

CuxPort bids to be a consolidation hub

Port plans to take smaller vessels away from congested Hamburg

**By Damian Brett
in Gothenburg**

CuxPort is looking to become a consolidation hub for feeder and shortsea traffic heading to deepsea ports, and cater for new automotive trades.

Speaking at the Coastlink conference in Gothenburg, CuxPort MD Peter Zint told delegates that three major shortsea and feeder routes passed-by the German port of Cuxhaven to larger European ports.

Zint said these routes were serviced by many small ships that could be replaced by fewer larger ships carrying cargo consolidated at CuxPort, situated north of Hamburg at the mouth of the river Elbe.

“We see cargo from the west ports going to the Baltic States and back, we see cargo from Hamburg going to the Baltic States and back, we see cargo going to Antwerp and Rotterdam

from Hamburg back and forth, always using small vessels with many sailings,” he said.

“At the same time, we see the situation in Hamburg where the ocean terminals have invested a lot of money in big berths and expensive container cranes that they have to waste on small ships that need to discharge or load 50teu, or 80teu.

“We want to consolidate cargo in CuxPort; we know this will involve two additional moves, which is costly, but we believe that the costs in Hamburg are going to go up because it will start to become congested and because they use expensive handling equipment.”

Feeder operator Unifeeder’s director of sales and marketing, Erik Petersen, said it had already been asked by transshipment hubs to not come with so many small vessels, but bigger ones instead.

Zint said CuxPort could also pick up traffic feeding the emerging automotive markets of eastern Europe and the Baltic States.

It has uncongested hinterland connections and already handles BMW’s exports to the UK on a

DFDS Tor Line service, he added.

To feed growth it has plans for a fourth deepwater berth at the environmental permission stage, and could also develop a further three berths.

It also has a building permit for a multi-storey car park and has space for another three nearby.

Zint added: “Hamburg has a very big development scheme but everybody is convinced that even if it manages to develop the sea capacities, it will still have problems with its hinterland connections.

“It is blocked today and intends to double its volumes by the year 2015 – that will be a nightmare for everybody.

“Different solutions will have to be found and cargo that doesn’t necessarily have to go to Hamburg, for example shortsea cargo, will probably look for other options because they do not enjoy premium treatment in Hamburg.”

However, other delegates were not so sure, and one told *IFW*: “It would probably make more sense for Hamburg to add a dedicated feeder berth.”