

## **Bring on your big ships, say German ports**

### **Hamburg and Wilhemshaven gear up to handle mega-vessels**

**Orders for 18,000teu megaships and the recovery of the world's economy have persuaded the port of Hamburg to push ahead with restructuring projects.**

At the Coastlink 2011 conference in Hamburg yesterday, Wolfgang Hurtienne, MD of Hamburg Port Authority, told delegates the port had a number of restructuring projects about to be completed or being planned.

These include the western extension of the Eurogate terminal and the upgrade of quay walls at the Burchardkai container terminal.

He said: "The terminal [Burchardkai] will be upgraded with new twin-lift container cranes and fully automatic stacking blocks, where boxes can be stacked five high. "Also, the rail capacities for combined freight transport to the hinterland will double from 2.6 million teu to 5.2 million teu."

He said the Eurogate terminal was Hamburg's second largest. "Now in planning approval process is the western expansion of the container terminal by about 40ha and three berths.

"There will be adjustments to the quay walls to accommodate new demands in container shipping and [annual] capacity will increase from 3 million teu to 6 million teu."

The port also has plans for a central terminal called Steinwerder, which will see the dismantling of old facilities and the filling-in of old harbour basins to create a 125ha area, big enough for the turning and manoeuvre of big ships.

Hurtienne emphasised the importance of the deepening of the Elbe river.

"There will be measures to make it easier for the latest generation of containerships to call at Hamburg," he said.

"The navigation channel of the lower Elbe will not only be deepened, but will be especially equipped with a widened stretch where even the largest containerships and bulk carriers can pass each other without problems."

The planned Eurogate container terminal at Wilhelmshaven will also be able to accommodate the world's largest vessels, Torsten Meyer, Director of Sales told delegates.

The terminal, which will be ready by August 2012, has no tidal restrictions and will be able to accommodate vessels with a draught of up to 18 metres.

The Triple-A port has ordered some of the biggest cranes available, which can handle rows of containers 25-wide and the Triple-E class Maersk Line vessels.

Meyer said Maersk had already signed-up for two ferry services at the port when it opens.