



Port of Trelleborg – one year ahead!

Port of Trelleborg, which is Scandinavia's largest RoRo port, has about 34 arrivals and departures every day. The four shipping companies that currently operate the port are TT-Line, Stena Line, Unity Line and FRS Baltic. Together they have 15 RoPax ferries and one fast catamaran serving Trelleborg to Travemünde, Rostock, Sassnitz, Swinoujscie and Klaipeda.

The port invests in the last years heavily in its facilities and increased its capacities. Today there are 500,000 square meters space for cargo trucks and intermodal and the port has now 5,400 meters of quay. RoPax spoke with Port of Trelleborg's CEO Jörgen Nilsson about the next steps and the high performance of his port.

RoPax: How was the year 2023, did you have a decrease or stable volumes?

Jörgen Nilsson: It depends how you look at it, but we have a decrease about 5,2%. When we look at the routes, we lost some loads at the Klaipeda route. But it was not so much, it was a better performance than we expected because of TT-Line's move to Karlshamn with one vessel. But we lost a little bit when we look at the lines to Swinoujscie. TT-Line performed better and Unity Line performed a little bit worse, in total I would say it was roughly the same level as the year 2022.



Jörgen Nilsson

RoPax: How performed the German connections to Rostock and Travemünde?

Jörgen Nilsson: The German connection was quite ok. When it comes to Rostock it was also a little bit less than last year and Travemünde was also more or less on the level as it was 2022.

RoPax: If I remember in 2022 on Travemünde there was a decrease in the volumes.

Jörgen Nilsson: Yes, that's correct because Poland was increasing, I would say for a long time. But I think we lost a little bit; TT-Line was performing better but Unity Line lost a little bit more.

RoPax: How was the performance in intermodal traffic are you on the same level as 2022?

Jörgen Nilsson: No, it increased with 12.4%. Even if the cargo volumes went down by roughly 5% we had an increase in intermodal traffic with 12.4%. We handled 40,000 trailers intermodal 2023.

RoPax: You are on your track because you told me two years ago you have the plan to handle 50,000 units per year until 2025.

Jörgen Nilsson: Yes, we are on schedule. I had a meeting with the regional manager for the rail traffic administration here in Sweden and I will have a next meeting in September 2024 with the general director we are going to start building a new intermodal terminal here.

RoPax: You will get more space and rail tracks in the future? Our last meeting, we spoke about the fence which you should move to get more rail tracks.

Jörgen Nilsson: I'm really convinced it's not a big problem but it's difficult for traf-

fic administration or in Swedish “Trafikverket”. I have so many political people that really would like to go in public and support me with this because everybody talks about move volumes from road to rail. We are the largest RoRo port in Scandinavia for trailer traffic. We have all the possibilities to connect where Europe meets Scandinavia with our network from Klaipeda to Travemünde. We can bring all the volumes in here and we can put it on the train. It might be that it will not be up and running 2026 but as it looks for now I would say I will be surprised if we will not be up and running in 2027 and then we will create a solution for 150,000 trailers. Three times more than today.

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RoPax: Today you have a capacity about max 50,000 units.

Jörgen Nilsson: If we look at it today, you know everybody would like to come in at his wished time and they would like to go out at their wished time. We have time schedules, which will cause difficulties to operate over 50,000 units with the existing facilities. We can manage up to 50,000 units. I think we can go up with 5,000 units this year and 5,000 more next year. Then we will have the new terminal and we will offer more capacity for these peaks. I'm really convinced that we will get the new terminal ready in 2027 at latest. There is no one to tell me this is not possible. Of course, we have some dialogues regarding how the new terminal should look according to our standard. I would say that we're using the tracks that they have today. We are going to do a total refurbish of everything because we need to have another construction. We are not thinking of having these gantry cranes. We will use reach stackers as it looks for now. One reason is because of the private apartments that are on the other side of the street. We will have problems immediately with the citizens for disturbing their sea view. It will take a little bit more space for us when we use reach stackers but our operation will be much faster, and we will have the space. We are expecting to have four lengths of racks based on Swedish standard, we will have 10 more tracks about 400 meters each where we can put trains on for waiting. Due to this plan of our increased capacity, we will still be able to handle the railway ferries.

RoPax: What is with your plans to get the new gate here in the east part of the port



do you have more information about the road plans?

Jörgen Nilsson: We are waiting for the ring road around Trelleborg but that is not in our hands. It will take longer time than we have expected but when it comes to our new intermodal terminal, we have much more possibilities. It is really necessary

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that we have the possibility to create full-length trains of app 720-750 meters from Trelleborg. Then we don't need to go inside to Malmö. There is no space in Malmö and it's not possible to doing anything inside Malmö. We compile the train there together because it's much more efficient. We can go direct from here to Stockholm or Oslo for example and much more other destinations. On 750 metres we can work with 7 reach stackers that means we can work

from one side with 3 and from the other also with 3 and we have one extra for failure or other problems. I can buy 7 reach stackers for the same price as for one gantry crane and it will be faster and more flexible.

RoPax: Do you have enough drivers? Is this also an issue here like in Germany in some ports they have not enough drivers for tugmaster, forklifts and stackers?

Jörgen Nilsson: No, we have an attractive work model. We can compare ours with the model in Rostock. I think we are paying a lot more than in Rostock compared to the working time per year. Today our stevedores work seven days on one-week shift and then they are free for seven days. Additionally, they have six weeks also of holiday. That means they're working 20 weeks in the year. Most of them have sometimes an extra job in the free time. It is very attractive, and we have no problems to get drivers.

RoPax: If we look at your port development you have reached the next stage of the launch of your wonderful terminal building in autumn 2023, and it looks very good. What comes next?

Jörgen Nilsson: We are proud to be one year ahead of our plan and we are going forward.

RoPax. Unbelievable in these times that you are one year faster as planned what is the secret of your success and I think many organisations need this power which I see here in your team?

Jörgen Nilsson: I like to push things to be fast and try it to be simple and possible. We have 150,000 sqm asphalt to be done. 100,000 sqm of asphalt will be done in 2024 and 50,000 sqm will be done in 2025. The reason why we are not doing everything now is because of the grants that we are getting from EU. We are one year ahead of our schedule. The reason behind our success is the complete planning with a detailed expected cost planning without grants from EU. We know how to finance it and then we had the confirmation from our owners to go ahead. When we got the confirmation for the money from EU we could speed up as planned. We know exactly what our interest costs are and our owner supports us very well.

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RoPax: What will happen with the old part in the next years?

Jörgen Nilsson: The old part will not be closed before we have the eastern entrance. We will also use the berths and quayside in the old part for the smaller vessels. We are preparing berth no. 13, exactly as it looks in berth no. 2, so “Huckleberry Finn” and “Tom Sawyer” will fit in berth no 13. And then we will have TT-Line in berth no 10,11,12,13. We can operate fast in these four berths. We can use the trailers from one area for all these four berths for TT-Line and we are not losing time. Berth no 8 and 9 are for Stena Line. We can use Unity Line at berth no 2, 3, 4, 5, 14 and 15.

RoPax: Do you have capacity for more vessels in the future?

Jörgen Nilsson: Yes, we have space and capacity, but we think in a couple of years we will get less vessels but bigger. The frequency will go down but that is my own opinion. Unity Line will operate with less but bigger vessels, today they have four in operation. We see it today with the new RoPax “Epsilon” of Unity Line. We also know that Unity Line will have two big new vessels in operation coming in 2025 and 2026. The big question is what Stena Line will do in the future. There are no plans communicated until today.



Trelleborgs Hamn

RoPax: What will happen with the old part? Is there still a plan to build houses or a logistic centre?

Jörgen Nilsson: There is still the plan to build houses, but if it will change there are many interests to do something for supply chain and logistics. The future for owners like municipalities is getting difficult and I think in a long-term perspective these ports could be partly or complete privatized to get more investors in for more activities in combination with logistics and short sea traffic. But this is my opinion and on a long-term view.

RoPax: You see this tendency in South Europe many ports are getting more privatized in Greece and in Italy. How do you see the next years will you be back on the old level of your transport figures?

Jörgen Nilsson: We have several things, we have the vessels, we have the capacity and

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when Sweden is running better, and construction will come back until August and September 2024, I think it will go up. We are looking positive into the future. But we have some factors, which are open and could influence our business; it is the situation with Russia and with China. I would say everything is going in the right direction for us we are bringing goods from China back to Europe. When you look at the possible shift to countries near to Europe like Turkey as alternative to China

these products must be also transported to the north and will pass our port.

RoPax: Do you see more new car transports via Trelleborg?

Jörgen Nilsson: We have a contract with Tesla. They rent a space in our port to prepare the Tesla cars for the Swedish market. They have a contract with TT-Line from Rostock to bring them here. We have some trains, which they transport up to the north. It was a good business for us. We are ready for this. We had 700 cars here and Tesla was happy but now we have a stop due to the union. We have 10,000 sqm here for this business. The metal union and Tesla have no agreement and there is a sympathy strike with our logistics workers and the metal unions. That's why the traffic actually stopped. We have other companies that are asking us like TOYOTA. It will never be a big business for us. We can keep 500 cars here, but we are not a port like Cuxhaven.

RoPax: Shore power how is the actual situation?

Jörgen Nilsson: We have signed a memorandum of understanding for a green shipping corridor with Port of Lübeck and TT-Line. Shore power is a part of this concept for the green corridor. Yes, we will have onshore power ready for four vessels in the near future. We will invest in two windmills and then we have the green power we will generate per year 15 Mio. kW from the windmills and 500,000 kW from the solar panels.

RoPax: Will you get more offices here to the possible new gate?

Jörgen Nilsson: Yes, we will build another office building for the ferry operators and other companies related with the port in the next years.

RoPax: Thank you for the conversation.