSA project manager, outlining the few facts he is officially allowed to communicate at this stage. „These will then be launched into low-Earth orbit at altitudes of up to 700 kilometres.“



Making the vision a reality: Andreas Stamminger (OH Systems), Sabine von der Recke (OHB Group) and Malte Steinhoff (Harren & Partners Group).



Layout of safety design for the project.

Before the rockets can get off the ground, however, an extensive logistics operation is required. A rotation principle with multiple launch boxes (the boxes in which the rockets are transported to the ship fully assembled) will be used. Once this has been done on the site in Bremerhaven, they will be transported by self-propelled modular transporter (SPMT) over ramps to a RoRo ship in the port, which will later also serve as a launch platform for the rocket. For this purpose the team will use the 169 metre long and 25 metre wide dock ship Combi Dock I, owned by shipping company Harren & Partners. The company has a diverse fleet of specialised offshore vessels and brings the diverse expertise of numerous maritime engineers to the project. „We’ll be making some modifications to the vessel before it can get underway,“ says Malte Steinhoff, Head of Marketing and Communications at the Harren & Partners. „Because although the Combi Dock I is ideally suited for transporting missiles, we haven’t yet launched any missiles from on board. In order for this to happen, some conversion work is required. The ship has to be equipped with a locking system to secure the launch box at its intended stowage position.“ He also explains why the consortium wants to operate with different launch boxes. „This way we can continue working on land even when a rocket is at sea. Because we’re currently assuming that a microlauncher will be launched every one to two weeks, depending on demand, in order to collect important data that can later be used for environmental and climate protection or for telecoms.“

**„Before the rockets can be launched, an extensive logistics operation is required**

**No previous experience**

The safety design for the missile launches at sea is similarly thorough. The loaded Combi Dock I will travel about 460 kilometres to the western edge of the German exclusive economic zone, a region known as the ‚duck’s bill‘. From there, the rocket will be launched after being erected and refuelled on site. Before that, however, the crew and all other persons will have left the launch vessel. At a distance of at least two miles, the escort ship and control station will then be positioned, from where the launch will be carried out by remote control. At a distance of seven miles, there will also be another ship, similar to those used for security and rescue operations on drilling and production platforms in offshore oil and gas fields. Last but not least, a salvage vessel will be located at a safe distance to collect the missile’s carrier stages, which will have landed in the sea.

„Our goal of having the platform ready for the first launch in 2023 is ambitious, but realistic,“ says Steinhoff. „There has never been a project like this before. This means we have to plan every step meticulously without having previous experience to fall back on.“ After all, in the age of digitalisation and AI, the GOSA partners are aiming to generate valuable data for the benefit of numerous companies and the entire German value chain. And one piece of news they really don’t want is that, just like in Houston fifty years ago, there’s a problem. (bre)

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PHOTOS: GOSA, Harren-&Partners-Gruppe, OHB-Gruppe



# Built on tradition

Project freight company Logistics Plus Projects of Bremen was founded in 2018, but is part of the decades-old Drewes Group.

**L**ogistics Plus Projects of Bremen was launched only three years ago. The outlook was favourable. Its parent company, founded in 1996 in Pennsylvania, US, had over twenty years of experience behind it. In 2017, the Drewes Group acquired the Logistics Plus subsidiary in Antwerp and founded Logistics Plus Projects in Bremen a year later. The Group is currently in its fourth generation in the shipping and logistics markets and is continuing to evolve. „At the beginning, we were involved in large-scale projects, e.g. with Siemens in Tanzania, but we weren't then as broadly positioned as we are today with the global network of Logistics Plus international as well as that of the Drewes Group,“ says Logistics Plus Projects Managing Director Thomas Hölker from Bremen. The Drewes Group also includes freight company Carl Polzin and the Transport- und Handelsberatungsgesellschaft (THB).

## Focus on project loading

While Carl Polzin specialises in logistics services for the steel industry and THB acts as a shipbroker for numerous well-known corporations and medium-sized companies, Logistics Plus Projects operates primarily as a project forwarder. An interdisciplinary team of twelve is based in Bremen. The forwarding and shipping merchants and engineers take care of container loads (FCL and LCL), sea and air freight and other transport modes in Germany and Europe. „The US market is covered by our American company, which is one of the country's leading logistics companies,“ says Hölker, but it's not a typical freight company. It offers 3PL (third-party logistics) and 4PL, where an independent party takes over the management, optimisation and control of the supply chain and provides IT solutions.



„In just two years we've been able to sign several major framework agreements.“

Thomas Hölker, Managing Director, Logistics Plus Projects



The company's integration into the Drewes Group and the expertise available there have contributed to Logistics Plus Projects' rapid growth. „Within only two years, we've signed several large framework agreements,“ says Hölker.

Despite its growth, the company has also felt the consequences of the pandemic. „The market twelve months ago was very different from what it is now,“ says Hölker. „A year ago, volumes dropped sharply and many ports were closed. For components for wind turbines, ships sometimes had waiting times of three to four weeks.“

Fortunately, many restrictions were lifted in late summer, autumn and winter. Since then, however, the cargo backlog that had been created in the first half of the year by lockdowns, port closures and production stoppages has been worked through from October onwards, leading to an extreme shortage of cargo space. „The Chinese ports in particular were completely overloaded with containers, breakbulk and steel,“ says Hölker. But there was another development: „As the situation was similar in container shipping, the latter reacted and reduced breakbulk cargo, which has exacerbated the situation. We are currently

It is only thanks to the specially design shipboard crane that an ammonia tank weighing 1,047 tonnes and measuring 30 x 40 x 17 metres can be loaded in the Korean port of Ulsan for shipment to Portland, US.



seeing a continued tonnage shortage across the board – breakbulk, bulk and container.“ This volume is now being worked through, he says.

### A difficult market for breakbulk

According to Hölker, the shipping industry used to work in cycles of about seven years, but this rule of thumb no longer applies. „We've had twelve bad years and now the worst summer I've ever experienced,“ Hölker emphasises. He doesn't expect the situation to ease in the short term. „In the bulk and breakbulk sector, we're not expecting any new builds, as the container shipping companies have reacted much faster with their orders and the Asian shipyards are now working to capacity for the time being.“ As in container shipping, the overall situation has led to skyrocketing freight rates. Breakbulk cargo from Asia to Europe currently has to pay around 50 to 60 per cent extra, and bunker prices have also risen. „I don't expect the situation to ease until the fourth quarter of this year at the earliest, or even until the beginning of 2022,“ says Hölker.

Meanwhile, Hölker is satisfied with the growth of his project cargo business. „The flow of goods is normal and we are playing a significant role.“ When it comes to acquiring new customers, it helps that both Logistics Plus and its staff were already well established in the market. The fact that, due to the pandemic, the company hasn't had a meeting with any of its customers since September last year is definitely an obstacle. Like any company, it takes the health and safety of staff and customers seriously. „Before that, we were on the road a lot, because trust can be built better face to face than in a video call,“ says Hölker. Nevertheless, the prospects for 2022 are good. „When I look at our situation as a young company, I can only say that I am quite content.“ The company already has some permanent customers, but is still flexible in terms of new customer relationships.

According to Hölker, digitalisation is both a challenge and an opportunity. „Our next step is to simplify the structures. Implementation is less challenging than the fact that our customers all have very different requirements. The pandemic has provided impetus. „Since then, more and more companies have been dealing with digitalisation. That's why I'm optimistic that we will continue to thrive. (cb)

## FACTS

### Logistics Plus

**Founded:** 1996 in Erie, Pennsylvania (US)

**Bremen office opened:** 2018

**Staff:** 450, of whom nine work in Bremen

**Markets:** full service logistics services provider. Bremen branch specialises in project freight.

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

# 2021

## September



# Save the Date

Due to the pandemic, scheduled dates and events are liable to change, sometimes at short notice. The dates for some of the maritime commercial and logistics events listed here have already changed several times recently and even after our deadline in June there are bound to be further last minute changes. Please check regularly for updates.

- Trade fairs** ■
- Customer events** ■
- Other highlights** ■

- 2. 9. 2021** ■ **Logistics Talk (virtual event)**  
www.bremenports.de/veranstaltungen  
digital
- 14. 9. 2021** ■ **BHV-Hafenclub**  
www.bhv-bremen.de/#veranstaltungen  
Bremen, Germany
- 14. – 17. 9. 2021** ■ **HusumWind**  
www.husumwind.com  
Husum, Germany
- 20. 9. 2021** ■ **2nd digital specialist forum Projektlogistik 2021**  
www.bhv-bremen.de/#veranstaltungen  
digital
- 23. 9. 2021** ■ **Logistics Talk**  
www.bremenports.de/veranstaltungen  
Stuttgart, Germany
- 28. – 30. 9. 2021** ■ **Breakbulk Americas**  
www.breakbulk.com  
Houston, US

## October

- 10. – 13. 10. 2021** ■ **Expo Real**  
www.exporeal.net  
Munich, Germany
- 12. 10. 2021** ■ **BHV-Hafenclub**  
www.bhv-bremen.de/#veranstaltungen  
digital
- 14. 10. 2021** ■ **Logistics Talk**  
www.bremenports.de/veranstaltungen  
Graz and Vienna, Austria
- 20. – 22. 10. 2021** ■ **Deutscher Logistik-Kongress**  
www.bvl.de/dlk  
digital and Berlin, Germany

## November

- 4. 11. 2021** ■ **Logistics Talk**  
www.bremenports.de/veranstaltungen  
Haiger, Germany
- 5. – 10. 11. 2021** ■ **China International Import Expo (CIIE)**  
www.ciie.org/zbh/en  
Shanghai, China
- 9. 11. 2021** ■ **BHV-Hafenclub**  
www.bhv-bremen.de/#veranstaltungen  
digital



Bremen Senate Chamber: delegation from Morocco with Zouhair Magour (fourth from left), President of the German-Moroccan Society in Tangier Dr Olaf Joachim (centre), Representative of the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen at the Federal Government, Morocco's Honorary Consul Volker Kröning (left) and Managing Director International of Bremen Chamber of Commerce Volkmar Herr (second from right).

## East meets West

Almost one and a half years ago, the Bremen Chamber of Commerce welcomed a Moroccan delegation from the Tangiers region. During the four-day meeting, the programme of events included a visit to the German Research Centre for Artificial Intelligence (DKFI) and the German Aerospace Centre (DLR) in Bremen as well as the container terminal and the Thünen Institute of Sea Fisheries and Fisheries Ecology in Bremerhaven. The main purpose of this coming together was a presentation on both these regions and their commercial and economic structures, with the aim of developing ideas for future partnerships. „Northwestern Germany and northwestern Morocco have a lot to say to each other and could trade even more than they do at

the moment,“ said Volkmar Herr, Managing Director International of the Bremen Chamber of Commerce. „Both regions have a strong focus on the maritime economy and logistics via their ports and hinterland connections. And renewable energies and green hydrogen play an important role in the northwest regions of both countries.“ The emphasis on exports and the growth in tourism are also similar. Currently plans are underway for a return visit by a delegation from Bremen to Morocco. „This has actually been planned for some time, but the pandemic has of course put things on hold. We currently hope that a return visit will be possible in the fourth quarter of this year,“ said Herr. (bre)



Experts in dialogue: (from left) Christian Lankenau (Works Director, Eurogate Group), Uwe Beckmeyer (Chairman, Weser Business Association), Prof. Hans-Heinrich Witte (President, Directorate-General for Waterways and Shipping), Robert Howe (Managing Director, bremenports) and presenter Hilke Theessen (Radio Bremen) at the Bremen Thursday event in June.

## Planning ahead again

The Bremen Thursday virtual event format has become well established in recent months, most recently with The Decade of Ports on 3 June. But now that things are slowly getting back to normal after the pandemic, the Bremen ports are aiming to start promoting themselves and their services in-person again as soon as possible, both in the hinterland and abroad. The Logistics Talk series is to be relaunched as an in-person event. Dates have been planned for Stuttgart (23 September), Vienna (14 October), Haiger (4 November) and Leipzig (24 November). Likewise, bremenports is considering attending trade fairs again in the fourth quarter of this year. Professionals from the heavy-lift sector will meet in Houston from 29 September to 1 October 2021 at the Breakbulk Americas trade fair. (bre)

COMPACT



**KIRCHHEIM UNTER TECK.** Under the banner of Mosolf 2030, the vehicle

logistics company Mosolf Group set up a new advisory board in May. The chairman of the new board is former DB Schenker board member **Hans-Jörg Hager**. Other members include Detthold Aden, Chairman of the Executive Board of the BLG Logistics Group until 2013, Prof. Julia Arlinghaus, Director of the Fraunhofer Institute for Factory Operation and Automation (IFF), and Ivo Rauh, former member of the Executive Board of Dekra.



**BREMEN.** Röhlig Logistics appointed **Andreas Polychronakos**

Global Sales Director in May. The sales specialist joined Röhlig Germany in 2018 and now succeeds the outgoing Gilles Ducarme. Polychronakos had already been appointed to the position of Global Air Freight Director, based at the company's headquarters in Bremen, at the beginning of 2021, and will now assume responsibility for both roles. He reports to Hylton Gray, CEO Sea Freight, Air Freight, Contract Logistics and Sales.

## BVL – press and PR role changes hands

**BREMEN.** The press and PR function of the German Logistics Association (BVL) acquired a new manager in June. After almost fifteen years in the role, **Ulrike Grünrock-Kern** has been succeeded by **Christian Stamerjohanns**, formerly head of corporate communications at Oldenburg photo service provider Cewe. Prior to that role, he held PR management positions at ECE Projektmanagement in Hamburg and at the Hamburg Ministry of Economics and Labour. Stamerjohanns's deputy at BVL is Anja Stubbe.



## Captain Dalege elected Europe's pilots chief

**BRUSSELS.** The new President of the European Maritime Pilots Organisation is Capt. **Erik Dalege**. The former chairman of the Federal Chamber of Pilots in Hamburg was elected at the EMPO General Assembly in May for a period of three years. Capt. Dalege succeeds Norwegian Stein Inge Dahn, who had held the role from 2013. One of his most important challenges is to „modernise communication channels in European pilotage.“

## New port captain in Emden

**EMDEN.** Emden. June saw the appointment of **Christoph Kolter** to the role of manager of the port office in Emden, the central contact point for shipowners, customers and service providers. He succeeds Frank Herbig, who retired after 29 years of service to the ports of Lower Saxony. „With his authoritative manner and experience, Frank Herbig was a firm anchor in Emden's port,“ says Volker Weiß, NPorts manager in Emden. Kolter's previous role was deputy port captain in Cuxhaven.



## Maritime Cluster Northern Germany expands advisory board

**NORTHERN GERMANY.** Every two years, the board of the Maritime Cluster of Northern Germany (MCN) appoints scientists and maritime professionals to serve on its advisory board. This year, four more members have joined, so the board now comprises thirteen members. New members are **Carsten Hilgenfeld** (Jakota Cruise Systems), **Petra Mahnke** (Gesellschaft für Maritime Technik), **Prof. Hinrich Mohr** from GasKraft Engineering and **Christian Naegeli** from the German Shipowners' Association. The advisory board also includes Lüder Hogrefe (North East Consulting), Axel Hahn (Offis), Natallia Dean (Pella Sietas), Lars Greitsch (MMG Mecklenburger Metallguss), Thomas Bjørn Larsen (Skuld Germany), Frank Lewandowski (Hydac International), Ivor Nissen (Independent, Science/Marine Technology), Eberhard Sauter (Alfred Wegener Institute, Helmholtz Centre for Polar and Marine Research) and Caspar Spreter von Kreudenstein (Windea Offshore).

PHOTOS: BVL MAN JAHERRMANN, MOSOLF, RÖHLIG, ARNDT, MCL, NPORTS, B.L.G., KARL GROSS, BREMENPORTS, PRIVAT

## Reißner boosts hinterland contacts

**LEIPZIG.** From September, bremenports will be expanding its network of representatives with the appointment of **Sonja Reißner**. Her role will be to boost the port management company's contacts with partners in the states of Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia. Reißner brings with her long-term logistics experience from various roles, including the handling of project cargo operations for Kühne+Nagel.



## Quarter of a century at Karl Gross

**BREMEN.** On 1 July, Karl Gross managing director **Martin Kollmann** celebrated 25 years in the service of the intercontinental logistics specialist. In fifteen years Kollmann rose from deputy import manager to the overall management of the group. Since July 2010, he has been joint managing director together with Steffen Fulst.



## BLG: Magnor leads contract operations

**BREMEN.** **Matthias Magnor** joins the BLG LOGISTICS board in October, when he takes over the contracts division. He succeeds Jens Wollesen, who is leaving the company to take up another role. Magnor has extensive expertise in supply chain management, logistics and trade and was most recently chief operating officer and member of the executive board at Hellmann Worldwide Logistics, where he was responsible for the Road, Rail and CEP divisions.

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**Niedersachsen Ports**

EDITION  
OCTOBER  
2021

## Focus on Central Eastern Europe

Following our surveys of Japan and North Africa, the next issue of LOGISTICS PILOT will return to Europe – specifically to its Central Eastern countries. We'll be taking a close look at three Visegrad countries: the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary, which are all among Germany's top 25 trading partners.

## Point of View

**Peter Hrbik, bremenports representative in the Czech Republic, on the subject of Central Eastern Europe**

” What has happened economically in countries of the former Eastern Bloc over the past three decades is an incredible success story. The importance of the entire Central Eastern European (CEE) region, which includes Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic (total of 25.8 million inhabitants), has grown steadily, especially for their western trading partners.

These countries are attractive manufacturing locations with high quality standards and high productivity workforces. At the same time, they are convenient local suppliers with enormous innovative power.

An important milestone on this path was their accession to the EU and the European Single Market, which took place on May 1, 2004. As far as the near future is concerned, I am sure that the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia, just like their neighbours, will benefit significantly from the trend for nearshoring. After all, proximity to European markets is one of CEE's main advantages over Asia. But these countries are already deeply integrated into the value chains of German industry, and all signs indicate that this will continue to be the case to the benefit of both sides. According to the latest figures released by the Federal Statistical Office in May, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia rank 10th, 13th and 22nd respectively among Germany's 200-plus trading partners. In 2020, bilateral trade between Germany and these three countries amounted to over 163 billion euros.

“



PHOTOS: BREMENPORTS; VECTORSTOCK; SIRANANWONG

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Hafenstraße 49, 28217 Bremen  
www.bremenports.de  
Michael Skiba  
Phone: +49 421 30901-610  
Fax: +49 421 30901-624  
Email: marketing@bremenports.de

**Project lead and advertisement:**

Ronald Schwarze  
Phone: +49 421 30901-612  
Fax: +49 421 30901-624  
Email: marketing@bremenports.de

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# greenports

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bremenports has now published its Sustainability Report for what is meanwhile the seventh time. The Report is audited by TÜV Nord and provides a wide-ranging account of the company's diverse activities in the sectors of governance, economic performance, labour practices and social responsibility.

Find out more –  
the online  
Sustainability Report  
is available here:



marketing@bremenports.de  
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