Smartly specialised

by Przemysław Myszka

The Danish Port Esbjerg has, throughout the years, become Europe's prime spot for installing wind turbines out there in the open sea. Though still booming, the Danes are already investigating other potential golden goose businesses. As such, we're talking with the seaport's Tracy Jin about developing Europe's first carbon capture and storage terminal, while facilitating the flow of electric vehicles into Europe and aquatic product exports to Asia. The conversation also touches on military mobility, innovation, and why building direct international partnerships is key to strengthening resilient and future-proof logistic corridors.

■ ***Can you walk us through your port's recent performance?***

The past year will go down in history as a record one for our seaport, especially concerning the offshore wind energy (OWE) business. As things stand today, almost 93% of all North Sea OWE projects are carried out with the involvement of Port Esbjerg. In 2025, 1.3 gigawatts of capacity were 'exported' through our quays, a year-on-year increase of around 100%. The start of this year has been nothing but robust as well, as we have secured a significant pipeline of OWE projects that will use Esbjerg for years to come.

Automotive is another sector that puts a smile on our faces. With a growing number of Chinese EVs entering Europe, the port is positioning itself to capture an increasing portion of this market. Interestingly enough, fish shipments are heading more and more in the opposite direction. Building on the co-op we've struck with one of the world's largest container ports, Ningbo Zhoushan, Esbjerg aims to create a full value chain that will see Scandinavian fish exported in reefers to Far East Asia. In parallel, we are exploring the development of a dedicated container facility to further strengthen our offering, including intermodal.

Beyond boxes and cars, break-bulk and project cargo remain Esbjerg's core strengths. Besides the wind energy sector, we're expanding our heavy-lift capacity to serve other large-scale industrial and energy-related shipments. As a case in point, Chipolbrok's *Herbert* called at our port this year, the largest vessel from China to date, bringing wind energy components. Together with the Chinese-Polish shipowner, we hope to further deepen Esbjerg's role in serving Asia-Northern Europe trade.

This reflects how we approach business – directly. In an increasingly uncertain geopolitical environment, ports must rely on strong, trusted partnerships to secure trade lanes, expand networks, and share knowledge. That is also why Esbjerg joined the Baltic Ports Organization, as a commitment to regional collaboration and building resilient, future-proof logistics corridors.

■ ***Apart from wind (and fish, vehicles, and containers), what other trends are shaping Esbjerg's business ventures – today and tomorrow?***

After OWE, the topic of decarbonisation surfaced. Our seaport was the first in Denmark to obtain a licence to handle liquid CO_2 for further storage underneath the North Sea. Developing Esbjerg into a CO_2 logistics hub will begin with handling tank containers coming to us on lorries. The next stage will see CO_2 transported by rail in greater volumes. Ultimately, there should be a pipeline network through which CO_2 from Denmark and abroad will come to us. Also, we wouldn't mind witnessing the addition of the 'utilisation' part to carbon capture and storage, making Esbjerg a production site for alternative fuels.

Esbjerg will not only help other industries decarbonise, but it's also greening its own operations – we've invested in onshore power supply and started monitoring in-port emissions to pinpoint areas for future green incentives, like vehicle or cargo-handling equipment electrification.

Dual-use infrastructure for military mobility? Esbjerg is a NATO port, meaning we're commercially closed from time to time when the Organization uses our quays for (dis)embarkation. The deepening of our fairway (from 9.3 to 12.8 metres) and adding land space (570,000 m^2) are two recent examples of dual-use investments.

Innovation? Port Esbjerg has established a hub to work with our partners on new solutions. Our seaport is home to around 250 companies serving the OWE industry. Esbjerg wouldn't be such a success story if we were 'only' focusing on the heavy-duty job taking place on our quays and in the yards.

Though Esbjerg can be seen as a traditionally universal seaport, handling dry and liquid bulk goods and general cargo, we came to realise that we also need to specialise – and do it smartly. The OWE 'gamble' paid off, and our port grew handsomely alongside the industry. Richer with this experience, we hope other vistas will prove as developmental. ■