



Wasaline

Peter Stahlberg: Yes, during winter holidays we had fully booked departures. In general, winter time is really well booked and after many years winter traveller volumes have been growing continuously. These people are going to the Swedish Lapland for skiing and winter activities. A lot of people from this area in Finland and even from the south are using this route with us to Sweden.

“We also see more and more German passengers using our ferry”

RoPax: Do you see an effect that is more attractive to go to Sweden due to the currency exchange rate?

Peter Stahlberg: Yes, the Swedish krona is quite low and people found out that they can buy wine or beer in Sweden because the Swedish tax is a little bit lower. I got a comment from a passenger that they are comparing prices and that it is cheaper to go with us to Sweden to buy alcohol than going all the way via Åland with tax free lines. I mean it's not cheaper on the ferries anymore.

RoPax: How is your pre booking situation for 2024?

Peter Stahlberg: We have some percent less booking than last year. But the main businesses we see today are the conference guests. We had the strikes in Finland and e.g. a lot of big paper factories have had layoffs. Cargo is growing again. The LNG prices are at 24 to 25 Euro per Megawatt and the diesel fuel is at 70 Euro. I'm happy that we have a dual fuel operating ferry. When the gas prices were over 150 Euro per Megawatt and the diesel was about 50-60 Euro per MW hour, we used diesel as main fuel. Today we do whatever is needed to reduce the emissions. We have budgeted ETS at 90.50 Euro per ton. Now it is 60-70 Euro per ton. I'm sleeping well even if we have a small dip on the passenger side. We also see more and more German passengers using our ferry and the German bus groups are increasing

RoPax. How will Wasaline effected in 2024 by ETS system? In this year 2024 we speak only 40% of your CO₂ emissions will be tax.

Peter Stahlberg: I had a presentation some days ago for my crew. I said that we will benefit from the ETS. I mean that when we made the budget, we calculated €90 per ton. We haven't either used any fuel surcharge for the passengers. Of course, we had the challenge with the fuel prices, but we put quite a big amount for passengers

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Wasaline – well positioned for the green future

Wasaline introduced 2021 its low emission ferry “Aurora Botnia”. The line developed very successfully between Umeå (Sweden) and Vaasa (Finland). The RoPax vessel is today one of the best solutions to operate emission free in the future.

The next step is to study the possibilities to rebuild an engine to a greener propulsion system. The target for the innovative ferry company is to be able to operate emission neutrally in 2030. RoPax spoke with Peter Stahlberg the CEO of Wasaline about the next steps and the new cargo corridor from continental Europe via Sweden to Finland.

RoPax: You have reported good transport figures but a little less in cargo how is the situation actual do you have a fully booked vessel when the people go to winter holiday?



CEO Peter Stahlberg

and cars, so I have not got any bad feedback because it's quite transparent. The ETS is about €60-70 per ton. We have an efficient vessel where we reduced CO₂ with 5% per voyage even in wintertime. We are mainly using only 1.4 of the engines, which is very good instead of all 4 generators. This year we will benefit from the ETS.

RoPax: What are your plans in the next years to reduce more CO₂, do you have something where you can adjust more at "Aurora Botnia"?

Peter Stahlberg: We got money from our owners for research about the next huge plans, which will be realized in 2027. This would mean that we wouldn't have to pay anything for the ETS. A lot of projects are going on. In Umeå in Sweden there is a company, which will start to produce methanol in 2026-2027, and the final decision will hopefully be made later this year. The company will first install a production unit in Örnsköldsvik. They will set up a production facility together with Umeå Energy. It means that then we could have the opportunity to use locally produced energy with short transportation costs. We have started a project with the specialists, where we investigate different possibilities to convert one or more generators to use for instance Methanol or to add more batteries on board. Today we have 2.3 MW batteries on board.

"In the future we will not use any fossil fuels."

RoPax. You will increase the battery capacity up to which size?

Peter Stahlberg: We know more about it after the studies to obtain the most optimal capacity. That's why we are doing this study to see how much battery capacity we can add that we don't have to rebuild the existing charging stations in the ports. We are studying what is the maximum we can get and of course you don't get them 100% charged during the half an hour to one hour stop in the port. But during the night we are staying longer in the ports meaning that we then depart with full charge. It is still unclear what the level of Methanol will be and the rules are still not in force with for instance the pooling. It is very difficult to calculate the ROI and the OPEX but one thing is for sure, our goal is to be a forerunner in the Industry.

RoPax: I think it is very interesting that you are investigating for instance to rebuild one or two engines to methanol, and you can get local your methanol, that is a very good situation and much better to transport methanol by truck or rail long distances to the port.



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Peter Stahlberg: I think we are getting more and more autarky with this system to generate our resources to operate the vessel from local sources. Today, when we look at the situation if for example the Kiel Canal is closed or we have problems in the traffic up to Gotland to get our oil to Finland, it is much better to have local methanol production to operate our vessel. We also have a new cargo solution where we can have multimodal transports to Gothenburg connecting to trains from our ferry. There are several companies having train connections to Umeå and the traffic is growing instantly. We work in close cooperation with logistic companies like Nurminen and ferry operators like TT. In the future we will not use any fossil fuels. This transit traffic will increase and we are prepared, and in the future we have no CO₂ emissions. If the Russian market will come back, we will see much more opportunities for more cargo and traffic also to China and Japan by train.

RoPax. Are you building up an alternative for transports from Continental Europe via Sweden to Finland?

Peter Stahlberg: Yes. If you look into the future the cost for all the small vessels to operate will be much higher. Small ships have let us say 10 containers in and out in one port. You can unload them in the South or West of Sweden to the rail. In Sweden they have a very good rail network. That is a totally green transport then to continue with our ship let us say in 2027 when we have totally emission free operations: Green transports are growing bigger and bigger and everybody wants to do green transport, but nobody wants to pay for it. We have one logistics company, Ekeri, who has

done the next step to integrate us in their network by having totally green transports.

RoPax: I saw that your cargo volumes were a little bit decreased last year because due to the Russian effect.

Peter Stahlberg: Yes, our export is plus / minus. The decrease is caused by lower export of paper. We transported a lot of special paper from the factories in Sweden, but the demand has decreased. There is a stable volume for cardboard. Our Russian cargo volumes were about 3% of our whole volume and now it's 0%. Our market share between Finland and Sweden has grown even if we had a little bit less cargo. The intermodal cargo by train is growing constantly and it means that we will have more feeder traffic here. The signals are good.

"I often say that Wasaline will not become a rich company because of our income but because we are efficient."

I often say that Wasaline will not become a rich company because of our income but because we are efficient. We have to watch all costs all the time. We have a very small organisation, a small crew and quite a few people in the office. We have so many brains on board so let them work – what I mean is that we don't have to manage everything from the office.

RoPax: You operated Fridays by biogas do you continue this case?

Peter Stahlberg: During the first three Fridays we had a record in cargo. We had to stop operating with biogas when we had this huge amount of ice at sea and our consumption was about 100% more. Our plan is to continue with this in August after the passenger high season. We do it for the cargo business. I hope we can continue with it, maybe it will not be Fridays but another day when we have a lot of cargo.

RoPax: I think it was positive test, but you need more support to continue?

Peter Stahlberg: Yes, that is the most important thing if you want shipping to reduce emissions. You will never reach the goal if we don't find politically some way how to balance the difference between biofuel, fuel and fossil fuel. It's impossible technically to request this in ships that are five years or 10 years old. I mean that you cannot afford to put the money on the technical changes like methanol conversions or similar. It's cheaper to pay penalties. I do not see the point to transfer the pollution from the air to the sea as a long term solution.

RoPax: What do you think about the upcoming systems with carbon capture?

Peter Stahlberg: With the technology today it is not possible to use it on our vessel. The technology is going forward and it will be an option for shipping in the future, but not for us.

Ships with scrubbers and heavy fuel will be better prepared for carbon capture, even if scrubbers will never be an option for us and have never been. We have a sensitive archipelago here which is Unesco natural heritage, and we will never put any pollution at sea. I'm born here with the very sensitive beautiful archipelago. I support some of the politician's decision that open loop scrubbers should be banned; I do not see the point to transfer the pollution from the air to the sea as a long term solution.

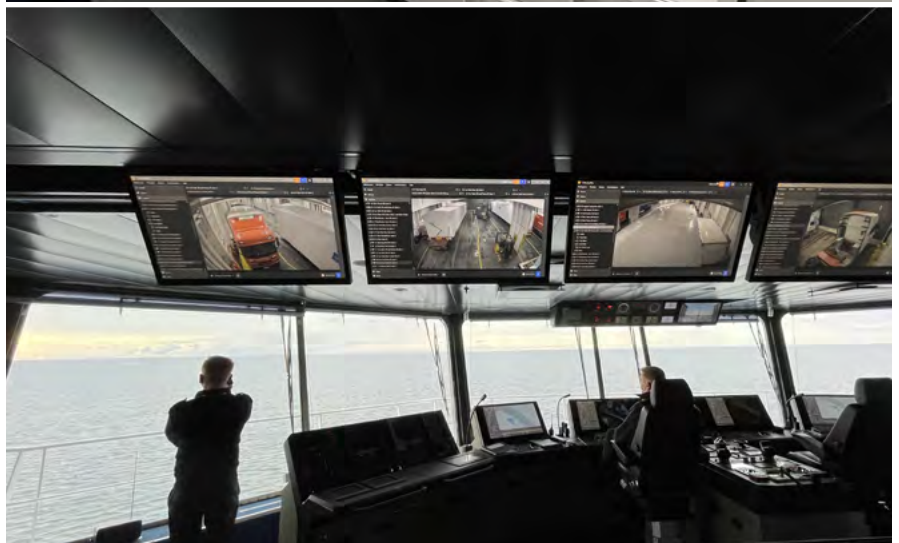
RoPax: Do you see a potential for a second vessel if the market will increase?

Peter Stahlberg: Our vessel has a special strength also for Nato transports and it is a special vessel for this area. We have huge investments coming in this area. We are talking about huge investments in battery factories. A huge battery area will grow in our area on both sides, and we see a huge number of investments in the area. We have seen the Northvolt investment in Skellefteå on the Swedish side. A lot of raw materials are coming from Finland. I think in five years' time it's reality that they have calculated it needs about 30-40 trailers per day. We have a good capacity at our ferry already. This is a huge potential for the future.

RoPax: Thank you for the conversation.



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The new green alternative transport to Finland via Sweden with TT Line and Wasaline