



**RoPax: Unity line has increased capacity by introducing the newer Ro-Pax “Epsilon”.**

Björn Boström: I think this is a wise move because we will hit the rock bottom of the market in the middle of 2024 and then traffic will increase again. We didn't lose much in the passenger segment in Poland. We saw an increase in the performance of the Poland service in January and February due to the deployment of the “Galileusz” with the old ferry “Jan Sniadecki” being sold for service in Greece. The “Galileusz” has brought a positive effect for us because she has almost double the capacity.

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**RoPax: This was the fleet reshuffle that saw the train ferry “Jan Sniadecki” withdrawn, the “Galileusz” introduced, and the “Epsilon” entered service to Trelleborg.**

Björn Boström: Yes, but the “Jan Sniadecki” had not transported rail traffic since 2018.

**RoPax: Do you still transport rail traffic from Ystad to Swinoujscie?**

Björn Boström: Yes, we can do this with the “Polonia” and we have a train connection which was temporarily stopped by the port of Swinoujscie because they carried out work to rebuild the rail tracks into an intermodal area. During that period, we could not transport any trains but now this service is open again following trials after the work was completed.

**RoPax: How is Ystad positioned in the strategy of the Swedish state to offer alternative rail connections should an accident or other issues occur on the Oresund Bridge rail link.**

Björn Boström: The Trafikverket made a report with the information that the only rail connection besides the Oresund Bridge is Trelleborg – Rostock. They did not mention that we have still a rail connection. That is not correct, and we are working to communicate to the government that we are also an alternative option to Trelleborg and the Oresund bridge. The Polish Rail company PKP is working to get more rail traffic from Germany onto Polish tracks and to increase the rail connection. This might affect the port of Rostock I think. Another point is the military transport solution via Ystad by Rail to Poland. Poland is part of NATO and now Sweden is also part of NATO so we need to

## Ystad Port Sets New Records for Bornholm Services

The Port of Ystad is well prepared for the future with its new port to accommodate vessels up to 250 metres in length. The first new vessel of such dimensions will be the RoPax “Varsovia” of Polferries. The newbuild from the Visentini Shipyard in Italy, will enter service in summer 2024. The port still has a rail connection to Poland and herewith it is the second port in Sweden with a rail ferry to the continent.

**The CEO of the Port of Ystad, Björn Boström, confirmed another record in transported passengers and vehicles to Bornholm in 2023. RoPax spoke with him about the perspectives and the position of this important ferry port in the south of Sweden.**

**RoPax: How was the year 2023 for Ystad port?**

Björn Boström: It was quite fine. It was a far better year than we had expected. We recorded some new traffic records on the route to Bornholm, in fact every year we have seen an increase in these figures. We hit new records for passengers, cars, and buses, with the new fast ferry “Express 5”. For the Polish services, the war in Ukraine and the recession has affected the traffic figures considerably, especially for building materials because nobody is building in Sweden for the moment. So, we have a decline in figures for this trade. The Polish



Björn Boström

ports with ferry services have not recorded an increase in 2023 and this includes our connection with Swinoujscie where ferry traffic has decreased. We cannot speak for the traffic volumes on the Karlskrona to Gdynia service but a lot of cargo might be changing from one company to another.

boost this rail connection. We must keep all route options open. The Ro-Pax “Polonia” has a capacity of 740 lanemetres for rail vehicles and she operates every day.

**RoPax: How is port of Ystad prepared for the huge Visentini newbuild vessel from Polferries, will she use the new part of your port?**

Björn Boström: As we know today, the Varsovia will be delivered in June 2024, but I think they need time to adjust her for the service. She will go to the new berth due to her length. We hope that she will bring more cargo traffic back to Ystad. She will

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use primarily berth no 8. We do not know which vessel will be replaced but we are incredibly pleased with the development, especially if freight volumes increase once again.

**RoPax: I think it was a good decision to get this vessel because it was available in a good timescale and is a well proven design, being a larger sister vessel of the Ro-Pax “A Galeotta” of Corsica Linea, which operates between France and Corsica. You will see in the coming years some more new Ro-Pax ships from Poland. The first one for Unity Line will be ready next year, will she be operating to/from Ystad?**

Björn Boström: We do not know where they will operate the new ship. The situation is not yet clear and there is nothing decided at present. It could be that the ship uses both ports, but nothing is finalised. Two newbuildings are for Unity Line, and one is for Polferries. The first one is for Unity Line as you say.

**RoPax: How is the situation with your cruise business?**

Björn Boström: We had three cruise vessels last year and this year we have two bookings from the newly established cruise company of Viking Line and Gotlandsbolaget, the “Birka Gotland”. We became a member of the Baltic Cruise Group and are also working with the Nordic Ports Group. They are actively exploring the market to encourage more cruise ship visits to our port. We have had discussions with cruise lines with vessels up to 250-metres in length, which we can easily



manage. This is the maximum permitted size from the authorities, 250-metres long with a 50m beam and an 8-metre maximum draught. The maritime authorities told us if we get requests for longer vessels, it is possible to make exemptions depending on the propulsion system that a ship has. In the old port we can accommodate vessels with a maximum length of 180-metres, such as Polferries’ “Cracovia.”

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We can still move vessels between the new port and old port areas if we get more cruise ships calling. We believe that Ystad is a very good cruise destination, and we received very positive feedback from the last cruise visitor.

**RoPax: I think you have every chance of getting more cruise vessels into your port. Let us get back to the Bornholm traffic situation.**

Björn Boström: We have transported 1.8 million passengers in 2023. It is a new

record. The figures are still increasing since the service started in 2018. They found the way to do it. They are elaborating with prices and services to get the best solution. We are very happy because Bornholmslinjen has finally got an agreement with the Danish state for the ferry contract up until August 2030. The company is well positioned and has two large catamarans on the route, the “Express1” and “Express 5”.

**RoPax: How are your onshore power installations?**

Björn Boström: We have had shore power since 2012 and we were one of the first in Sweden to instal power to all berths. There is one exception, the high-speed craft get no shore power because they stay only around 40 minutes in the port. We have three vessels which use the shore power today. All new vessels will be equipped with shore power connections. We are running a little project to find a mobile solution. This would cost less than a fixed supply point. We need it for Polferries’ new Ro-Pax “Varsovia” if she requires a change of berth. We can deliver both 50 and 60 Hertz and have been able to do so from the beginning.

**RoPax: Thank you very much for the conversation.**