

HWG Newsletter 10/2015

Fishery in Cuxhaven: Searching for New Ways and New Markets

Interview with Bodo von Holten, chairman of the Fishery Association of Cuxhaven



Mr von Holten, the new fishing season has started in September. How is the fishing industry in Cuxhaven doing?

Unfortunately, not so great. The landings of fresh fish to Cuxhaven continue to decrease and shift more and more to Denmark and the Netherlands. The reason for this is simple: The amount of fishing days at sea is limited, and a tour to Cuxhaven in order to deliver the fish costs around three to four sea days. It's more efficient for the fishermen to deliver their goods to ports that are more closely located to the fishing grounds. That is where the fish is immediately processed and transported onwards via truck or plane. It is just not profitable for the fishermen to come to

Cuxhaven. And this is a problem that occurs across Germany: The main transshipment centre for fresh fish in Germany used to be Hamburg, Bremen and Cuxhaven – today it's the Frankfurt/Main airport.

On the other hand, there are of course also fishing boats that immediately deep-freeze the fresh fish after it's caught at sea. These ships are still landing their catch in Cuxhaven, where the fish is stored in frozen storage warehouses until it continues its journey to be processed – for example into the widely known fish fingers. That is why renewals such as the new refrigerating set at the frozen storage warehouse III, which was officially handed over in October, are still worthwhile. These renewals especially concern the increase of the energy efficiency of the plants.

At the German National Maritime Conference in October, Chancellor Merkel presented many promises for the maritime industry. For example, German seafarers will get more support. How does this affect the fishing industry?

The tax incentives for the employment of German seafarers will only apply to the international shipping industry – but not to the coastal trade or the nearshore fishing. Enak Ferlemann, Parliamentary State Secretary at the Federal Transport Ministry, clarified this at an event of the Nautical Association of Cuxhaven (NVC) at the end of October. Although we also had high hopes for improvements and benefits to come out of the National Maritime Conference, the fishing industry was very disappointed.

In Cuxhaven, we have subsidiaries of big, multinational fishing and fish processing companies, as well as smaller, regional or local companies. The big businesses located in Cuxhaven are in fierce competition – with their international sister companies (benchmarking) as well as the international rivals. Both profit from the low taxes and payroll expenses in other countries amongst other things. In the past years, we have seen an increased exodus of these bigger companies from Cuxhaven. Increasing taxes and costs, for example for energy and sewage, are putting extra pressure on the remaining companies.

The smaller businesses are faring better, since they are processing, marketing and selling their fish regionally. These companies are especially supported by local tourism. Many small businesses run little bistros and restaurants directly in the port and show tourists a nostalgic view of the traditional daily work in the fishing industry.

Everyone is talking about Cuxhaven because of the offshore expansion, but it is also Germany's second biggest fishing port. What does the future of this industrial sector in Cuxhaven look like?

In the long term, the smaller businesses have a better chance of staying in Cuxhaven, since they succeed in marketing their locally caught fish within the region. They are not as hugely influenced by the international competition as the multinational companies. The situation is similar for the fish processing industry: Out of seven fish meal plants once existing in Northern Germany, only one remains today. Every year, more than 100,000 tons of fish are processed in Cuxhaven – but today, the majority comes from aquaculture, or fish farms, instead of the fishing boats.

In order to stay profitable, the fishing industry in Cuxhaven is looking for new ways: Firstly, the fishing grounds have been extended and now stretch along the German coast all the way to Poland. Secondly, the fish processing businesses are trying to develop new niche markets. Lipomar GmbH, for example, opened a new production plant for fish oils and functional fish proteins for human consumption earlier this year. Here, fish by-products are processed into fish oils, functional protein and powder used as dietary and health supplements due to the valuable ingredients such as Omega-3 fatty acids (editor's note: can be read in HWG Newsletter 01/2015).

As a new niche market, the company is now developing fish oils with different aromas, which are used in the health and wellness sector, for example in gourmet cooking and sports nutrition. This production currently only exists in Cuxhaven. Of course, it takes time to tap into and develop new markets, new customers and new products. In case of the fish oils, things are going well. The company is marketing the product at many international fairs and events as a member of the Fishery Association. In October, Lipromar was at the Anuga in Cologne; soon they will be at Fish International in Bremen and Internorga in Hamburg.

The fishery has experienced many hurdles and setbacks – but it is always finding new ways to develop and keep afloat.

9th German National Maritime Conference in Bremerhaven

Federal Government acknowledges the German ports

On 21 October, the 9th National Maritime Conference ended in Bremerhaven, where for three days, 800 representatives from the maritime economy and politics met to exchange ideas and solutions for the maritime industry.

Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel spoke out in favour of the German shipping companies and shipyards as well as of the whole maritime industry. Amongst others, she assured more funds to support technical research and development in the shipbuilding industry. The funding is said to increase from currently 10 to 25 million euros. In addition, Merkel highlighted the key function the hinterland connections have for the German seaports. The upkeep and expansion of these infrastructures should be considered in the new Federal Transport Infrastructure Plan as well as in the new National Port Concept, which are both currently being developed at the Federal Ministry of Transport and digital Infrastructure.

The tax incentive for German seafarers was also a widely discussed topic – in this respect, the chancellor promised a short-term solution in order to increase the income tax deduction for seafarers on ships under German flag from currently 40 percent to 100 percent. In many other EU countries, this rule is already in effect, so that German seafarers are currently under a lot of pressure in the international job competition.

Federal Transport Minister Alexander Dobrindt and Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Sigmar Gabriel commented on the disputed dredging plans for the rivers Elbe and Weser:

They mentioned that the required consent process would be finished soon, that the financial means are standing by and that it all now depended on the outcome of the judicial process.

Hans-Peter Zint, chairman of the Port Association of Cuxhaven (HWG), personally attended the conference and reports: “Our efforts to let the German ports as well as the situation of the German seafarers be heard by the Federal Government were successful. Subsequently, these positive words and promises need to be followed up by corresponding actions – The Federal Transport Infrastructure Plan and the National Port Concept represent the first needed steps in this respect.”

In light of the conference, the Lower Saxon Transport Minister Olaf Lies and Dr Andreas Schmidt, speaker of the Lower Saxon seaports committee, had again issued their demands: “Our seaports are logistic hubs. Lower Saxony is the logistic heart of Europe. For this, we need a reliable and powerful infrastructure.” The upkeep and expansion of the seaward access and hinterland connections of the North German ports should have absolute priority in the Federal Transport Infrastructure Plan, so that the Lower Saxon seaports will be able to continue to contribute to Germany’s economic development, they said.

Moroccan Delegation visits Cuxhaven

HWG members Cuxport and Bremer Reederei presented the port facilities



28 marketing and operational representatives of the biggest Moroccan port operator Mars Maroc as well as of the ESSEC Business School in Paris and the Institut Supérieur d’Economie Maritime in Saint Nazaire, France, visited the Port of Cuxhaven at the beginning of October. They attended the 8th Shortsea Euro Conference,

which was held in Bremen at that time. At the conference organised by Navigate Events, Bremer Reederei Managing Director Arne Ehlers and Oliver Fuhljahn, Head of Automobile Logistics at Cuxport, gave talks concerning the transshipment facilities of the Port of Cuxhaven.

Due to a last-minute cancellation for a tour of the Bremen ports, the Institute of Shipping Economics and Logistics (ISL) approached the two Cuxhaven representatives concerning an alternative programme for the delegation members. So, the Moroccan delegation was piloted to Cuxhaven in order to visit the local port facilities and terminals.

“The multipurpose terminal and the offshore terminal attracted special attention. The last-minute tour was a good initiative, which was followed with great interest and also well received afterwards. We have already received requests for additional group visits from the maritime and port sector for 2016,” says Fuhljahn. The leader of the delegation also extended a return invitation to the Cuxhaveners.

The same evening, the ISL also expressed its satisfaction with the trip. The offered lump-sum fee for Cuxport and Bremer Reederei was given to the charitable organisation Seamen’s Mission of Cuxhaven.

New Refrigeration Set at the Frozen Storage Warehouse III is Operational

NPorts hands over modernised device to Cuxhavener Kühlhaus GmbH

Niedersachsen Ports had already started the modernisation of frozen storage warehouse III in Neufelder Strasse in October 2014. It was finished towards the end of July this year and has since then been in trial operation, which was now completed successfully. The warehouse was officially handed over to the operator, the Cuxhavener Kühlhaus GmbH, this October.

The investment of overall 1.6 million euros was used to install a new cooling device that adheres to the newest technological standards and uses about a third less electricity than its predecessor. In addition, the cooling device is now located in a separate powerhouse outside of cold storage warehouse III. Before, the over 40 year-old cooling device had been housed in a poorly accessible room on the top floor of the warehouse.

“With this renewal measure, we’re strengthening the fishing location Cuxhaven for the next decades,” explains Holger Banik, Spokesman of the Management Board of Niedersachsen Ports GmbH & Co. KG as well as the JadeWeserPort Realisierungs GmbH & Co. KG. In addition to investments by NPorts, the renewal project was also funded by the European fisheries fund (EFF). Frozen storage warehouse III is also used by ships from the German

Fishing Union (DFFU), which store their deep-frozen fish – 800 tons per landing – there until it is palletted and packaged further.

NPorts and Cuxhaven Dyke Association Agree on Flood Protection

New dyke line completed for 30 million euros

The new ca. 700 metres-long dyke line, which had been extended upon instigation from the Cuxhaven Dyke Association in the last few years, will protect residents even better from floods and storm tides in the future. The HWG member NPorts will continue to be responsible for securing the dyke line. NPorts maintains and operates overall seven dyke gates along the dyke line and closes them in case of approaching storm tides. NPorts takes over these tasks for the Cuxhaven Dyke Association and is thus able to secure the existing jobs for the dyke gate maintenance at the location. These would have fallen away in case the range of duties had been passed to the Dyke Association. “The agreement brings advantages for all parties involved. The new main dyke line increases the protection against storm tides for the inhabitants of Cuxhaven as well as for the port businesses. At the same time, we can ensure a higher dyke safety during storm tides with less effort,” explains Holger Banik, Spokesman of the Management Board at Niedersachsen Ports. The arising costs of around 120,000 euros for the on-call service and maintenance is handled mostly by NPorts.

The dyke line in Cuxhaven was developed between 2007 and 2014. The responsibility for the maintenance and safeguarding of the new dyke line technically lies with the Dyke Association. But NPorts has the needed specialised competence at the location and thus a mutual solution was found. “We have an experienced and well-tested team that has been very reliable while fulfilling the necessary tasks concerning flood protection in the port. We look forward to maintaining these responsibilities in the future,” says Banik.

HWG introduces her members: Chamber of Industry and Commerce in Stade

Profile

Company name:	Chamber of Industry and Commerce in Stade for the Elbe-Weser region (IHK Stade)
Year founded:	1866
Industry:	public body
Locations:	Stade, Cuxhaven, Verden
Portfolio:	representation of public interest, consulting, official duties

Interview with IHK Stade managing director Jochen Werwath



Question 1 – How would you describe your company?

We fulfil our official duties in a customer-oriented way, advise our members with high competence and represent our region's public interest in a balanced and coordinated manner.

Question 2 – Why are you a member of the HWG?

Because we care about the development of the port industries in Cuxhaven. The HWG is a job motor and a driver for economic stability.

Question 3 – What are your personal wishes for your company?

We hope for a successful consolidation of the budget of the town of Cuxhaven, for success for the Siemens settlement and for the businesses in the region to continue to receive the proper economic and political framework to succeed.

Further information about the company: www.stade.ihk24.de

53° 52' N 09° 42' E



This message has been sent to you by the Cuxhaven Port Business Community (Hafenwirtschaftsgemeinschaft Cuxhaven e.V.).

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