



TIEFGANG#23

TERMINAL

On a high: In 2025, Eurogate Container Terminal Wilhelmshaven handled over a million containers for the first time. **Page 3**

FREIGHT VILLAGE

Climbing higher: The Freight Village Wilhelmshaven has improved on its place in an official ranking of Europe's strongest logistics sites. **Pages 4-5**

LOCATION

Taking the high road: For Biopin, a manufacturer of natural paints, Container Terminal Wilhelmshaven is the logistics facility of choice – just down the road. **Page 7**

DEEPWATER PORT WITH **A TAILWIND**



PHOTO: HAPAG-LLOYD

As if cruising past the one-million-TEU-mark weren't enough, Freight Village Wilhelmshaven has moved up in a ranking of European logistics locations, now on 13th place out of 280 facilities assessed. Yes, Container Terminal Wilhelmshaven has the wind its sails...

“Wilhelmshaven is now very much on the map of key German logistics facilities.” That is how Dr. Thomas Nobel, Managing Director of the Deutsche GVZ-Gesellschaft (DGG) and co-author of its most recent study based on a detailed catalogue of assessment criteria with over 50 categories, puts it. Wilhelmshaven performed particularly well on classic location factors and thanks to its excellent

infrastructure, explains Dr. Nobel in his interview with TIEFGANG: “That meant road and rail connections and direct access to a coastal port.”

And there's another category in which Freight Village Wilhelmshaven, outperforms the competition: its potential to expand both infrastructure and space.

Wilhelmshaven is in a very strong position here,” says Nobel. With space at a premium across the continent, this is a criterion of Europe-wide importance.

READ THE FULL INTERVIEW WITH DR. THOMAS NOBEL ON PAGES 4 AND 5.



“Wilhelmshaven allows us to combine international reach with short routes, high planning reliability, and regional cooperation. It's an advantage of our location that also suits our approach.”

Tobias Gözl, Managing Partner at Biopin Naturfarben GmbH & Co. KG

PHOTO: PRIVAT

THREE QUESTIONS FOR ...

*Dr. Christoph Ploß,
Federal Government Coordinator
for the Maritime and Tourism
Industries since 2025*



Born in Hamburg in 1985, Christoph Ploß went to school at the Hamburg Johanneum, graduating in 2005 and doing non-military national service before going on to study political science and history with a focus on European Studies in Hamburg. He gained his doctorate in 2017, having started work in the communications department of a major publishing house in 2015. In 2005, he joined the CDU and has been a member of the German Bundestag since he was first elected in October 2017. In May 2025, Ploß was made Federal Government Coordinator for the Maritime and Tourism Industries.

Dr. Ploß, since beginning your role as coordinator for the maritime industries, you have been making yourself acquainted with Germany's ports. In your view, what is the strategic importance of Wilhelmshaven in the country's coastal range?

Due to its independence from tides, Wilhelmshaven plays a strategically important role for Germany as a port which can reliably handle the world's largest container ships. At the same time, it has also established itself as a high-performance logistics hub in northern Europe. The fact that, in 2025, Container Terminal Wilhelmshaven crossed the million-TEU threshold for the first time underscores this growing importance in a strikingly clear manner. Then there is the strong inland connection offered by the port's railway, enabling freight movements both within Germany and into neighbouring countries, as well as the A29 motorway.

Germany's ports are asking the federal government to undertake more in order to strengthen their competitive position vis-à-vis other North Range ports in Belgium and the Netherlands. Which specific instruments do you see from the government's point of view – and what can you in your role realistically aim to achieve?

I have long been an advocate of greater government support for northern Germany's ports: they are, after all, of crucial national importance. The current government has recognised this fact and, after less than a year in office, we have already done more than the preceding administration during its whole period in office. There is a 400-million-Euro package to ensure that infrastructure projects in and around our ports can be planned faster, that railways are expanded at scale, and that planned motorway extensions like the A20 are finally built. In late April this year, there will be a National Maritime Conference in Emden at which we in the federal government will work on further initiatives to strengthen our country's ports.

Across the globe, geopolitical tensions are increasing – with results ranging from supply-chain disruption to risks of attack on critical infrastructure. At present, how resilient are Germany's ports in your assessment – and where do you see vulnerabilities which government, the relevant authorities, and the industry need to deal with as a matter of urgency?

Taken together, Germany's port infrastructure is much more resilient than it was even just a few years ago: deepwater ports such as Wilhelmshaven, upgraded quaysides, and a thickly-woven network of rail and inland navigation routes have increased its robustness. Then again, the challenges have increased markedly in recent years, too. The level of threat, especially in the Baltic, is much higher, and the structural shift in our economy due to the green energy transition means that we will have to set a new course in order to retain our competitive position internationally – and to maintain our resilience.

At the National Maritime Conference I referred to earlier, we will therefore be focussing on competitiveness and the crucial role of the maritime industries in keeping Germany safe. We will be talking about further investment in expanding our ports, in safeguarding critical infrastructure, and in ensuring a competitive business environment for German shipbuilding. This will enable us to add to the domestic value chain and create new jobs.





PORTS ARE THE FOUNDATION OF OUR COUNTRY'S FUTURE

Germany's 14th National Maritime Conference is more than just an industry get-together. It is, above all, a forum we can use to emphasise to federal politicians just how crucial the country's maritime industries are – above all, its seaports.

Whether it is the renewed focus on defence, the green energy transition, or supply-chain contingency: Germany's coastal ports are at the centre of many national initiatives – and without port facilities capable of responding to demands, none of Berlin's plans can be executed. Ports are the beating hearts which keep international trade flows circulating; they are parts of the industrial value chain and infrastructure sites of critical national importance which connect Germany with the world and vice-versa. Wilhelmshaven is a case in point: in 2025, this deepwater port handled 74% more containers than in the year previous, with 1.47 million TEU passing through CTW.

Yet Europe's need to strengthen its defences is bringing new challenges. Germany's duties to its allies, its ability to defend itself, and its strategic autonomy are all predicated on functioning seaports. This is as much a question of economic strength as it is military muscle, for without strong growth, security policy options are limited. Ports are also key elements in the transition away from fossil fuels. Whether it is to land components for wind turbines or import hydrogen, the quayside is where the transformation of our value chain begins.

The upcoming National Maritime Conference represents an opportunity for politicians, businesspeople, and researchers to come together and reflect on this context. We need join forces for more investment in port infrastructure, for expedited applications and planning procedures, and for a better competitive proposition internationally. Because this much is clear: the maritime industries are the foundation of Germany's prosperity and a strategic lever to ensure that our country can meet the challenges of the future.



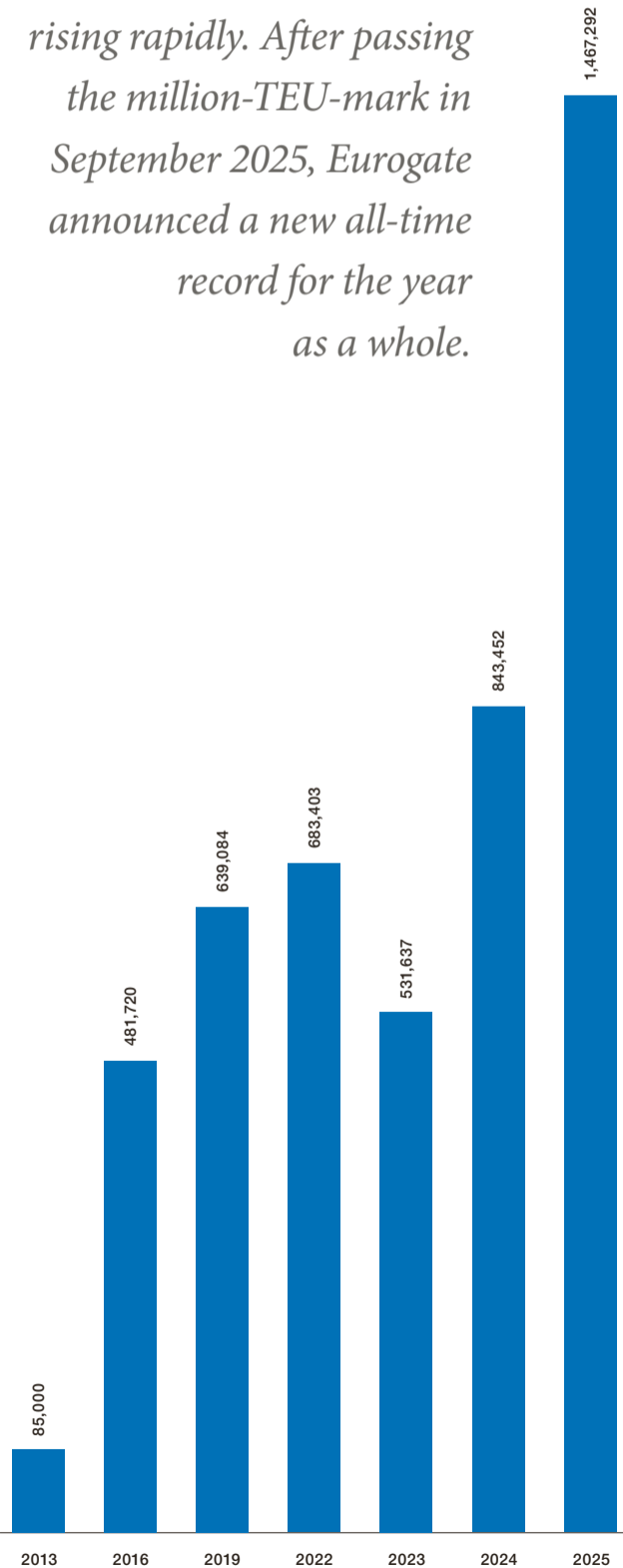
PHOTO: HENDRIK LUEDERS

PROF. DR. SEBASTIAN JÜRGENS

President of the Central Association of German Seaport Operators

NEW RECORD IN CONTAINER VOLUME

Since the launch of the Gemini Cooperation, the number of containers handled by CTW has been rising rapidly. After passing the million-TEU-mark in September 2025, Eurogate announced a new all-time record for the year as a whole.



According to operator Eurogate, the number of containers passing through the Wilhelmshaven terminal (CTW) surged by 74% year on year to reach 1.47 million TEU. In 2023, the port had handled 843,000 TEU – a record at the time.

The principal driver of this development is the beginning of the Gemini Cooperation between Hapag-Lloyd and Maersk in February 2025. Hamburg-based Hapag-Lloyd especially has been sending an increasing number of its largest ships to Wilhelmshaven, from where they connect the Jade Bight to North and South America as well as India and China.

At the beginning of Gemini, Marc-Oliver Hauswald, Managing Director of Container Terminal Wilhelmshaven JadeWeserPort marketing company, was cautiously optimistic, predicting in February 2025 that the tie-up would put CTW “within touching distance of the seven-figure mark”. Of course, he had no way of knowing that figures would already pass the million milestone in September last year. “We are delighted that volumes are rising so strongly,” he says.

Not that he sees the current record as the nonplus ultra. “This year, too, we want to keep growing – and I’m optimistic about our prospects,” he adds. Especially since, in terms of capacity, CTW is still some way away from reaching its limits: in planning, it was dimensioned to handle 2.7 million TEU annually.

THE **FREIGHT VILLAGE** IS WORKING ITS WAY **FORWARD**



In a recently published European ranking of comparable facilities, the Freight Village at Container Terminal Wilhelmshaven (CTW) made a progress, moving up from 16th place in the 2020 edition to number 13 in 2025. This puts it among Europe's strongest logistics locations.



Published by the Deutsche GVZ-Gesellschaft (DGG) in Bremen, an association of freight villages in Germany, the five-yearly ranking is produced in cooperation with the Europlatforms umbrella organisation. The current edition compares around 230 sites “with the aim not just of ranking them, but of offering a continent-wide comparison of logistics sites which is of genuine use,” explains DGG Director Dr. Thomas Nobel, who authored the study alongside Steffen Nestler and Bianca Nobel.

The 2025 ranking took a considerably broader range of criteria into consideration, assessing 50 individual categories and various thematic groupings. Among the areas evaluated were infrastructure, intermodal operations, availability of space, quality of management, and perspectives for development. In addition, future-facing factors such as alternative drivetrains, solar power, and intelligent traffic coordination all featured in the assessment. As a result, this study was much more robust than previous rankings and, accordingly, is only comparable with them to a certain extent.

In view of this, Wilhelmshaven's rise is truly impressive. As a logistics location, the site benefits from structural advantages such as port access, rail and road links, and comparatively good space availability with options for expansion. “In recent years, with many European freight hubs reaching their structural and spatial limits, this latter factor is proving a real advantage,” explains Nobel.

The Freight Village Wilhelmshaven stands out above all for its classic location advantages and excellent infrastructure.

PHOTO: BJÖRN LÜBBE

What does 13th place for the Freight Village Wilhelmshaven mean in terms of quality, opportunities, and perspectives at Wilhelmshaven? We talk to Dr. Thomas Nobel, Director of Deutsche GVZ-Gesellschaft (DGG) and co-author of the recent study, about which criteria were used to produce the ranking, why Wilhelmshaven has been placed higher, and where he sees additional potential for development in future.



“WILHELMSHAVEN IS ON THE MAP”

Dr. Nobel, in the new ranking, the Freight Village Wilhelmshaven has risen from 16th to 13th place. How do you interpret this?

As a good result and strong signal for the site. It's important to look at it in the context of the methodology, though: we've made some important changes to the ranking, increasing the number of categories on which we evaluate from 38 to 50 and recalibrating the weighting between them. This means that there is only a certain degree to which placement in the ranking is comparable between 2020 and 2025. One thing that is quite clear, however, is that Wilhelmshaven is now very much on the map of key German logistics facilities.

Where did the Freight Village Wilhelmshaven score particularly highly?

Above all, Wilhelmshaven performed well on classic location factors and on infrastructure. That meant road and rail connections and direct access to a coastal port. Another particularly important point was that the site has options to expand its footprint and infrastructure. In European terms, this has become a key criterion as other places have exhausted most of their potential development space. Wilhelmshaven is in a very strong position here.

Where do you see room for Wilhelmshaven to improve?

The site has a lot going for it: the infrastructure is there, there are options for expanding, and the management is good. I see further potential in making more intensive use of the space, in job creation: ideally, the strengths Wilhelmshaven patently has should translate into additional users being attracted to the site and adding to the value chain there.



You mentioned that you have changed how your ranking works. In terms of method and substance, what is different about 2025 – and what will be important going forward?

Our evaluation takes greater account of new trends and topical developments: alternative powertrains, for instance, or solar power – i.e. questions about how logistics facilities are implementing the green energy transition and electrification in transport. Nevertheless, the core of the assessment remains unchanged: we are looking at intermodal operations, especially with regard to moving freight from road to rail. That is the DNA of freight villages – and in a European context, it is of particular importance.

Bremen's freight village came out on top again. Given the geographic proximity between the two: is Bremen a competitor for Wilhelmshaven – or is there a complementary relationship between the two?

From my point of view, the freight village at Bremen complements Wilhelmshaven perfectly. Both sites are linked by a functioning intermodal connection – especially by rail. They also cooperate in joint activities, in research and development projects such as automated driving as well as other key future technology areas. And as a general rule, most freight villages are not in direct competition with each other; they have a much more complementary relationship based on their differing strongpoints. So for Wilhelmshaven, Bremen can be both a benchmark and a partner.

WHEN CTW IS **RIGHT OUTSIDE** **THE FRONT DOOR**

A good coat of paint needs to last – just like a good supply chain. And for paint manufacturer Biopin, sustainable products, international procurement, and the shortest possible routes to its production site in Jever are all of equal importance.

“Our sustainability approach isn’t just about the product itself,” says Tobias Gözl, Managing Partner at Biopin, “but includes the whole length of the supply chain.” Biopin, a manufacturer of natural paints, is based in Jever, around 10 miles west of Wilhelmshaven, and besides “using, to the greatest possible extent, renewable raw materials and making long-lasting products, we aim to keep value creation in the region.” At the same time, explains Gözl, “some natural materials such as special plant-based oils and additives are only available on the international market.” That is why, when choosing suppliers, Gözl places a premium on reliable partnerships, transparency about origins, and the most efficient possible transport.

Biopin develops its own products – and tries to keep as much of the production in-house as possible: glazes, paint for walls and ceilings, oils for flooring, as well as waxes and boat lacquer are all manufactured in Jever. “This is what allows us to keep full control of our formulas, our quality, and our sustainability standards,” emphasises Gözl.

The supply chain and manufacturing process start with procuring natural raw materials: as well as oils and resins, waxes, and mineral pigments, this means metal and plastic for packaging, labels, cartons, and pallets – all of which come from specialist suppliers. When it comes to importing raw materials and upstream products from overseas, Container Terminal Wilhelmshaven is close to mind – and “really is very close by,” says Biopin boss Gözl. “That saves time and keeps both costs and emissions down on our end. Moreover, we can work with local logistics partners, which aligns well with our focus on regional value creation.”



“For us, JadeWeserPort combines international reach with short distances.”

TOBIAS GÖZL

Managing Partner
at Biopin Naturfarben GmbH & Co. KG

As such, Biopin uses CTW primarily for raw materials which are not readily available in Europe such as plant oils and adhesive precursors from Asia as well as resins and functional additives from North and South America. Using Wilhelmshaven’s direct international routes, Biopin has containers shipped to CTW and then driven by lorry to the Jever production site. “Compared to other shipment methods,” says Gözl, “this is an energy-efficient way of moving large volumes of goods.” Biopin buys around 400 tonnes of plant oils a year, just to give one example.

Increasingly, the company is making use of the integrated transport solutions offered by shipping lines. “For us, this enables us to place an order with a supplier in Asia – say: a container of raw materials – and then let the shipping line take care of everything from the port of origin to our works door.” From a commercial point of view, too, Wilhelmshaven makes sense, because road transport to Jever is cheaper than from ports elsewhere in Germany. “CTW allows us to combine international reach with short routes, high planning reliability, and regional cooperation,” summarises Gözl. “It’s an advantage of our location that also suits our approach.”

PHOTOS: BIOPIN



BIOPIN AT A GLANCE

The company’s history stretches back to the Netherlands in the 1920s, where future founder Barend ‘Ben’ Palm ran a small firm producing oil paints and putty. In 1982, Palm set up Biopin in Wilhelmshaven, moving to nearby Jever in 1997 where, ever since, the company has been developing and manufacturing adhesives, paints, oils, and lacquers. With reference to its broad product range and high volumes, Biopin counts itself as one of Europe’s largest producers of natural paints. In 2022, Meffert AG Farbenwerke, based in Bad Kreuznach, southern Germany, took a controlling stake in the company, providing it with strong strategic backing.

Managing partner Tobias Gözl has been instrumental in developing the brand’s technology and anchoring it more firmly in the market for professional products. Biopin’s core proposition is to provide high-performance paints made of natural raw materials which combine innocuity, sustainability, and quality.



NEW OPERATOR FOR VW PACKAGING FACILITY



Industrial systems provider Dirks Group has started work at Volkswagen's Wilhelmshaven packaging facility – and is expecting to see increased volumes at the Wilhelmshaven Freight Village in the near future.

At the beginning of the year, Emden-based industrial systems provider Dirks Group took over operations at Volkswagen's CKD packaging facility in the Wilhelmshaven Freight Village. The carmaker uses Germany's only deepwater port to supply a large number of its international production plants with around 3,000 vehicle components – and to route incoming volumes to its over 20 European works. In total, VW ships around 5,500 containers through Wilhelmshaven.

CKD – completely knocked-down – “is a way of shipping products, primarily vehicles, packaged as parts and component groups,” explains Andreas Zitzer, Branch Head for Dirks Group at Wilhelmshaven. “Only when they reach their destination countries are they assembled.” For the roughly 170 Dirks employees at Wilhelmshaven, this means managing production and packaging material, dealing with goods in, and packaging vehicle parts ready for sea-freight shipment – as well as consolidating pre-packaged deliveries where appropriate.

ABOUT DIRKS GROUP

Headquartered in Emden, Lower Saxony, Dirks Group has a worldwide staff of around 4,500 people based at 32 locations. The industrial systems provider offers solutions in logistics, warehousing, automation, production, and maintenance.

Its customers are drawn from automotive manufacturing and shipbuilding, defence, consumer goods, and retail.



For Dirks, an increase in activity at Wilhelmshaven appears eminently possible – and, indeed, would be welcomed, as Jan Wegmann, Head of Automotive at the systems provider, tells TIEFGANG: “We hope to see further growth here as existing volumes are re-routed and new loads increase.”

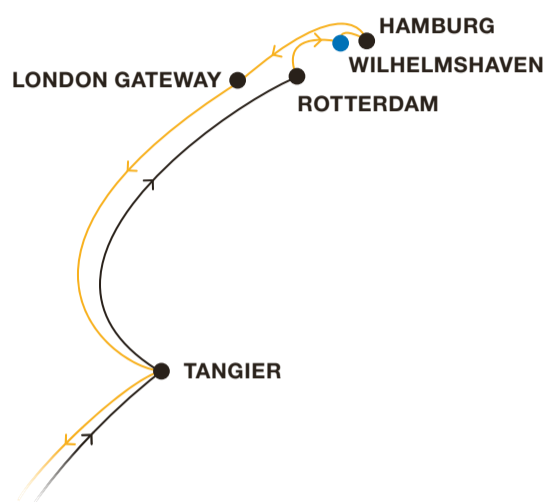
2019 FACILITY ACHIEVED ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD

Developed by Panattoni on a 100,000m² plot of land in the Freight Village, the VW packaging facility was opened in 2019. It benefits from direct access to the Eurogate Container Terminal and consists of four halls for loading, warehousing, and packaging parts and components. The facility was rated Gold Standard by the German society for sustainable building DGNB.

In communications at the time, VW gave commercial and strategic considerations for coming to the Freight Village. Astrid Lühring, then Head of Materials Logistics at the carmaker, underscored the importance of Wilhelmshaven being Germany's only deepwater port and enjoying independence from the tides.

FROM EUROPE TO INDIA AND BACK

Starting in January 2026, the Gemini Cooperation Indian Ocean Service (IOS) connecting ports in the Middle East and India with North Africa and Western Europe has also been calling at Container Terminal Wilhelmshaven (CTW).



Following Rotterdam, Wilhelmshaven is now the second European port of call for container ships on the IOS rotation. After that, they go on to Hamburg, back over to London and then call at Tangier (Morocco) on their way back to Salalah (Oman), Jebel Ali (United Arab Emirates), and on to Mundra and Nhava Sheva (India).

The first ship on the new service to stop at the Eurogate CTW was the 13,500-TEU-capacity Los Angeles Express, docking on 24th January 2026 – one year to the day after Kawa Ningbo, the first vessel on the China-Europe-Express (CEX) came alongside at the quayside. This connection is now a firm feature on the Wilhelmshaven schedule.

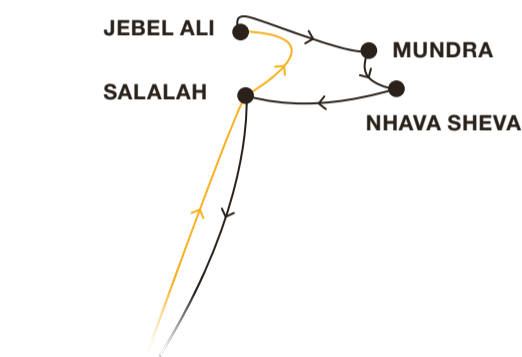


PHOTO: EUROGATE/ROHLFS



AT THE LAST MINUTE...

Just before TIEFGANG went to press, JadeWeserPort marketing company announced that Managing Director Marc-Oliver Hauswald will leave the company on April 30th, 2026. He will be followed by Holger Banik on May 1st, 2026.

More information is available at www.jadeweserport.de and in the next issue of TIEFGANG

PHOTO: NPORTS

PORT MEETS LAND

New dates have been announced for the "Hafen trifft Festland" series.

Now entering its tenth year, "Hafen trifft Festland" ("Port meets land") run by Container Terminal Wilhelmshaven JadeWeserPort marketing company, is well-established as a regular event. This year's first meet took place in Duisburg, attracting around 120 participants in what was an exceptionally successful start to 2026. Dates for the rest of the year have already been set:

Bad Salzuffen:	10 th June
Prague:	11 th June
Stuttgart:	13 th October
Regensburg:	14 th October
Vienna:	25 th November

For more information and to sign up, scan here: www.jadeweserport.de/presse-media/events/



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