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Scandlines Invests in More Electric Ferries

This year, the new electric freight ferry „Futura“ will go into operation and in 2025 the two double-ended ferries „Schleswig-Holstein“ and „Deutschland“ will be converted to at least 80% electric operation.

The electric ferry „Futura“ is scheduled to enter service before the end of 2024 and will be fully electrically operated. With zero direct emissions from operations, the shipping company confirms its sustainability goals.

With 1,200 lanemetres available, i.e. a capacity for 66 truck units, the ferry complements the freight service on the Puttgarden-Rødby route and thus has twice as much space for trucks as each of the four hybrid ferries on the same route. The “Futura” will initially only be powered by electricity in Rødby with this infrastructure also being available in Puttgarden from 2025.

In 2023 Scandlines transported in total 6.4 million passengers (6.1 million in 2022) and 1.6 million cars (1.6 million in 2022) and more than 704,000 freight units (754,000 in 2022) on both routes.

There have also been changes in the management of Scandlines. Michael Guldmann Petersen was appointed as acting CEO in February 2024 and has served as Chief Operating Officer (COO) since 2018. Until July Eric Gregoire will take over the position as CEO. He will continue in his old position as COO.

RoPax. How was 2023 for Scandlines?

Michael Guldmann Petersen: We were affected by the decline of the Swedish

appetite to travel anywhere. It is obvious that both the exchange rate and inflation in Sweden have a direct impact on our business. We had a very good summer season in 2023, and in total the number of passengers increased by 5%, but we witnessed a 7% decline in our freight business, which is also attributable to a very large extent to the general slowdown of the economy all over Europe.



Michael Goldmann Petersen

RoPax: How is the perspective for 2024? Do you have good pre-booking figures?

Michael Guldmann Petersen: On the freight side, we expect a flat first half year in comparison to what we saw at the end of last year. Then we expect a small increase over the second half of the year. Overall, we do expect improved volumes on the freight side whilst on the leisure side we hope to see demand continue to grow especially during the peak season. We expect a small increase in volumes overall.

RoPax: Can you see on your lines how many Swedish passengers use your vessels? I saw a statistic that last year 23% Swedish fewer passengers travelled by plane from Sweden and instead, they used the train or their car.

Michael Guldmann Petersen: It is a good question! We would never know how many people are using the alternative routes, but I can say that in the past years 60% of the visitors we had in our Border Shop came from Sweden. This volume has decreased significantly in the last year. We think one factor is the currency exchange rate but what we also see is that the Swedish clients spend the same amount in Swedish Kronas as they did in the past.

RoPax: On the other hand, you see more Germans travelling to Denmark and Sweden. Have you noticed an increase in the number of German travellers?

Michael Guldmann Petersen: Yes, the German market is good for Scandlines. We hope that it is one of the areas where we will see a bigger increase than we have seen in the previous years. We saw last year as well an increase from the German side. Even during the ski holidays this year, we

saw a surprisingly positive number of northbound travellers from Germany. Not to the same magnitude as we already see southbound but it's better than what we had expected. There is plenty of snow in the north. This is a good trend and I think the German market is becoming increasingly important, and we are adding more focus on the German passenger market.

RoPax: This year you will get the new electric ferry "Futura" from Türkiye. How is the building process and the schedule?

Michael Guldmann Petersen: We launched the vessel on the 25th of November with a big celebration. The launch and entering of the vessel into the water was very impressive. I love ships but to see her on the water was fantastic and she's very beautiful. The yard is doing all the final works now and we expect delivery in the second half of 2024. Deployment will depend on the weather conditions on her route to the north. It will take between two and three weeks to get her from Türkiye to the Fehmarn Belt. We will then need a little bit of time to commission her. It is a new ship with a new propulsion system for us and we must be sure that the charging tower and all systems are working.

RoPax: Is the installation for charging towers in Rödby and Puttgarden ready?

Michael Guldmann Petersen: The installation in Rödby is finished. The charging tower for Puttgarden is a separate project and will reach fruition next year. We had the courage to go for it, as we made the decision to convert both German ferries to electric propulsion as well. This will enable the "Futura" to operate completely emission-free in a two-hour rotation sequence. The first design was that she would be zero emission in a three-hour rotation by charging in Rödby only. Now we can reduce the charging time and we will be able to charge in both ports. We can optimise the capacity on the usage of the "Futura" to fit in with the schedule of the other ferries. It will also enable us to charge at least 80 % of the energy needed for the two German ferries "Schleswig-Holstein" and "Deutschland" to cross the Fehmarn Belt.

RoPax: Why will only the two German ferries be electrified?

Michael Guldmann Petersen: We have been extremely fortunate that the German authorities support this project so much. We are very happy with this opportunity and anyone into energy or a better sustainability agenda will know that this green technology always comes with a significant price tag, and we're very grateful for this support from the German representation.

RoPax: How is the schedule for the rebuild of the ferries?



Scandlines

Michael Guldmann Petersen: We are going to start doing some of the preparatory work perhaps towards the end of this year. The full installation on both ships will be completed by the end of 2025, and likewise for the charging tower in Puttgarden, which is expected to be finalised and operational in September 2025.

RoPax: You will have one charging tower in each port and will operate at the end of 2025 three almost fully electric ferries. (100% for the "Futura" only). I think you must have a good schedule to supply all vessels with enough energy as and when required.

Michael Guldmann Petersen: Yes, that's right, it's possible. We'll be able to charge a ferry in just 12 minutes.

RoPax: If you look to your Gedser – Rostock operation that features a rotor sail on each Ro-Pax ferry (the Copenhagen & Rostock), you made a lot of positive promotion about this, and the results were very positive. Do you have any news for the next step to further reduce emissions?

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Scandlines Neujahrsempfang in Kiel 2024. v.l.n.r. Heiko Kähler (GF Scandlines), Kristina Herbst (Landtagspräsidentin Schleswig Holstein), Tobias von der Heide (Staatssekretär im Verkehrsministerium SH), Michael Guldmann Pedersen, Ingo Gädechens MDB

Michael Guldmann Petersen: One thing is the rotor sail itself which does what it's supposed to do. The system delivered the thrust that we were looking for from windy conditions. We additionally installed smaller propeller blades on the centre propeller on both ships, and furthermore we have increased the transit time from one hour and 45 minutes to two hours for most voyages. Thereby the crossing speed required is less than what the design of the propeller was initially intended.

Currently, we don't have any definite new energy projects in the pipeline. We always have something on the horizon, but we don't currently have any projects ready to be put in place. Of course, we are continuously trying to tweak all the small

things that we can tweak but any significant projects are not in place yet.

RoPax: One idea that came up when I was aboard the ferry in conversation with your captain was to install more battery capacity. You have today 1.5 MW capacity and the captain told me that 5 MW would be good to operate into Rostock port in electric mode.

Michael Guldmann Petersen: We are considering what would be the best solution and are considering removing the batteries from the “Schleswig-Holstein” and “Deutschland” because they will each get a new package during the conversion project to 80% electric operation. But the idea is still in the evaluation phase. We would like to operate almost emission free while we are travelling inside the port of Rostock, but this is at an early stage, and we must do some homework for it first.

RoPax: The journey to go more emission free will continue. What will you do with the older ferry “Kronprins Frederik”?

Michael Guldmann Petersen: For the moment she will be continuing to work as a backup ferry for whenever we have one of the other ferries out of service. We foresee that we will need her during the summer as well for the freight volumes. She’s doing a good job. She’s an old lady, built 1981, but a great workhorse. We expect that she will stay in the fleet for some time. We have projections for volume growth, and for this growth we will need additional capacity. In any case we are hopeful that we can keep her.

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RoPax: Is the new “Futura” not able to operate between Gedser and Rostock or are there any plans to bring her to this route as an interim replacement ferry?

Michael Guldmann Petersen: For now, the “Futura” is only able to operate between Rødby and Puttgarden because in Rostock we do not have the facilities in place to discharge or load the vessel. The existing facilities and ramp linkspan are not the correct fit for the double-ended ferries. At this moment we will not invest jointly with



the port of Rostock into new ramps. We would also need some minor modifications to the ramps in Gedser as the width is slightly different.

RoPax: On the subject of ETS, how much will Scandlines be affected by this? I think not so much as other operators because you are operating more and more using electric power.

Michael Guldmann Petersen: I think we have a significant advantage when we have the “Futura” in place and we will have the big battery packages installed aboard the “Schleswig-Holstein” and “Deutschland”. The ETS costs will be higher for the “Prins Richard” and “Prinsesse Bendeikte.”

RoPax: Is it possible at a later date to convert the two Danish double-ended ferries to electric power?

Michael Guldmann Petersen: I wish I could confirm that. What I mean is, the project is obviously prepared and ready, but the question is whether we can attract

funds in the EU or from the Danish government.

RoPax: How is the situation with the Fehmarn tunnel project. Will the construction work affect your traffic?

Michael Guldmann Petersen: It’s difficult for us to see that they can meet the timeline that is set out. They are still communicating it will be open in 2029. We can operate our ferries without breaks. The construction corridor is just east of our transport corridor. Initially when they started digging the trench, there were times where our ferries were pushed a little bit to the west of their normal passage. The biggest challenge that we do have is whenever the work areas are too close to the traffic separation scheme or to the main corridor for the traffic crossing the inward/outbound vessels. But we have not yet suffered from all the works.

RoPax: Thank you very much for the conversation.