

HWG–Newsletter 04/2015

Rescue operation in the Mediterranean Sea: HWG-member Bremer Reederei reports

Interview with Arne Ehlers, Managing Director of Bremer Reederei E & B GmbH



Mr. Ehlers, the Bremer Reederei has seven vessels on the North African trade route. How often do your vessels have to participate in rescue operations?

The refugee problem off the North African coast, namely from Libya with destination Italy, has been existing for a while now. However, we seem to witness a considerable increase currently. The closer you get to the Libyan coast, the more likely you encounter boats with refugees. So far, we have taken part in a search-operation on one occasion and on 20 April, one of our vessels rescued 90 refugees.

Who is organizing the rescue-operations and how are they carried out?

The Italian Coast Guard asked us to participate in search operations and to rescue refugees. The entire operation is coordinated closely with the Italian Coast Guard, which transmits coordinates of boats with refugees, recorded by sea patrol planes. The Merchant Ship then has to deviate from its original route and sail to the given position. It is important to approach the refugee boat with caution and depending on the weather situation. The refugees may try to escape since they do not want to be captured by the Italian forces. In such a case, the vessel has to stay near the refugee boat only for offering help. Refugees cannot be taken over by force because of legal reasons. Only when the refugees decide to accept assistance, the crew is allowed to take them on board, where they will be taken care of in the best way possible. The Italian Coast Guard then instructs the vessel to hand over the refugees at a meeting point, e.g. to an Italian Coast Guard or Navy Ship.

What are the risks of such operations and what should be done to improve the situation, especially for ship owners?

The risks for the captain and the crew should not be underestimated. Multiple scenarios come to mind when thinking of a 12-15 men strong crew, taking in 90 refugees. For safety reasons and for the precise record of any action, the Italian Coast Guard strictly demands documentation of every rescue operation. Nevertheless, in terms of provision and weather, every rescue operation remains a highly precarious maneuver. Therefore, we are very grateful to our captains and crews for the great work done under these conditions.

Our number one aim is to save lives – this has always been the sacred duty for seamen of every nation and religion. The situation becomes problematic, when this is not a matter of the occasional ship in distress and the request for help, but when criminal smugglers deploy huge quantities of unseaworthy boats and thereby consciously provoke emergency cases. Here, the commercial shipping industry is overburdened. This is also underlined by the huge number of refugees rescued on board of the vessels. Obviously, every vessel is equipped with sufficient provisions for her own crew, which last for a certain time, but which in rescue cases can only serve as first emergency supply. It is now being considered to equip the vessels as a precautionary measure with sufficient blankets, crackers and water bottles; however, today this would have to be sponsored by the owners. We will certainly approach relief organizations for support; still the financial means are limited.

Clearly, all vessels in the respective sea areas have to assist. However, the major burden needs to be carried by the Coast Guard and Navy of whatever country is involved in the rescue operations. There has to be a consideration of cost-sharing from which the commercial shipping industry benefits, because rescue- and search-operations are time-consuming and performed repeatedly in these waters today.

NPorts builds new quay for automobile handling in Cuxhaven

New dolphin berth in *Amerikahafen* expected to be set in operation already this year



HWG-member Niedersachsen Ports GmbH & Co. KG (NPorts) strengthens the automobile handling capacities in Cuxhaven by building a new quay. The new dolphin berth, which consists of a 155 meters long footbridge and five big bollard blocks, can be used by vessels of 160 meters length and 25

meters width. “We realized that automobile handling becomes a growing industry in our ports. With this new project, we strengthen our position in this competitive market: after Bremerhaven and Zeebrügge, the ports in Lower Saxony are the next biggest automobile handling ports in Europe,” states Holger Banik, Managing Director of Niedersachsen Ports.

The existing facility did not allow handling of bigger vessels because of its condition, dimension and draft. The roro bridge no 3 will therefore be partly rebuilt, as well as the roro pontoon, and relocated to the new berth. Furthermore, the dredging of the harbor basin to -10.00 SL is planned. A new connection from the former bridge no 3 enables cargo handling through the stern ramp of the vessel. For loading and discharging of the vessels, there will also be a possibility to make use of a quarter-ramp. In total, NPorts invests around three million Euros from State funds and from European Funds for Regional Development in the new dolphin berth. The contracted company for realizing this project is *Bilfinger Offshore and Marine Systems GmbH* from Hamburg.

On the occasion of the first groundbreaking works, the State Secretary for Transport, Daniela Behrens states: “Lower Saxony realigns its port policy. The core aim is to strengthen the ‘port of Niedersachsen’ and its locations. Our sea and inland ports are an important part of our infrastructure network, logistics hub and significant business location. That is why the emphasis is laid on already identified core fields of expertise, which are continuously developing. With the new dolphin berth, more automobile handling capacities are generated in Cuxhaven. Cuxhaven’s position as a strong and successful seaport is further strengthened.”

AMBAU acquires major order for *Nordsee One*

The Hamburg based company Nordsee One GmbH entrusted the AMBAU works in Cuxhaven and Bremen with the design and construction of 54 monopiles und transition pieces, starting June 2015.

AMBAU started the ‘Detailed Design’ of the foundation structure already in October 2014, and final certification is imminent. The 54 steel foundations weigh all together abt. 50,000 tons. The monopiles and transition pieces were successfully tested by RWE Innogy at the AMBAU location in Bremen, where an innovative sealing system was also developed.

Rainer Wirth, technical superintendant, describes the engineering process: “It is a challenging and technically demanding task for AMBAU, not only to build the fundamentals but also to provide an optimized and certified design.” The foundation structures are built for the project ‘Nordsee One’, located about 40 kilometers off the North Sea island Juist.

After completion of the installation, the 54 windmills will produce 1.2 billion kilowatts electrical power and can supply approximately 400,000 households with 'clean' energy.

The Nordsee One GmbH is a joint venture of *Northland Power Inc.* from Canada and *RWE Innogy GmbH* from Hamburg.

HWG introduces itself: Kutterfisch Zentrale GmbH

Profile

Company name:	Kutterfisch-Zentrale GmbH
Year founded:	1964
Industry:	fish industry
Locations:	Cuxhaven
Portfolio:	fishing, fish processing, fish wholesale

Interview with Horst Huthsfeldt, Managing Director:



Further Managing Directors are Kai-Arne Schmidt, Jörg Petersen and Michael Seidel.

Question 1 – How would you describe your company?

The business, which was founded in 1964, stands for sustainability, transparency and responsibility in the fishing industry. In 2008, *Kutterfisch* was the first European company to be

MSC certified for salmon fishing. Another MSC certification for codfish from the Eastern Baltic Sea followed in 2011 and the most recent certification for herring fishing, also in the Baltic Sea, in April 2015. Our vessels are equipped with cameras for supervising the fishing procedures.

Question 2 – Why are you a member of HWG?

Cuxhaven needs a strong port representation. The fish industry is organized by the 'Fischwirtschaftliche Vereinigung'. The HWG is currently very focused on cargo handling and offshore projects. Improved collaboration and joint presence in the future would be worthwhile.

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

Keeping ecology and economy successfully in tune also in the future and proving to our customers the high quality of our fish products being substantial for a healthy and balanced nourishment.

Further information about the company:

www.kutterfisch.de

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