

Still plenty of room for growth

by Przemysław Myszk

The setup of JadeWeserPort (JWP) over a decade ago was one of those truly huge, greenfield investment projects that just couldn't go unnoticed. Given the external circumstances of the time, the timing wasn't all that perfect, with the kick-off operations experiencing a rather bumpy start. During the latest transport logistic in Munich, we sat with the new chief exec of JadeWeserPort-Marketing, Marc-Oliver Hauswald, to ask how the business is fairing in 2025 and what the company has in its development store.

■ *In what shape are your operations these days – and what do you expect from the coming years?*

JWP is quite a young port, opened just 12 years ago. In short, it currently comprises two areas: the ISPS container terminal of EUROGATE and the Freight Village. The latter is a logistics centre, full of warehouses and various service partners. Some 70% of the Freight Village is already taken. Probably early next year, we'll be full, with new clients establishing their businesses in Wilhelmshaven. The tender is ongoing – and what we hope to achieve this time around is to attract cargo owners to find their place with us. Among others, P3 JadeWeserPort is developing 140,000 square metres of logistics space, with the first hall of almost 32,000 already in operation, while two others will be ready soon. Whereas JWP didn't have a rosy start, cargo traffic has picked up the pace: last year 843,000 TEUs went through our quays, an increase of almost 60% year-on-year. We are confident that the one million barrier will be broken in 2025. Also, Wilhelmshaven is handling more and more vehicles, too: around 74,000 in 2024, double what our seaport saw the year before. What is interesting about this finished vehicle segment is that the cars, mainly electric ones from China brought

by MOSOLF, are transported not only aboard vehicle carriers but also in containers (up to three in a single, 40-foot, high-cube box).

All in all, JWP is now increasingly capitalising on its position as Germany's sole deep-water seaport, with 18 metres of depth at any time and 2.7 million TEU-capacity to be further utilised.

■ *What changes will the alliance between Hapag-Lloyd and Maersk bring to JadeWeserPort?*

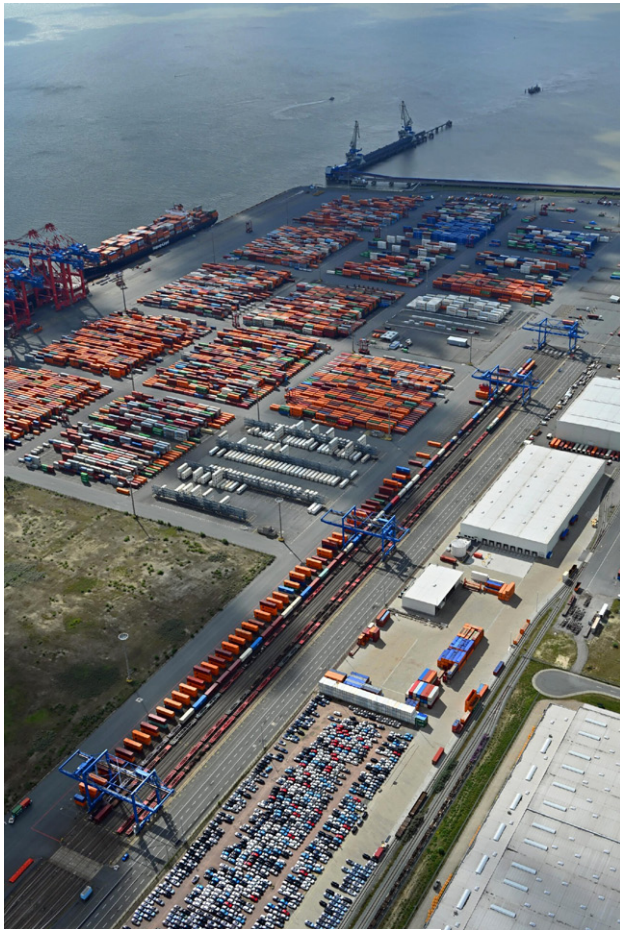
The Gemini Cooperation will use Wilhelmshaven as one of its hubs in Northern Europe. This is a crucial change because while JWP used to handle a lot of European exports, it was neighbouring ports that took care of Asian imports.

Another change will be in the size of vessels. We are very fortunate to serve the China-Europe Express (CEX), a 26-day, no-stopover service between Ningbo and Wilhelmshaven (operated by the Port of Ningbo, which has also set up its own warehouse in the Freight Village). CEX, though it feeds us considerable volumes, is operated with two 5,000-TEU vessels (hopefully accompanied by a third before long). Gemini will bring the 24,000 carriers, plus the 10,000-TEU shuttles for traffic with the Baltic Sea region.

What is also very interesting about CEX is that it's essentially a China-Hungary service via our seaport's rail network. It takes just a day and a half to reach Budapest from Wilhelmshaven by train. I dare say there's no faster way to reach Europe's deep hinterland with a multimodal service than CEX. As such, we're keen to see it transform from a twice-a-month into a weekly service.

JWP was originally erected as a transshipment port. Today, some 60% of the traffic goes over the quay only, with the remaining 40% evenly split between trucks and trains. The latter benefits from the port's marshalling yard with 16 tracks, while the former benefits from the fact that a highway goes straight to our gate. In short, we offer pure cargo connections that do not intersect with passenger traffic. What is more, we also gain from not having certain infrastructure, like old bridges, that make it particularly difficult to move project cargo.

With Gemini, transshipment will only strengthen. There are also other concepts of using Wilhelmshaven this way, e.g., for carrying goods to us from Asia for onward shipping to North America to avoid going through the (sometimes troublesome) Panama Canal. This, CEX, and other developments are signs of a new trend, namely Chinese companies transporting components door-to-door for assembly in other countries, something unheard of



Photos: JadeWeserPort



until recently. Not only does one see more imported Chinese cars on European streets, but the 300-hectare BYD factory in the Hungarian Szeged will begin assembling cars this year.

■ **How are you preparing to accommodate these developments?**

If these and other projects come to fruition, we'll have to up our capacity. Fortunately, there is enough 'room' within the seaport's current premises to do exactly that. By this, I mean investing in automation and optimisation technologies, as well as in new cargo handling equipment. There are 10 ship-to-shore gantries now (including two

brand-new Liebherrs as of 2024); we would need six more to reach that 2.7 million TEU limit. The original eight bought for starting JWP could handle the largest container ships of the 2010s. Fast forward to today, and EUROGATE had to make them taller to serve what's the norm nowadays.

Another novelty for us has been remote operations with the new gantries. The container yard will also need an upgrade, with automatic straddle carriers that can lift more than three boxes. Altogether, there's 'room' for handling 4.0-4.5 million TEUs within the current boundaries of Wilhelmshaven. All big ports of today are automating, and it's my firm belief that carriers will only call to terminals that run automatically. We need to make such investments to stay in the game once shipping lines start chasing after those 30 thousand-TEU vessels. That said, other segments won't go unnoticed. A heavy-duty ro-ro ramp will make it possible to handle larger car carriers. Also, we have already handled components for (onshore) wind farms – and that's a piece of the transport & logistics business cake we are eager to hold on to. A new multipurpose terminal in Wilhelmshaven is thus on the drawing board.

■ **What other cargo segments are you targeting?**

To further drive the green transition, countries will need new energy hubs, including for future fuels, either for producing them or storing (or both). We could put that offshore wind energy to good use by producing green hydrogen directly on the quayside. Places like JWP are privileged here as we've been set up as a greenfield project. We don't have to compete with citizens for land access or demolish one infrastructure to make room for another. There is enough space to grow new businesses, including energy ones. Luckily, the 'old' Port of Wilhelmshaven is already furnished with a pipeline system that could be refurbished to take care of future energy molecules.

In the meantime, EUROGATE is greening its container operations, going from diesel to hybrid to electric. We do our part by, among others, investing in LED lights. Photovoltaic systems atop warehouse roofs are also on our agenda (contrary to wind turbines directly in the port – others have shared that having them has turned out to be too big of a headache). The mentioned logistics halls of P3 will harvest solar power. ■