TIEFGANG#24

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TERMINAL

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WILHELMSHAVEN IS GROWING



PHOTO: JADEWESERPORT/BJÖRN LÜBBE

Container Terminal Wilhelmshaven is continuing on its growth trajectory – and not only in terms of cargo throughput. Newly installed gantry cranes are improving Container Terminal Wilhelmshaven's performance, and additional development sites nearby offer businesses new opportunities.

"We don't want to stick at around 1.5 million TEU," says Holger Banik, Managing Director of JadeWeserPort-Marketing. In a double interview with Hannah Ohorn, Head of Eurogate Container Terminals Wilhelmshaven, the shipping expert explains how they plan to build on this success in the future. The focus is on new liner services and attracting new businesses who will "bring in greater volumes and create value for the port." The necessary infrastructure is already in place, including robust hinterland connections. At the terminal, there are plans to test and securely integrate digital technologies, such as automated transport and yard processes, into existing workflows. Businesses located in the neighboring Voslapper Groden-Nord could also benefit from these improvements. The competitive bidding process for the first 40 hectares is scheduled to begin later this year.

READ THE FULL INTERVIEW WITH HANNAH OHORN AND HOLGER BANIK ON PAGES 4 AND 5.



"For Roland Umschlag, Container Terminal Wilhelmshaven has become an indispensable part of our network."

Hendrik Klar, Managing Director of Roland Umschlagsgesellschaft für kombinierten Güterverkehr mbH & Co. KG

PHOTO: ROLAND UMSCHLAG

THREE **QUESTIONS** FOR …

Yannis Fischer, Head of the Energy Hub Office in Wilhelmshaven



PHOTO: ENERGY HUB OFFICE

Yannis Fischer has been working at the Wilhelmshaven Economic Development Agency since August 2024 and has headed the Energy Hub Office there since February 2025. Prior to that, he spent five years at the German Aerospace Center (DLR) as a research associate in the field of electrolysis and fuel cells. Fischer studied process and environmental engineering at what is now the Berlin University of Applied Sciences (BHT) and subsequently earned a master's degree in environmental and process engineering from the Technical University of Augsburg. His master's thesis at Volkswagen focused on PEM fuel cells.

Mr. Fischer, what makes Wilhelmshaven special as an energy center – and when will all the individual projects actually evolve into a functioning hub?

Wilhelmshaven brings together many things: renewable energy, the deepwater port, infrastructure, available space, and, above all, a network of businesses, administration, political and economic support that aims to develop the location and actively shape the transformation. At the same time, we are improving the infrastructure – from electricity provision and the connection to the hydrogen backbone network, to plans for a liquid gas terminal. Our plans also include upgrading the Oldenburg–Wilhelmshaven rail line. Pipelines and storage facilities are crucial, too: the pipelines have to transport hydrogen to Germany's major industrial centers, and the storage facilities ensure that hydrogen remains available even during periods of lower production. Wilhelmshaven won't become a true hub until these projects have really taken shape, allowing synergies to actually be leveraged and new concepts to emerge.

What synergies do you envisage between the Energy Hub and Container Terminal Wilhelmshaven?

There are some already. The Wilhelmshaven port facilities are ideal for disembarking large or heavy components, like transformers. With the "Multi-Purpose Terminal" project located in close proximity to Container Terminal Wilhelmshaven, cooperations like these are sure to increase. Alternative fuels for ships are another aspect. LNG, ammonia, and methanol are already being used or are under consideration. These energy sources are all processed in Wilhelmshaven already or are part of plans already underway. Voslapper Groden-Nord, where a cluster of energy projects and other businesses is being developed north of Container Terminal Wilhelmshaven, also plays an important role.
(Editor's note: You can find out more about Voslapper Groden on page 6 of this issue.)

Where do you see Wilhelmshaven by the middle of the 2030s?

Wilhelmshaven will become an important energy center and a CO_2 hub. We want the majority of the projects currently in planning to be in operation or at least undergoing implementation by then, and we hope that Wilhelmshaven will remain Germany's biggest energy port. I would personally love it if we were considered the number one region for hydrogen in Germany. Just as people associate banking with Frankfurt or Carl Zeiss with Jena, we want them to associate Wilhelmshaven with hydrogen.

MORE **CRANES** FOR MORE **CONTAINERS**



CTW Managing Director Hannah Ohorn and Marc Dietrich, Managing Director of Container Terminal Bremerhaven, symbolically handing over the keys.
PHOTO: EUROGATE/BJÖRN LÜBBE

Against a backdrop of sustained increases in transshipment, two more gantry cranes are now in operation at Eurogate Container Terminal Wilhelmshaven (CTW).

"By putting these two new gantry cranes into operation, we now have extra capacity, which means we can offer our customers an even better service and continue to drive CTW forward on its growth trajectory," says CTW Managing Director Hannah Ohorn.

The new cranes are located in the northern area of the terminal and are expected to be used mainly for handling feeder vessels. The cranes are around 100 meters high and weigh 1,900 tons each. Prior to their move to Wilhelmshaven, they were in operation on the river quay in Bremerhaven.

In April and May 2026, the cranes were transported by sea from the Weser to the Jade in two coordinated heavy-haul operations. Germany's only deepwater container port now has twelve gantry cranes in total.

Self-propelled heavy-lift modules (SPMTs) loaded the cranes onto a barge during high tide, after which they were securely welded in place on deck. They were also unloaded at CTW during high tide. The transport, assembly, and technical set-up of the cranes placed the highest demands on the planning, logistics, and engineering teams.

TIP

The NDR's "Nordreportage" program followed the professionals behind this unusual heavy-haul transport as they moved the two gantry cranes from Bremerhaven to Wilhelmshaven. You can watch the segment in the ARD media library.

UNDERVALUED SEAPORTS

In the last few years, shipping has repeatedly made the headlines – mostly when there were significant disruptions. As a result, the relevance of shipping routes like the Suez Canal or the Strait of Hormuz for supplying Europe has become common knowledge.

At the same time, the importance of seaports for the German and European economy is still underestimated. According to a study carried out in 2017, 1.3 million German jobs – the majority in Bavaria – depend on the overseas exports that are handled by the German sea ports.

The significance of our seaports still is not widely understood because they have always functioned reliably, even in periods of crisis: there have never been any serious outages. The low water levels on the Rhine this year showed, however, that even here in Europe there can be disruptions. For the west German hinterland, which is supplied via the Rhine, one alternative would be transport by rail via Wilhelmshaven.

To ensure that there are never serious disruptions to our supply chains, we need to identify the interdependencies of particular transport routes and develop plans for how to navigate disruptions. One thing is clear: the German and European economies are dependent on resilient seaports.



PHOTO: ISL

DR. SÖNKE MAATSCH

Head of Maritime Markets,
Institute for Maritime Economics and Logistics (ISL)



Container Terminal Wilhelmshaven is continuing to grow. After container throughput surpassed the one-million-TEU mark for the first time in September 2025, reaching 1.47 million TEU, they had already hit that milestone by August in 2026.

STRONG **HUB**, STRONG **HINTERLAND**

In this TIEFGANG double interview, Holger Banik and Hannah Ohorn discuss how this momentum can be sustained.

Mr. Banik, Ms. Ohorn, following a record year in 2025, CTW's growth continued in 2026. What's crucial now?

HOLGER BANIK: We don't want to stick at around 1.5 million TEU, so we need additional services and we need to market our available space in a way that creates value and generates additional import and export volumes. In collaboration with our partners, we want to bring more traffic into Wilhelmshaven.

HANNAH OHORN: At the terminal, we need to create the operational conditions to support further growth, which means it is crucial to put in place flexible staffing capacity, consistency around the availability of equipment, and efficient processes. We want to increase productivity and capacity without increasing our use of resources at the same rate. This is how we can ensure we sustain the quality, reliability and competitiveness of our services in equal measure.

A significant proportion of the recent growth can be attributed to transshipment. How important is it now to take even greater steps to expand into the hinterland?

OHORN: Transshipment is resource and cost intensive because transporting goods on water requires a lot of equipment and precise planning. This is why we are putting an even greater emphasis on expanding our land-based operations. The infrastructure is there. Now we need to develop attractive products in collaboration with our customers that appeal to shipping agents. The balance between supply and demand still presents a classic chicken-and-egg problem.

BANIK: Where rail is concerned, it is important to have import and export traffic that is as balanced as possible. The greater the volume, the more attractive the connections become, and the easier it is to retain operators at the port. That is why we are deliberately taking our "Port Meets Mainland" event series to where the traffic is, in Germany and abroad. Now we need to continue expanding our network.

At Container Terminal Wilhelmshaven, there are plans to better coordinate site marketing, business recruitment, and location development. What concrete benefits do you envisage?

BANIK: For me, these areas are directly related. We market our space to investors who build warehouses or recruit businesses and therefore create value and bring traffic into the port. At JadeWeserPort-Marketing, we have a national and international sales team, and a communications team. I can combine these skills with my experience in real estate and port management.

OHORN: Synergies between these areas are also very important for terminal operations. Together, we need to create the conditions required to bring additional volume to Wilhelmshaven and process it efficiently. For me, the hinterland offers the best opportunities. We need connections that appeal to our customers, new businesses, and additional cargo flows. In the long term, combining a strong transshipment hub with an efficient gateway inland is crucial if we want to make Container Terminal Wilhelmshaven more robust and even more attractive to our customers.

PHOTOS: AXEL BIEWER (left), ANDREAS BURMANN (right)



Holger Banik has been the Managing Director of JadeWeserPort Realisierung GmbH since 2014. On May 1, 2026, he also took on the role of managing director of Container Terminal Wilhelmshaven JadeWeserPort-Marketing. Banik is the spokesperson for the board of Niedersachsen Ports, the port infrastructure company belonging to the state of Lower Saxony. From 1996 to 2007, he gained management experience in commercial roles within Deutsche Bahn's rail freight division, including finance, controlling, planning, and reporting. In 2007, he joined the port management company Bremenports, where he became commercial managing director in 2011.

Hannah Ohorn is an engineer and sole Managing Director of Eurogate Container Terminal Wilhelmshaven (CTW). She came to Eurogate in June 2023, and held the position of Operations Manager at CTW from 2024. In 2025, she became Managing Director. Ohorn is familiar with the maritime supply chain from the perspectives of both shipping companies and the terminal, and brings her expertise in both areas to her current role.

Mr. Banik, which companies and sectors would you like to see moving into the available spaces?

BANIK: We are focusing on businesses that create volume and value for the port. We're no longer just thinking about traditional container logistics companies. Instead, we're focusing on onshore and offshore activities, the automotive industry, and energy-related applications. In addition, there might be opportunities in the military logistics sector. The geopolitical conditions have widened our scope. Overall, it is a question of working with partners who fit with the location and generate more traffic.

Ms. Ohorn, Eurogate has put two additional gantry cranes into operation and built up its staff. What changes do you foresee?

OHORN: These changes mean that we are now in a position to reliably handle the additional volumes we expect – even with the new EMX-service, Hapag-Lloyd's East Med Express. With the additional cranes, extra equipment, and staffing resources, we can boost our berth productivity rate to process additional volumes efficiently and ensure a reliable service for our customers.

By the end of 2027, an automated mini-terminal should be operational. What role does automation play for your business?

OHORN: Above all, we want to test automated transport and yard processes under real world conditions and integrate them into our processes. Technical knowledge, digital competence, and control of automated systems are becoming increasingly important, as is an understanding of terminal processes as a whole. For us, automation means further development, first and foremost. It is crucial to involve our colleagues early on and provide them with targeted training.

Is the existing road and rail infrastructure sufficient if Wilhelmshaven continues to grow?

BANIK: In the port itself, the infrastructure is very good and could expand substantially. The railway is electrified all the way into the port, and we have capacity for additional traffic. The rail connections outside the port are not in our hands, but overall, we are well equipped to manage further growth in the coming years both overland and by rail.



At the turn of the year 2025/26, JadeWeserPort-Marketinggesellschaft became the owner of new plots of land at Voslapper Groden Nord.

245 HECTARES FOR THE NEXT PHASE OF **ENERGY DEVELOPMENT**

Voslapper Groden-Nord is set to become a key part of the Wilhelmshaven energy hub. The 245-hectare area will open up new opportunities for industrial development, energy projects, and economic growth in close proximity to Container Terminal Wilhelmshaven.

The Voslapper Groden is a tract of land that was created as a result of dike construction and artificial land reclamation in the early 1970s. Today, it includes both industrial zones and near-natural and protected areas.

At the beginning of 2026, JadeWeserPort-Marketing (JWP-M) took ownership of desirable plots in Voslapper Groden-Nord. According to JWP-M, of the approximately 245 hectares, around 125 hectares (gross) are available for industrial development in the medium term. These sites are ideal for businesses requiring access to the deepwater port and close proximity to Container Terminal Wilhelmshaven. The competitive bidding process for the first 40 hectares is scheduled to begin this year, and the plots will be allocated under a leasehold arrangement.

The location provides a strong selling point for the marketing team: large, flexibly divisible plots; Container Terminal Wilhelmshaven in the immediate vicinity; and access to port, energy, and logistics networks. JWP-M plans to market the area both nationally and internationally, focusing on companies in the energy, chemical, logistics, and industrial sectors, as well as the defense sector. This will enable Wilhelmshaven to further refine and expand its profile as a desirable location for businesses.

The new sites complement an energy center that is already undergoing a fundamental change. At the Energy Hub, businesses and partners in Wilhelmshaven are pooling their activities related to renewable energy, hydrogen and its derivatives, and carbon management. The goal is to strengthen the connections between individual projects and thereby develop an integrated energy system.

INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS FORM A CLUSTER

For Holger Banik, Managing Director of JWP-M, Voslapper Groden-Nord is a significant part of this development. “These sites play an important role for us.” Banik cites Jade Energy, HES, and Westlake Vinnolit, the liquified gas terminal currently in planning, and other potential new businesses. These projects could evolve to form a new value-creation cluster to the north of Container Terminal Wilhelmshaven, primarily focusing on green energy. This is in line with Banik’s vision for a functioning hub, which individual initiatives cannot achieve: “Wilhelmshaven won’t become a true hub until these projects have really taken shape, allowing synergies to actually be leveraged and new concepts to emerge.” This means that, in addition to suitable new sites, there is a real need for the appropriate electricity infrastructure, a connection to the hydrogen backbone network, storage facilities, and high-capacity port and transportation routes. (Editor’s note: More on this topic in “Three questions to Yannis Fischer” on page 2 of this issue.)

A PARTNER FOR INVESTORS

The site alone is not enough to attract large industrial and energy projects. JWP-M therefore plans to work with relevant partners such as the Wilhelmshaven Economic Development Agency and Niedersachsen.next, the Lower Saxony Innovation and Economic Agency, to support international investors beyond real estate allocation. JWP-M also offers assistance with navigating approval processes, provides information in collaboration with the relevant authorities on subsidies and financing opportunities, and coordinates connections with the local infrastructure.

JWP-M aims to become a central point of contact, which is a significant advantage when it comes to the competitiveness of the location internationally. Large investment projects need clarity around responsibilities and easy ways to contact the authorities, infrastructure providers, and other key partners. With its strong network, JWP-M can bring these contacts together and develop sector-specific solutions.

THE TRANSFORMATION IS ALREADY UNDERWAY

Energy provider Uniper illustrates how the Wilhelmshaven energy hub is changing. A solar energy park with a peak energy production of around 17 megawatts is being developed on the ash dump of the former Wilhelmshaven coal mine. More than 28,500 modules are distributed across 14 hectares. On completion, the site should produce around 17,000 megawatt hours of renewable energy per year and supply up to 4,500 households. Uniper plans to start operations later this year.

While the project doesn't occupy one of the sites owned by JWP-M, it does clearly demonstrate how the existing sites can be repurposed. Today, new infrastructure for renewable energy is being built on sites where coal-based energy used to dominate the scene. Voslapper Groden-Nord should create more space for this development. And producing energy is only part of the story. The region also looks set to become a key location for new industrial growth, importing and processing energy sources, and lower-emission port and shipping technologies.

Land acquisition and development open up new opportunities as far as the State of Lower Saxony is concerned, too. For the first time, there is an opportunity to shape the development of large, interconnected areas in Voslapper Groden-Nord, strategically manage them, and make them available specifically for industrial and energy transition projects. This will allow Wilhelmshaven to further expand its role as a green energy hub whilst strengthening Container Terminal Wilhelmshaven's position as Germany's only deep-water port.

ENERGY TRANSFORMATION MEETS CONSERVATION

The development does present a significant challenge, however, because the area is also a habitat for protected bird species. Voslapper Groden-Nord is classified as a European bird preservation area and includes wet dune valleys, reed beds, small bodies of water, and willow bushes.

Conservation organization NABU Lower Saxony has objected to the City of Wilhelmshaven's Development Plan no. 225 "Voslapper Groden-Nord/ North of the Fuel Storage Facility". Although the Higher Administrative Court of Lower Saxony (OVG) provisionally suspended the plan in May 2026, it also stressed that there was no fundamental legal basis on which to object to the industrial development of the site. The aim of creating a "green energy park" that would contribute to climate protection and structural transformation carries a lot of weight and could justify the use of the conservation area; nor did the court find in principle against the proposed compensatory measures.

This is exactly where Holger Banik comes in. "In Wilhelmshaven, we are aiming to combine transformation with an energy transition and conservation of natural areas." He refers to the site's unique location between industry, birdlife protection, the Wadden Sea UNESCO World Heritage site, and regions that rely heavily on tourism.

It is clear to everyone involved that the conflict cannot simply be dismissed. Rather, it demands a solution that is properly planned with appropriate compensatory measures. As such, further development now depends on harmonizing industry, infrastructure, and effective environmental protection measures.

If new businesses can be successfully integrated with the port, the energy infrastructure and existing projects, the Voslapper Groden-Nord site could grow into a cluster that creates genuine value. The area provides Wilhelmshaven with more scope and Container Terminal Wilhelmshaven with an opportunity to play an even more important role in the industrial energy transition.

VOSLAPPER GRODEN-NORD AT A GLANCE

Total area:	approx. 245 hectares
Plot immediately available for industrial development	approx. 40 hectares
Marketing:	JadeWeserPort-Marketing (JWP-M)
Allocation:	Leasehold
Start of bidding process:	Autumn 2026
Target sectors:	Energy, chemicals, logistics, industry and defense
Features:	Proximity to Container Terminal Wilhelmshaven, large and flexibly divisible plots, access to port, energy, and logistics networks

The Voslapper Groden Nord site is within sight of the JadeWeserPort.



PHOTOS: JADEWESERPORT/BJÖRN LÜBBE

MORE **VOLUME**, MORE **TRAINS**

More vessels in Wilhelmshaven mean higher capacity utilization inland, with logistics providers such as Roland Umschlag experiencing the growth of Container Terminal Wilhelmshaven first-hand. Indeed, to cope with the increased loads, the company has now chartered extra trains.

Roland Umschlaggesellschaft operates an intermodal terminal at the Bremen Freight Village and runs transport services between seaports and the hinterland. In the first half of 2026, the company reported double-digit growth in volumes compared to the same period in the previous year. “In both imports and exports, there is a clear increase in the utilization of our trains’ capacity,” says Managing Director Hendrik Klar. They have even chartered additional services to manage the extra volumes.

Container Terminal Wilhelmshaven has become an indispensable part of the network for Roland, says Klar. Since 2017, the company has been running daily connections to and from Wilhelmshaven. This July, a major import contract from a shipping company came through Container Terminal Wilhelmshaven. Flexibility on the part of the terminal management company Eurogate at the other end is another advantage, allowing for ad-hoc handling of extra trains at short notice. “This flexibility is extremely helpful for our operational planning, allowing us to handle shipments smoothly,” says Klar.

Since the beginning of the year, there have also been two trains per week to Piacenza, and since the middle of the year, seven to Dortmund. The service to Hof is set to expand from the current three trains per week to six. Roland is also digitizing its services. With their “CONROO” software, truck drivers can complete the administrative handling of ‘their’ containers in advance via the app, reducing waiting times at the gate significantly, according to the company’s data.





Hendrik Klar (left) joined the management team at Roland Umschlagsgesellschaft on 1 September 2025. He initially led the company alongside his predecessor, Christoph Holtkemper (right), until Holtkemper retired at the end of 2025. A qualified transport specialist (DAV), Hendrik Klar has worked for the company for more than 21 years. After managing the empty-container depot, he helped establish the transport department and most recently served as an authorised signatory.



ROLAND UMSCHLAG

Roland Umschlag was founded in 1972 and deems itself the oldest privately-owned transshipment business for intermodal transport in Germany. It has been based at the Bremen Freight Village since 1989. The facility covers 260,000m² and includes a terminal and a container yard.



PHOTOS: ROLAND UMSCHLAG

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