

Record handling in a challenging year 2023 at Rostock Overseas Port

For the first time in its history spanning more than 60 years, Rostock Overseas Port handled 30.9 million tonnes of cargo in one year. This means a plus of 6.5 percent and/or 1.9 million tonnes compared to the last handling record in 2022.

According to Rostock's Port Authority the other ports in Rostock, such as the cargo and fishing port and the chemical port, together handled another 1.3 million tonnes of goods in 2023. Thus a total of 32.2 million tonnes of cargo were transhipped in the port city of Rostock in 2023.

„In view of the economic environment we are pleased with the overall result of 2023 since it confirms the operative capability of all companies and public authorities active at the largest universal port on the German Baltic Sea coast. Despite some cyclically induced declines in ferry and ro-ro traffic and reductions in grain handling due to the harvest the sea port managed to score another record result mainly through the enormous growth in liquid goods handling“, sums up ROSTOCK PORT managing director Dr. Gernot Tesch. „We are particularly happy with the strong growth in high value-creating general cargo, in the ferrying of railway cars as well as the positive trend in car handling, a new activity at our port“.

„In 2023 we had the pleasure to welcome a total of just under three million passengers on the ferries and cruise vessels at the Overseas Port and in Warnemünde, which is around 200,000 travellers more than in the previous year“, says Jens A. Scharner, managing director of ROSTOCK PORT GmbH. „At 2.54 million passengers on the three ferry services of Scandlines, Stena Line and TT-Line to Denmark and Sweden there was a rise of 40,000 or 1.5 percent over the previous year. At the Warnemünde cruise port 419,000 cruise travellers embarked and disembarked (2022: 294,000) during 130 port calls (2022: 139) by 30 cruise vessels (2022: 30). On 103 out of 365 days of the year 2023, cruise liners from 22 national and international shipping companies were moored in Warnemünde cruise port.“

In the year 2023, Euro 20 million were invested in the infrastructure of the Overseas Port. This year, ROSTOCK PORT plans on investing more than Euro 50 million in the infrastructure and in participations to strengthen the competitiveness of the port.

Cargo handling results at the Overseas Port

All told, Rostock Overseas Port logged 7,461 port calls by ferry and ro-ro vessels, tankers, freighters and cruise liners last year (2022: 7,800), of which 5,657 port calls were made by ferry and ro-ro vessels (2022: 5,958).

Dry bulk handling was twenty percent below the very good previous year with a total of 5.7 million tonnes. There were losses in the handling of grain, coal and building materials. With an annual result of 2.6 million tonnes grain remains the dominant dry bulk cargo at the Overseas Port.

At 7.9 million tonnes the handling of liquid goods more than doubled, increasing by 4.4 million tonnes. All told 5.9 million tonnes of crude oil (+4.7 million tonnes) were pumped from tankers via Rostock oil port into the pipeline to the PCK refinery in Schwedt as a contribution to securing the supply to eastern Germany.

Handling of high-value-added general cargo was 132,000 tonnes or an impressive 21 percent above the level of the previous year at 760,000 tonnes. Especially the transshipment of components for wind power plants but also cranes and large pipes increased last year.

In contrast the handling of wheeled cargo, i.e. ferry and ro-ro goods, declined cyclically by 1.2 million tonnes or seven percent to 16.5 million tonnes. The number of truck/trailer units carried on the ferry and ro-ro connections to and from Northern Europe decreased accordingly from 579,000 in 2022 to 516,000 last year, a fall of eleven percent. Handling of paper, cellulose and chipboards declined slightly from 378,000 tonnes to 362,000 tonnes.

By contrast, ferry travel continued on the increase last year after 2022. The number of cars and mobile homes carried between Northern Europe and Rostock amounted to 647,000, a rise by three percent.

The number of railway wagons carried to and from Trelleborg increased markedly from 18,100 in 2022 to 26,800 last year. Also the import and export of new cars increased especially by the establishment of the automotive logistics company Autolink, from just under 13,000 to more than 32,000 vehicles. The approach of ROSTOCK PORT to widen the range by establishing a port terminal for car handling has proven to have a stabilising effect for ferry and ro-ro traffic.

The share of wheeled cargo in the overall handling at Rostock Overseas Port was 53 percent last year. It is an indicator for the well-balanced business model and thus for the efficiency of the all-purpose port.

Dent in demand for intermodal transport

In 2023 there was a decline in intermodal transport. The terminal operator Rostock Trimodal (RTM) transhipped around 115,000 units and thus twelve percent less than over the previous year.

„After many years of growth this decline is to be attributed to the difficult economic environment but also to higher energy and train path prices. In the medium and long term we envisage growing demand for intermodal transport solutions and we will continue to expand capabilities at the port accordingly”, says Dr. Gernot Tesch.

Currently there is for instance a project under way to extend the existing Bettembourg-Rostock-Le Balou/Barcelona (CFL Multimodal / Stena Line) service via Trelleborg-Eskilstuna-Umeå towards northern Sweden and on by Wasa Line to Finland (Vaasa). This will create an environment-friendly transport offer for craneable and non-craneable load units between Spain and northern Sweden/Finland, which will save up to 4.5 tonnes of carbon dioxide per load unit compared to truck transport.

Currently there are 45 intermodal trains per week to and from Verona (19) in Italy, Bratislava (6) in Slovakia, Oradea (2) in Rumania, Dresden (6), Herne (7) and Halle (1) in Germany as well as Bettembourg (4) in Luxembourg.

Projects and investments of 2023 and 2024

New building of berths 31 and 32

The replacement construction of the two oldest berths at Rostock Overseas Port, berths 31 and 32, officially started in April 2022. ROSTOCK PORT GmbH is the principal of this approx. Euro 22 million port infrastructure project which is to be completed until April 2024.

The berths on the eastern side of pier 2 at port basin B are 62 and 58 years old, respectively. They are being newly built on a total length of 400 metres, a width of 18 metres and for a draught of 12.50 metres. The quay has been designed for a surface load of five tonnes per square metre and is being equipped with new crane rails over the entire length capable of carrying 30 tonnes per metre.

Berths 31 and 32 are rebuilt as multi-purpose berths for the handling of both project cargo as well as general and dry bulk cargo. After completion of this building project it is planned to also rebuild berths 33 and 34, which have also seen better days, to the same standard.

New building of Ost-West-Strasse

As part of stage 2 of the subsidy project to improve the traffic flow at the port the new building of a roughly 500 metres long section of the highly frequented Ost-West-Strasse at the Overseas Port was begun in the spring of 2022. Due to the intense use the road structure was completely worn out. Building activities of public operators of supply and disposal lines were integrated into the extensive road building and civil engineering works and carried out simultaneously. These included the laying of new drinking water and district heating lines.

One special feature was the construction and laying of a large drainage canal in the road structure and below two level crossings. The canal was continued up to the transverse quay of berth 30 at port basin B in order to allow for areas south of Ost-West-Strasse to be developed for use by creating a receiving water of appropriate dimensions. This building activity was completed in the main until the end of 2023. One particular challenge of this project was the routing and diversion of traffic in order to avoid interruptions especially in internal port traffic.

New building of deep-water berth 5 at the oil port

In June 2022 an order was placed for the planning of a deep-water berth in the eastern part of the existing oil port. Based on qualified and accelerated planning, a building permit is to be obtained as quickly as possible in order to upgrade berth 5 for future energy imports and provide sufficient amounts of renewable energies via the location of Rostock. An approval procedure will be initiated this year in order to allow for construction work to begin in 2025. Construction is estimated to take around two years.

New construction of two office buildings

In the spring of 2023 ROSTOCK PORT started the invitation to tender for the new construction of two new office complexes on Ost-West-Strasse. Construction work is to be completed until the end of 2025. ROSTOCK PORT will invest several million Euros in order to create modern and sustainable office real estate for port companies and public authorities and in order to concentrate offices on the port area.

Replacement construction of a road bridge at the tank farm

In 2022 ROSTOCK PORT began the replacement construction of a road bridge at Rostock tank farm. The bridge on the premises of the tank farm at Rostock Overseas Port crosses a pipeline route towards the street "Zum Tanklager". Due to numerous structural defects, the insufficient space underneath the superstructure and its limited bearing capacity it became necessary to build a new bridge. The new bridge was built south of the existing structure. Construction was planned to take a year and a half and ended with the demolition of the old bridge last year. The cost of construction was just under one million Euros.

Track extension at the intermodal transport terminal

The current planning effort for the extension of the existing intermodal transport terminal is expected to be completed still this year so that the actual extension can be implemented until 2025. Apart from that, further extension work is planned at the port in order to enable it to cope with future requirements in rail/land transshipment. „Rostock is confident that thanks to the above-average railway infrastructure it has to offer, but also through targeted measures to

extend capacity combined with the current investment by InfraGo (DB Netz) it will be able to contribute to the establishment of green transport chains and to the transfer of traffic from road to rail. The years 2024 and 2025 will for a start be fully dedicated to the urgently necessary track extension at Rostock Trimodal. In December 2023 we already managed to install a digital registration system for intermodal transport units at the terminal entry and an operating system for a better operative handling at the terminal”, explains Dr. Gernot Tesch.

Refurbishment of railway facilities for berth 64 at the ferry terminal

In coordination with Deutsche Bahn, ROSTOCK PORT has started the refurbishment of railway and switching facilities at the ferry and ro-ro terminal. The implementation is planned in four construction phases until the end of 2025 under the subsidy programme „Rail-IT-MoS“. Apart from the investment in the public railway facilities, ferry and ro-ro areas are to be optimised as well. The total investment amounts to around seven million Euros.

Development plan for the area between the oil port and the chemical port

The 27 hectares of land between the oil port and the chemical port represent one of the last sizeable coherent areas available for port use in the current special area of the port. Together with ROSTOCK PORT, the Hanseatic and University City of Rostock is preparing for the drawing-up of a supply-led development plan for this area.

Provision of areas for port development

The high demand for areas close to the quays exceeds the land on offer. Development plans are currently being prepared for the last sizeable areas in the special area of the port, and/or investigations are under way with regard to their possible future use. The gratifying establishments of businesses to date and the extension projects pursued by numerous companies established at the port were only possible until now due to the availability of space thanks to efforts to secure land in previous years. It is therefore necessary to intensify the provision of port-related areas, especially also with regard to the various opportunities presented by the energy transition.

The provision of areas for long-term port development must be intensified. The municipal and regional planning authorities are working on the process of

drawing up a new preliminary municipal development planning – “land zoning plan” and/or redrawing the “future plan” of the Hanseatic and University City of Rostock – as well as of the regional planning. „Together with the aforementioned partners, Rostock Chamber of Commerce and the Economic Development Corporation Rostock Business, ROSTOCK PORT has worked out a communication strategy to be presented in various decision-making bodies of the city as well as at the port panel”, says Jens A. Scharner. For further information and background:

<https://rathaus.rostock.de/de/startseite/325396>

Energy port Rostock: Hydrogen production project and import of green energy sources

In order to establish the Overseas Port as a hub for green energy sources ROSTOCK PORT continues to work on a multitude of projects together with various partners. Preconditions for the implementation of the energy port concept, which focuses on the import of green sources of energy and on the generation of green hydrogen, are excellent.

ROSTOCK PORT publishes a sustainability report

ROSTOCK PORT GmbH has published its second sustainability report for the business years 2020 to 2022. In the report they describe, among other things, how ecological, social and commercial aspects are incorporated into and inform the management of the company. Especially with regard to the ecological issues there is a differentiation of the tasks and activities of ROSTOCK PORT as the infrastructure and port operator and the port with its variety of different companies, which is often perceived by the public as one overall location. In compiling the report, ROSTOCK PORT followed the so-called *Global Reporting Initiative*. Sustainable management is an absolute precondition in order to remain competitive in the decades to come and to proactively shape transformation processes.

[Nachhaltigkeitsbericht ROSTOCK PORT 2023.pdf \(rostock-port.de\)](#)

Cruise shipping

The 2024 cruise shipping season in Warnemünde will begin with the arrival of *AIDAmar* on 14 April. 21 cruise shipping companies have notified 146 port calls by 35 cruise liners for this year. Rostock-based shipping company AIDA Cruises

will for instance perform 69 port calls with turnaround of passengers at its home port of Warnemünde with *AIDAdiva* and *AIDAmar*.

Eight cruise vessels will call at the mouth of river Warnow for the first time this year: *Ocean Albatros* on 5 May, *Brilliant Lady* on 24 May, *Viking Neptune* on 31 May, *Coral Princess* on 12 June, *Caribbean Princess* on 4 July, *Mein Schiff 7* on 15 August, *Azamara Onward* on 27 August and *Sirena* on 17 September 2024.

From 20 to 22 September 2024 the tourism centre of Rostock and Warnemünde plans a re-launch of the Rostock Cruise Festival in Warnemünde which was first organised together with shipping companies, maritime and tourist businesses, the cruise shipping network MV Cruise Net as well as ROSTOCK PORT in 2018. Apart from an expert conference there is to be a varied and informative programme about cruise shipping from Friday to Sunday. During those three days we expect port calls by *Mein Schiff 7*, *Norwegian Dawn*, *Sirena*, *AIDAdiva* and *AIDAmar*.

The 2024 cruise shipping season is expected to end on 18 December with the port call of *Amadea* of the German shipping company Phönix Reisen.

Statistics of Rostock Overseas Port for 2023

Main cargo types	2022 (t)	2023 (t)	trend in %	share in %
Ferry & ro-ro goods	17,700,000	16,500,000	-7 %	53 %
Dry bulk goods	7,200,000	5,690,000	-20 %	18 %
Liquid goods	3,450,000	7,930,000	+129 %	26 %
General cargo	625,000	758,000	+21 %	3 %
total	28,975.000	30,878,000	+6.5 %	100 %



Further information: www.rostock-port.de &
<https://rathaus.rostock.de/de/startseite/325396>