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HGK Shipping and the Port of Rotterdam sign a cooperation agreement for greater sustainability on inland waterways

Duisburg / Rotterdam. HGK Shipping and the Port of Rotterdam signed a long-term cooperation agreement to promote sustainable concepts for inland waterway services leading to and from seaports on 20 April 2023. The document primarily focuses on the energy revolution and logistics for hydrogen as well as reducing CO₂ emissions by using innovative drive concepts and digitalisation. These topics are crucially important to ensure reliable and sustainable supplies for industry. The agreement therefore ensures that stable supply chains will continue between Germany and the Netherlands and within Europe.

As part of the cooperation arrangement, Europe's largest inland waterway shipping company and Europe's largest seaport will in future maintain close ties to share information and jointly examine the possibilities that open up for both partners. For example, a reliable supply chain for hydrogen and hydrogen derivatives as well as alternative renewable fuels is due to be established to promote the energy revolution. Among other things, the partners will analyse how the need for services to transport, store and tranship alternative energy sources will probably develop. Another important factor in this connection is how to make the inland waterway fleet more ecologically-friendly and draw up implementation concepts for renewable engine fuels.

HGK Shipping and the Port of Rotterdam also intend to enhance transparency along supply chains in order to be able to organise procedures in a more efficient, flexible and sustainable manner. The goal here is to involve other stakeholders, in addition to exchanging information about the quantities and types of goods that are transported and transhipped, for example. This is set to take place through cooperation on digital platform initiatives, which support communications and the exchange of information for all the partners involved in the supply chain and which are working to achieve standardisation further inland.

Matthijs van Doorn, Vice-President Commercial at Port of Rotterdam Authority: "We are very pleased with the enhanced cooperation with HGK Shipping. Cross border initiatives with strong and ambitious partners in the areas of energy transition and digitalisation are of paramount importance to reach our goal of becoming a CO₂ neutral port by 2050. Inland shipping plays a crucial role in supplying hydrogen to the European market and at the same time this sector has the best credentials to do so in a sustainable and efficient way by sailing on alternative fuels and using innovative techniques."

Steffen Bauer, the CEO of HGK Shipping, comments, "The Port of Rotterdam is assuming a key role in supplying European industries and the energy sector as the hydrogen economy is launched. As an important hydrogen port, it depends on efficient connections to destinations further inland – and we at HGK Shipping are able to handle them through our inland waterway system. By working together, we can develop the future flows of supplies for the energy sector, but also for our parent company, the City of Cologne Public Utilities Group, and therefore enable reliable and dependable access to renewable energy sources."

Photo Caption:



Matthijs van Doorn, Vice-President Commercial Port of Rotterdam (on the left) und Steffen Bauer, CEO HGK Shipping (Copyright: Port of Rotterdam)

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About the HGK Group:

Häfen und Güterverkehr Köln AG (HGK) is the logistics company within the City of Cologne's public utilities group. Formerly just a port operator, HGK has developed into a group that provides integrated transport and logistics services with operations across Europe. Structured in five divisions, Logistics & Intermodal, Shipping, Rail Operations, Infrastructure & Maintenance and Real Estate, the HGK Group operates the largest inland waterway port network in Germany, one of the largest private railway companies for transporting cargo, specialist logistics firms and terminals as well as its own railway network and workshops for railway goods traffic through its subsidiaries and holding companies. HGK Shipping GmbH is the largest inland waterway shipping company in Europe.

About the HGK Shipping division:

HGK Shipping is part of Häfen und Güterverkehr Köln AG. Its fleet comprises about 350 vessels, including owner-operated ships. The spectrum of goods transported ranges from liquid chemical products and liquefied gases to dry goods and even break bulk cargo.

About Port of Rotterdam Authority:

The aim of the Port of Rotterdam Authority is to strengthen the competitive position of the port of Rotterdam as a logistics hub and a world-class industrial complex in terms of both size and quality. The Port Authority is able and willing to make an impact and so it is focusing on accelerating sustainability in the port and it is a partner in the digitalisation of the port and logistics chains. The Port Authority's core tasks are the sustainable development, management and operation of the port as well as the maintenance of the smooth and safe handling of shipping.

Facts and figures for the Port of Rotterdam Authority and the port of Rotterdam:

Port of Rotterdam Authority: approximately 1,300 employees, revenue approximately €825 million and €257 million gross investments. Port area: 12,500 hectares (land & water, including approximately 6,000 hectares of industrial sites). The port area is more than 40 kilometres long. Goods throughput: approximately 467 million tonnes of goods a year. Shipping: approximately 30,000 seagoing vessels and 100,000 inland vessels annually. Employment: (direct and indirect) 565,000 jobs in the Netherlands. Added value: €63 billion, 8.2% of Dutch GDP.