**The Port of Hamburg is impressive for both its performance and its global links**

The Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg forms the core of a metropolitan region with over five million inhabitants and with its port provides the essential basis for an efficient supply of European domestic markets with up to 400 million consumers. The attractiveness of this handling centre is based on its superb geographical location, the cutting-edge technology of its handling facilities, its highly efficient transport infrastructure and very effective connections with the hinterland, especially by rail. These provide the essentials for exchanging goods with trading partners all over the world. And even in the cruise segment, the Port of Hamburg is becoming a magnet for tourists.

***The Port of Hamburg – Germany’s biggest universal port***

Hamburg is the second largest container port in Europe after Rotterdam and the pivotal transhipment hub for cargoes for Central, SE and Eastern Europe. Around 10,000 seagoing ships call annually in the Port of Hamburg, and 8.9 million TEU (20-ft standard containers) were handled there in 2012, corresponding to two-thirds of the port’s total throughput. In addition, imports and exports of such general cargoes as RoRo and project shipments, as well as bulk cargoes, all go to make Hamburg a universal port. All in all, 130.9 million tons were handled in seaborne foreign trade.

Commencing as one of the centres in the Hanseatic League, down the centuries the City of Hamburg has taken advantage of its favourable location for transport. The Port of Hamburg came into being 824 years ago and lies on the Lower Elbe around 130 kilometres from the North Sea. Its accessibility deep inland brings tremendous economic advantages, since transporting goods by sea is considerably cheaper than overland. Every nautical mile nearer that a ship can approach consumer markets reduces transport costs and relieves strain on the roads. The Hamburg Metropolitan Region also possesses the highest purchasing power in Germany. The local requirement for goods is therefore very considerable. The proportion of containers remaining in Hamburg and the vicinity is a remarkable 20 percent of hinterland traffic, or twice as high as the average for other North Range ports. Yet it is not simply consumption, but also the requirements of various major industrial enterprises that contribute to this volume of cargo.

Moreover, the Port of Hamburg is notable for the first-class technical equipment of its terminals. These are continually being modernized and expanded. Among other features, annual capacity at the leading cargo-handling operations HHLA and Eurogate is to be expanded to 20 million TEU by 2020. In parallel to the expansion of the terminals, their trimodal transport links for rail, inland waterway and trucking are continually being expanded and extended by ongoing automation and IT-based networking that incorporates all modes of transport involved in transhipment. Of the North Range ports - Amsterdam, Antwerp, Bremen/Bremerhaven, Hamburg, Le Havre, Rotterdam and Zeebrügge - the Port of Hamburg is regularly rated best by shipowners for service and expertise.

Irrespective of this, conventional handling of dry and liquid bulk cargoes also belongs as before to the core competence of companies operating in the Port of Hamburg. HANSAPORT is Germany’s largest bulk goods terminal. Around 15 million tons – over ten percent of total port throughput – or tonnage received – is shifted here every year. In the immediate vicinity are a large number of enormous tanks used by oil companies to store their various products. Large volumes of suction cargoes are also handled, for instance by ADM’s oil mill. Adjacent to these, BLG LOGISTICS GROUP puts the finishing touches to vehicles imported from all over the world, as does HHLA’s Unikai subsidiary at O’swaldkai. If the various multipurpose facilities with their RoRo ramps and powerful mobile port cranes as well as numerous jetties for inland waterway vessels, are all included, the Port of Hamburg possesses over 280 berths

Rail plays a central role in the Port of Hamburg’s goods traffic with its hinterland. Hamburg is Europe’s largest rail port and Germany’s most significant one. Twelve percent of German rail goods traffic has its source or destination in the Port of Hamburg. In 2012 altogether almost 2 million TEU were handled by rail to/from the Port of Hamburg. Over 200 trains arrive daily in the port area or leave it again. In 2012 altogether 40 million tons were transported along the 300 kilometres of the public-sector Port Railway and around 160 kilometres of private sidings. Around 52 percent of all container shipments in hinterland traffic that are bound for destinations more than 150 kilometres away, are handled by rail. Nearly 41 percent of containers are bound for other countries in Europe. That puts Hamburg clearly in the lead among the ports in the North Range. Rail has also kept pace with this trend by modernizing what is currently Europe’s largest marshalling yard at Maschen, which with over 120 sidings fulfills a crucial role for the Port of Hamburg. Between 2008 and 2014 this already highly efficient marshalling yard has been rendered fit to meet the challenges of the coming decades. German Rail is investing 220 million euros in upgrading here. Throughout Germany, moreover, train lengths are being raised from 740 to as much as 1,000 metres. As part of a pilot project, since autumn 2012 Germany‘s longest goods trains (total length: 835 metres) have already been operating between Maschen and Padborg in Denmark. Existing infrastructure is therefore even now being utilized more economically.

For short-haul traffic, the truck is the dominant means of transport. Its share in nationwide goods traffic is around 61 percent; in traffic between the Port of Hamburg and its hinterland, around 48 percent. The truck mainly gains credit for speed and flexibility. Another of its strengths is delivery of goods over a limited area. Keeping pace with the latest technical innovations, many forwarders renew their vehicle fleets every three years. Various vehicle manufacturers meanwhile offer tractors with especially economical engines and emission-optimized chassis.

One in every ten trucks making for the Port of Hamburg is a heavy-load transporter with cargo whose dimensions – length, width, height and/or weight – exceed the norms. Such project cargoes again and again represent a special challenge for which the Port of Hamburg is extremely well equipped. Various operators in the port have suitable handling equipment available and highly trained staff to deal with special loads of this kind.

***Port of Hamburg Marketing***

Terminals, forwarders, shipping companies, packers, storage and logistics providers: The Port of Hamburg’s immense potential is founded on a host of companies located throughout the Metropolitan Region. It is therefore essential that the strengths and advantages of individual companies be networked into a services profile. Since being founded in 1985 Port of Hamburg Marketing, or HHM, have been concentrating, meanwhile in consultation with the Hamburg Port Authority, all the individual strengths of its member companies in the Association. HHM Hamburg and the 12 representative offices in Europe and overseas are the first points of contact for queries pertaining to the Port of Hamburg throughout the world. With skilful location marketing HHM contributes to the long-term strengthening of the competitive position of the Port of Hamburg as well as the ports of the Metropolitan Region – and with great success. Hamburg as a port/logistics region today enjoys a positive image all over the world, standing for professionalism, efficiency and innovation.

***New Port of Hamburg’s Logistics Portal PORTlog***

At the beginning of June 2013 a new Logistics Portal for the Port of Hamburg and the Metropolitan Region was successfully launched: With PORTlog both German and international customers are able to locate the right service provider in the warehousing, logistics or transport fields for their imports and exports in Hamburg and the metropolitan region rapidly and precisely. PORTlog is a platform for logistics companies, manufacturers as well as importers and exporters along the transport chain, bringing together potential customers and providers of warehousing, transport and other logistics services. So the German or international port customer looking for a warehousing company in Hamburg specifically for his own business, for example, calls up PORTlog, choosing in his own language the services required in the user-friendly input mask. After completion of the input process, PORTlog uses a matching procedure to select companies from the existing pool that match the enquiry, listing these on screen. As the next step, the enquirer can despatch a standardised enquiry to one of the suggested service providers. This fast and independent search procedure is free of charge for enquirers. PORTlog is also available in Chinese and will be extended and geared to the needs of the users continually, for example with further information about suppliers, refinement of filtering criteria and installation of further language versions. Read more about PORTlog on [www.portlog.de](http://www.portlog.de).