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## Rostock Port sees growth

The Port of Rostock recorded a new cargo handling record in 2025 with 31.3 million tonnes, exceeding the previous year's result by four percent.

Including the cargo volumes of the other Rostock ports, a total of 33.1 million tonnes of goods were handled. This confirms Rostock's role as a significant universal port and an important economic driver for the region. Passenger traffic also developed positively: around 3.2 million travelers used ferries and cruise ships in Rostock and Warnemünde. Approximately 2.6 million passengers were counted on ferry routes to Denmark and Sweden. In the cruise port of Warnemünde, 592,000 passengers embarked and disembarked during 165 ship calls.

The most important cargo segment remained rolling cargo in the ferry and Ro-Ro sector, with 16.85 million tonnes handled. Automobile handling also developed positively, rising to 132,000 imported and exported vehicles. Combined rail transport remained stable at around 110,000 loading units. In addition, the port is investing in several infrastructure projects such as the extension of rail tracks, new terminal areas, and modern information and communication technologies. RoPax spoke with one of the two Managing Directors of Rostock Port, Dr. Gernot Tesch, about the port's future development.



Managing Director Dr. Gernot Tesch

**RoPax: Dr. Tesch, looking at the first three months of the year: has the positive development you previously described continued directly, or were there any delays in momentum?**

Dr. Tesch: Overall, the development has stabilized. We are not seeing abrupt jumps, but rather a solid continuation of the trend. However, we are also seeing growth: particularly in the RoRo/RoPax sector we are operating at a higher level compared to the previous year, which fits well with our overall expectations for the year. Growth is present, but differentiated and strongly dependent on individual routes and market impulses.

**RoPax: What role do the Northern European markets, especially Scandinavia, play in this?**

Dr. Tesch: Scandinavia – Sweden in particular – is currently showing somewhat stronger momentum than Germany. Investments are being made there, infrastructure projects are underway, and this is reflected in freight volumes. Finland needs to be viewed more cautiously: there are slight signs of recovery, but there are still structural challenges such as comparatively high unemployment and generally subdued economic development. We have about 8–9% more trucks and trailers to Sweden compared to 2025. We also see a greater awareness of our rail ferry connection as a redundant solution for links to Sweden in case of bottlenecks or disruptions on the fixed connections. The current ships can operate for a few more years, but we are in dialogue with Stena Line and are

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also discussing future ideas and solutions. However, it is becoming increasingly difficult to find companies capable of maintaining or even building such specialized technology – Germany used to be a leader in these technologies.

**RoPax: You have mentioned the competitive situation several times. Do you see any changes here?**

Dr. Tesch: Definitely. Competition is becoming more intense, particularly due to strategic considerations by individual shipping companies to expand or realign their networks. Issues such as additional port calls, alternative route planning, or new hub concepts are playing a role. In the medium term, this could lead to shifts – including in the Baltic Sea region.

**RoPax: What importance does the hinterland play, especially intermodal transport?**

Dr. Tesch: The hinterland is a decisive factor. Intermodal transport is stable but not showing dynamic growth. A central problem remains the reliability of the rail network. Construction works, diversions, and capacity bottlenecks directly affect performance. Nevertheless, we see that awareness of resilient transport chains is growing. The current geopolitical tensions make it clear how important redundant and stable connections are.

**RoPax: Are there any infrastructure developments on your side?**

Dr. Tesch: Yes. We are specifically expanding our intermodal infrastructure. In con-



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crete terms, we are extending the rail tracks to a usable length of 680 meters with five tracks. This significantly increases flexibility and capacity. The goal is to be able to handle more and longer trains efficiently in the future.

**RoPax: How do you see the future of combined transport in competition with road transport?**

Dr. Tesch: Road transport will remain dominant in terms of volume, mainly due to its flexibility. However, rising energy prices, regulatory pressure, and sustainability requirements will strengthen intermodal transport.

Electric trucks will initially play a role on defined routes and in regional transport. For long distances, rail will remain indispensable in the long term – provided that the infrastructure is expanded and stabilized accordingly. The Port of Rostock is also examining and planning charging stations for electric trucks.

**RoPax: The new car business has developed well. What does the outlook look like?**

Dr. Tesch: The business has developed well and, above all, very quickly. The operator has already repurposed some additional space to increase capacity.

**RoPax: What are the biggest opportunities and risks for Rostock in the coming years?**

Dr. Tesch: Opportunities clearly lie in the growth of Baltic Sea traffic, stronger connections with Northern Europe, and the further development of intermodal solutions.

Risks arise from geopolitical uncertainties, potential market shifts due to new competitors, and infrastructural bottlenecks in the hinterland.

Our approach is therefore clear: create the necessary capacities, remain flexible, and work closely with partners along the entire transport chain.

**RoPax: Thank you for the interview.**



Automotive business has developed well