PORT OF HAMBURG MAGAZINE

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Transatlantic

The Transatlantic Myth
Pro sailor Boris Herrmann shares what makes one of his favourite sailing routes so fascinating.

Goodbye Stability
Professor Rolf J. Langhammer explores the impact of US tariff policy.

Port of Hamburg

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Editorial

Dear Readers,

A country like Germany places great value on free global trade. This applies all the more to international supply chain hubs such as the Port of Hamburg. And it is the reason why its stakeholders are continuously embarking on fresh partnerships and breaking down intercultural barriers.

With the announced energy transition, many countries in the Americas have come into focus for new collaborations with the Port of Hamburg. Vast quantities of hydrogen and its derivatives could be imported from here in the years ahead. The foundations have been laid and set out in numerous agreements. What matters now is implementation on both sides of the Atlantic.

While the Mercosur Agreement represents an attempt to reduce tariffs and establish a new level of cooperation between South American countries and the European Union, the United States of America currently presents a very different picture. Announcements and reversals of punitive tariffs are coming in quick succession, yet there are already more trade barriers with the United States than before. This situation is and remains poison for free trade. Professor Rolf Langhammer from the Kiel Institute for the World Economy analyses the motives behind the US President's actions in an interview that is well worth the read.

Stay curious,

AXEL MATTERN
CEO Port of Hamburg Marketing

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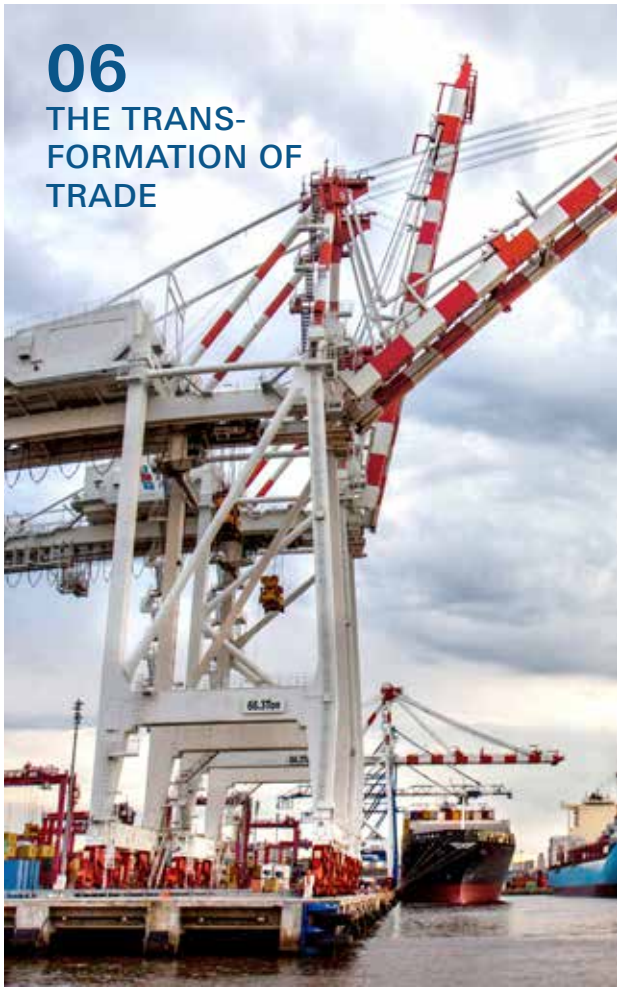
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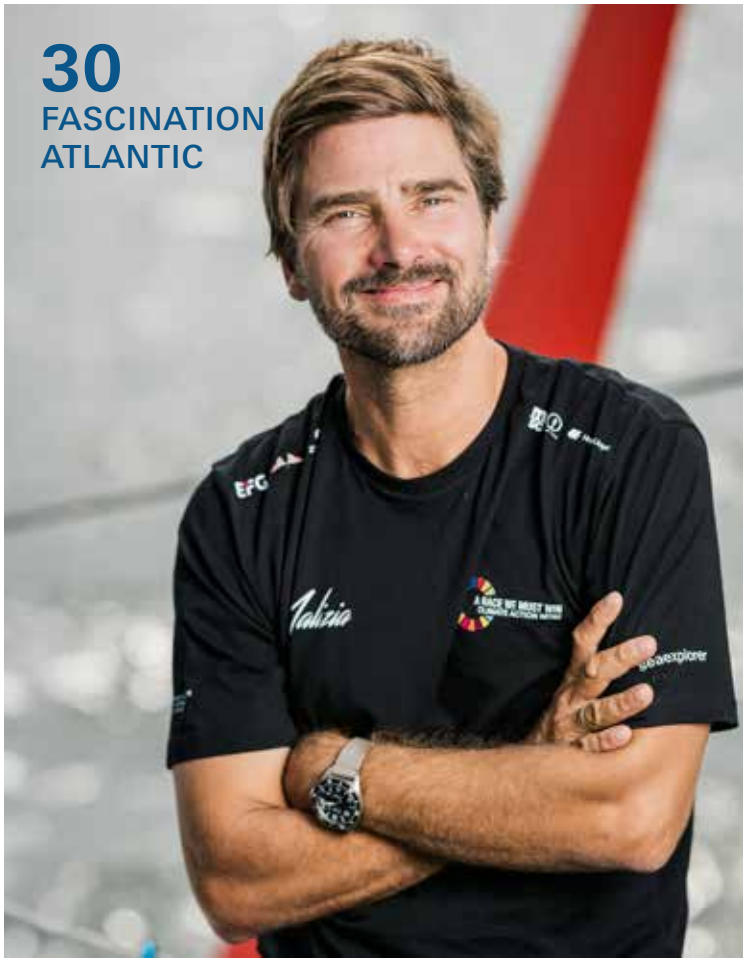

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FASCINATION ATLANTIC

Closer ties could develop between the ports of Buenos Aires and Hamburg.

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The transformation of trade

Changes are imminent in the traditional product groups traded with countries on the South American continent. As the energy transition in Germany progresses, it will become necessary to import significantly more "sustainable" raw materials. The Port of Hamburg is preparing for this development as well.

BY **RALF JOHANNING**

Trade with the South and North American continent has great potential for the Port of Hamburg. Even a glance at some South American countries reveals that Uruguay and Chile, for example, offer goods that will be urgently needed in Germany in the years ahead. We are talking about alternative energy sources such as hydrogen. They are essential to the envisaged energy transition, not only in Germany but also in Europe.

So it is hardly surprising that many delegations of Hamburg politicians have already travelled to South America. A good example is the 2022 trip to South America by Peter Tschentscher, First Mayor of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg. Even then, he emphasised why many countries in South America could significantly contribute to the energy transition in Germany. "Green hydrogen is a key energy source for the energy transition and an important future field for our economy and industry. Hamburg aims to become a leading location for the import and trade of hydrogen in Europe. But we will need good partners around the world to achieve this goal. Chile, Uruguay and Argentina have ideal conditions for the production of green hydrogen and have adopted ambitious strategies for hydrogen exports. They are very keen to cooperate with Hamburg, our port and the companies", Tschentscher said during the trip.

GREEN HYDROGEN FROM SOUTH AMERICA

The delegation concluded several memorandums of understanding with the various countries to emphasise its ambitions. Mayor Peter Tschentscher, Chilean Energy Minister Claudio Huepe and Friedrich Stuhr-

mann, Chief Commercial Officer of the Hamburg Port Authority (HPA), signed a cooperation agreement at the Chilean Foreign Ministry to establish a strategic trade corridor for green hydrogen. The agreement stipulates that Hamburg and Chile will create the necessary infrastructure, technologies and logistics chains for an efficient green hydrogen economy. To put this into practice, suitable communication is ongoing between ports, as well as among political, economic and scientific institutions.

The Mayor of Hamburg also travelled to the Argentinian capital to sign a renewed cooperation agreement with his counterpart Horacio Rodriguez Larreta, which the two cities will use as a basis to intensify collaboration in urban development, climate protection and digitalisation. Hamburg and Buenos Aires first agreed on closer dialogue in 2018. This time, scientific collaboration was added to the envisaged cooperation in the areas of hydrogen trade and logistics.

Uruguay will be the third country in the group to play a role in the import of hydrogen moving forward. The country produces almost 100 percent of its electricity from renewable energies. Uruguay now wants to produce and export green hydrogen and other renewable energy sources. This is why Cap. Nav. (R) Daniel Loureiro, Vice President of the National Ports Authority of Uruguay, is a very keen supporter of the cooperation and is focused on the export of green hydrogen, among other things. The country began developing alternative energy capacities in the 2010s and works mainly with a mix of hydro and wind energy. It will therefore be able to produce significant quantities of green hydrogen in the future. Uruguay presented a hydrogen strategy at the beginning of the year. According to the report, the country plans to invest around €1.9 billion in the development of green hydrogen by 2040 and intends to have built an electrolyser capacity of ten gigawatts by then. Located directly on the Atlantic Ocean, the Port of Montevideo is predestined for exports.

The ports also cooperate in the areas of environmental protection, security and safety. “The Paris Agreement is very close to our hearts. We are therefore engaged in lively dialogue on which sustainability and environmental protection measures can be implemented quickly at the ports. Port security also has a pivotal role in our cooperation. “It is always a pleasure for the Port of Hamburg to work together with the Port of Montevideo”, says Axel Mattern, CEO of Port of Hamburg Marketing.

HAMBURG IS GETTING READY

These examples clearly show which new goods will play a significant role in trade with some South American countries in the years ahead. But preparations are still underway across the board — including at the Port of Hamburg. In its Port Development Plan for 2040, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Innovation has explicitly included an energy hub. “The tank farms at the Port of Hamburg play a key role in the supply of energy far beyond the metropolitan region. The Port of Hamburg is a central throughput hub, especially for new energies. A significant portion of the necessary energy sources will be imported by sea. It is therefore important to position ourselves for the future. This will include the introduction of modern workflows to ensure that the port continues to fulfil this important national task both safely and efficiently”, said Dr Melanie Leonhard, Senator of the Hamburg Ministry of Economic Affairs and Innovation during the launch of the DigiTank project at Evos early this year. Like MB Energy – previously Mabanaft – the company is also preparing for new imports of green energy sources such as hydrogen, ammonia and methanol.

TOP 3 PRODUCT GROUPS
(rounded)

South America – Export 2024

Chemical products	1.3 Mio. t
Timber products, paper, etc.	400,000 t
Machinery and equipment, etc.	304,000 t

South America – Import 2024

Agricultural, hunting, and forestry products	1.1 Mio. t
Ores, stones, earths, etc	642,000 t
Foodstuffs and luxury foods	538,000 t

Central America – Export 2024

Timber products, paper, etc.	222,000 t
Chemical products	188,000 t
Foodstuffs and luxury foods	97,000 t

Central America – Import 2024

Agricultural, hunting, and forestry products	136,000 t
Foodstuffs and luxury foods	45,000 t
Chemical products	43,000 t

FREE TRADE WITHOUT CUSTOMS DUTIES

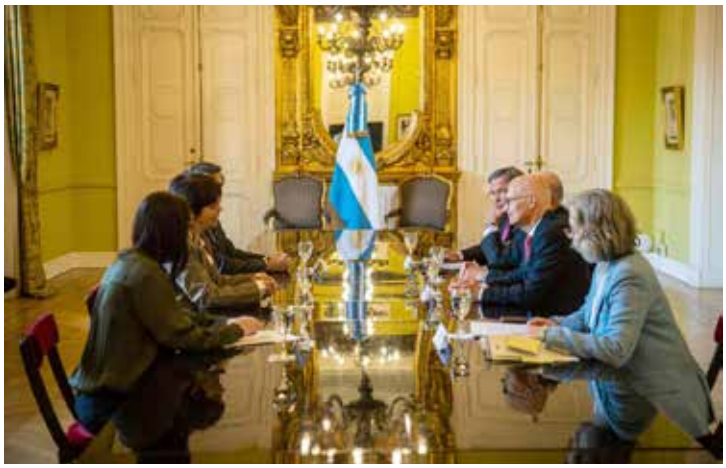
Another agreement is gradually taking shape at the same time – the EU-Mercosur Agreement. The planned free trade agreement is intended to significantly facilitate trade in goods between the European Union and the Mercosur states of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay by abolishing customs duties and creating common standards.

It is largely relevant to precisely those groups of goods that are already imported and exported via the Port of Hamburg. For example, imports of agricultural products, hunting and forestry products amounted to over one million tonnes last year. In addition, there were over 600,000 tonnes of rare earth elements, ores and stones and over half a million tonnes of foodstuffs and luxury foods.

By comparison, chemical products were the main goods shipped from Hamburg to South America in 2024 at over 1.3 million tonnes, followed by timber products and paper at around 400,000 tonnes and machinery and equipment at over 300,000 tonnes.

The movement of goods via Hamburg might experience another boost if customs duties levied on these goods were to be cancelled going forward.

But so far, the implementation of the agreement has been difficult. Although the political agreement was reached back in 2019, not much else happened until the end of last year. It wasn't until December that negotiations between the partners were finally concluded. Accordingly, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen sounded quite euphoric. "This is a win-win agreement that brings significant benefits for consumers and businesses on both sides. We emphasise fairness and mutual benefit. We have listened to and taken into account the concerns of our farmers. The agreement contains robust clauses to protect their livelihoods. To date, the EU-Mercosur Agreement is the largest of its kind for the protection of food and beverages from the EU. Over 350 products from the EU now enjoy geographical protection. Exporters from Mercosur must ensure strict compliance with these standards in order to gain access to the EU market. These are real provisions of this agreement, which will save EU companies €4bn a year in export duties." This year will show whether the member states intend to throw their weight behind the agreement as well. It would be a clear sign to promote cooperation and free, global trade, which should present new growth opportunities for the Port of Hamburg as well. ■



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During a delegation visit by the Hamburg Senate, a series of memorandums of understanding were signed to strengthen cooperation on the transport of climate-neutral fuels.

More info at:
www.hafen-hamburg.de/en/linerservices

Diverse connections between Hamburg and the Americas

The Port of Hamburg maintains strong trade relations with the American continent — from Canada in the north to Argentina in the south, from the West Coast to the East Coast. Numerous weekly liner services connect Hamburg with destinations across the Atlantic.

● = Number of liner services via Hamburg

SEABORNE CONTAINER THOUGHPUT IN HAMBURG

in 1,000 TEU

Country	2024
USA	685
Canada	181
Brazil	168
Mexico	100
Columbia	97
Chile	52
Panama	52
Dom. Rep.	44
Peru	43
Ecuador	35
Argentina	33
Uruguay	12
Costa Rica	9

SEABORNE CARGO THROUGHPUT IN HAMBURG

in 1,000 t

Country	2024
USA	11,207
Canada	6,130
Brazil	3,601
Mexico	858
Columbia	1,679
Chile	644
Peru	604
Panama	565
Argentina	506
Ecuador	480

Many containers leave Hamburg bound for the USA, including New York.

© Port Authority of New York & New Jersey

More courage for cooperation

New energy sources such as hydrogen and its derivatives could boost trade between North American countries and the Port of Hamburg. However, traditional product groups still dominate the retail sector.

BY **RALF JOHANNING**

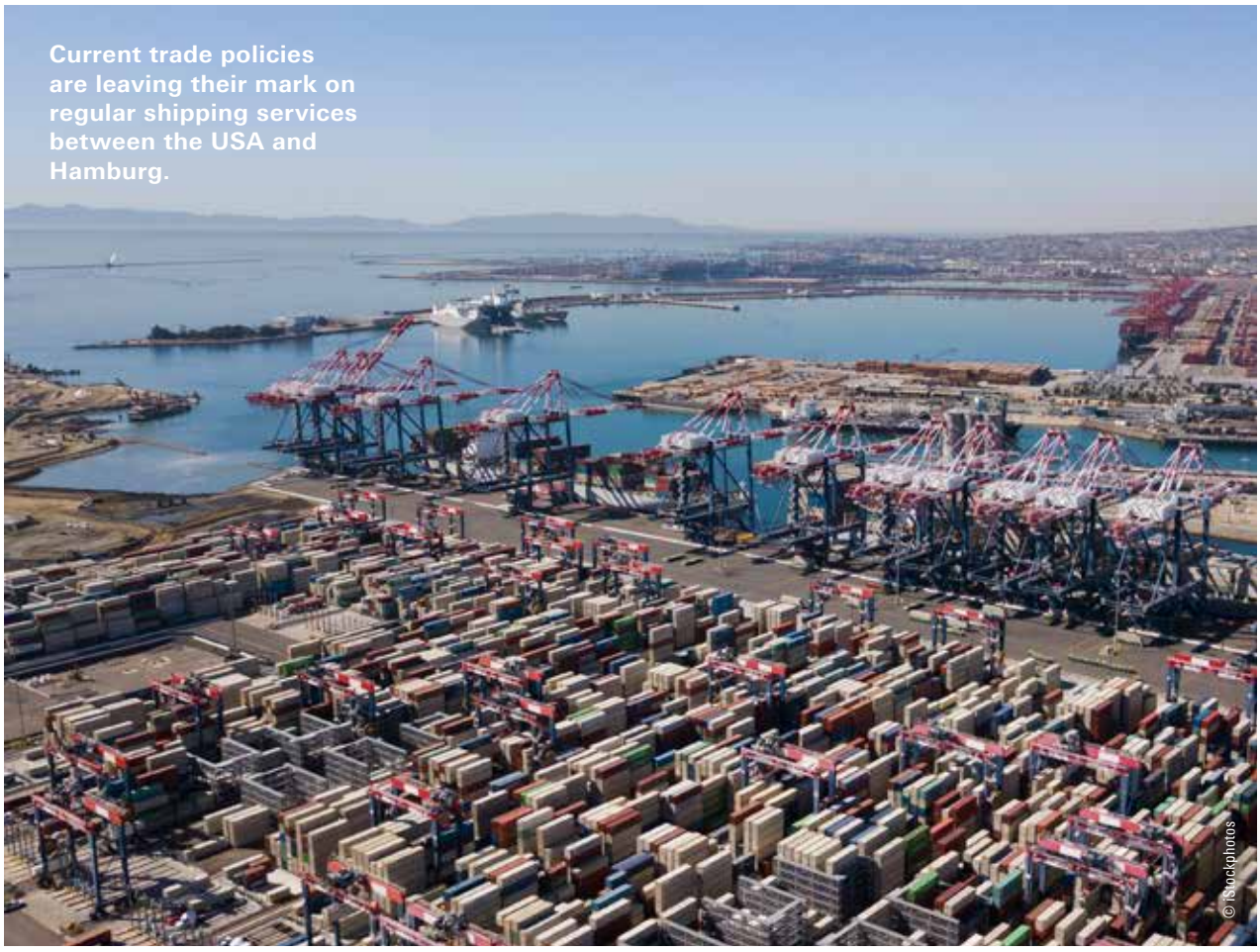
The energy transition in Germany will require new energy sources. Hydrogen is among the biggest sources of hope. Nevertheless, national hydrogen production is still in its infancy and capacities for green energy sources such as hydro, wind and solar power must first be ramped up even more. However, production capacities will not be sufficient to cover demand for the green molecules. This means that Germany will remain dependent on imports of green energy sources. The Port of Hamburg is preparing for this scenario.

Canada is adopting an increasingly strong position in the search for potential customers. According to "Invest in Canada", the country is among the world's ten largest hydrogen producers and is therefore establishing itself as an exporter. All of this is promising for the energy partnership between Canada and Germany that was confirmed a few years ago in a memorandum of understanding. Transitioning to safe, reliable, affordable and sustainable energy should ensure that net zero emissions are achieved by 2050.

HAMBURG IS GETTING READY

Air Products – by its own admission one of Canada's leading hydrogen suppliers – is among the companies that want to provide support and has already established close contacts with MB Energy, formerly Mabanaft, at the Port of Hamburg. In 2022, the two companies announced their intention to build a large-scale import terminal for green energy in Hamburg during a ceremony attended by numerous senior politicians. This was preceded by another agreement between Air Products and the Hamburg Port Authority, which aimed to establish an end-to-end hydrogen value chain at the Port of Hamburg. The projects are still in the development phase. If everything proceeds according to schedule, the import of green energy sources could begin in the next few years. They will then become a new factor in throughput volumes at the Port of Hamburg.

In the meantime, ports on both sides of the Atlantic are also seeking to establish even closer collaboration in order to make global supply chains more efficient and secure. To this end, the Port of Halifax and the Hamburg Port Authority intend to build an open platform. The respective chairmen, Jens Meier, CEO of the Hamburg Port Authority, and Captain Allan Gray, President & CEO of the Halifax Port Authority, signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) two years ago for this purpose. "The PIER" and "homePORT" platforms build on very similar underlying ideas. This partnership now intends to flesh out and intensify digital collaboration in the field of innovation. "The PIER" and "homePORT" Hamburg have therefore built a joint maritime innovation network platform as an "Open Innovation Platform" and are now seeking to share best practices, solutions and challenges.



Current trade policies are leaving their mark on regular shipping services between the USA and Hamburg.

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Another partner port in the development of a supply chain for green energy sources is the Port of Belledune. Blessed with a favourable location, it is predestined for transporting goods to Europe and Hamburg, as the port in New Brunswick has one of the shortest transatlantic connections between Canada and Europe. With its four sea terminals, 1,600 hectares of industrial land and modern infrastructure, the port specialises in the transport of dry and liquid bulk cargo, general cargo and project cargo. Good conditions for the transport of green energy sources.

TOP 3 PRODUCT GROUPS

(rounded)

North America – Export 2024

Chemical products	1.3 Mio. t
Machinery and equipment, etc.	782,000 t
Foodstuffs and luxury foods	651,000 t

North America – Import 2024

Ores, stones, earths, etc	3.9 Mio. t
Agricultural, hunting, and forestry products	2.0 Mio. t
Coal, crude oil and natural gas	1.7 Mio. t

Hamburg and Belledune are also keen to work together on the transport of dry and liquid bulk goods as well as industrial products. In a Memorandum of Understanding, the two ports agreed to build a partnership that promotes cooperation to support the evolving needs of the Canadian and German energy and manufacturing sectors. A focus will be placed on the production, storage and transport of more environmentally friendly fuels such as green ammonia, hydrogen, biomass and renewable natural gas.

CLASSIC GOODS REMAIN EN VOGUE

So far, trade between North American countries and the Port of Hamburg has been shaped largely by bulk cargo shipments as well as container throughput. When it comes to imports from Canada, ores clearly take the lead — nearly four million tonnes passed through the port's quaysides last year alone. Coal is another very popular bulk product on this route, accounting for 340,000 tonnes last year. The same applies to the United States. Coal is placed second in import volumes with 1.3 million tonnes, trailing only products of plant origin with 1.8 million tonnes, despite a slight decline in throughput.

A glance at throughput statistics in container transport reveals sustained growth for years. Last year set a new throughput record in container traffic with the USA. At around 690,000 TEU, throughput in 2024 was

five percent higher than in the previous year. Figures from the Federal Statistical Office underscore this record as well. According to the report, the USA reclaimed their spot as Germany's top trading partner for the first time in nine years, with foreign trade turnover reaching €252.8 billion. A significant share of this was down to Germany's automotive industry, including motor vehicles and motor vehicle parts. Machinery followed in second place, with chemical products coming third. A large proportion of these product groups are shipped from the Port of Hamburg to the United States and Canada. The export of chemical products, for example, ranked first among Hamburg's export goods at just under 1.3 million tonnes, followed by machinery and equipment at almost 1.1 million tonnes.

However, some of the effects of the new Trump administration were already noticeable in the first quarter of this year. "An analysis of throughput figures in the Port of Hamburg with the USA reveal that certain repercussions were already felt by the end of last year. Many companies filled their warehouses in response to Donald Trump's election as president. The effects are already tangible in container throughput from January to March, although the punitive tariffs have not even materialised so far", explains Axel Mattern, CEO of Port of Hamburg Marketing e.V.

Trump's erratic actions are causing major uncertainty in the markets. At times, there are signs of easing trade tensions—only for things to escalate again shortly afterwards. The actual impacts on trade relations remain uncertain. At the same time, the US President is trying to boost the production of American industrial goods and increase exports. But Professor Rolf Langhammer from the Kiel Institute for the World Economy believes that he will fail in this venture as US-Americans are not and will not become a major exporter of industrial goods. This opportunity disappeared a long time ago in favour of emerging countries such as China and other industrialised nations (see the interview on p. 16). Instead, their strength lies in services and raw materials. This is also confirmed by the statistics. The United States could become much stronger in this area, and new sources of green energy might also drive exports, once they are produced. Until then, Germany will build on all other partners who are willing to export the products.■

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The age of stability is over

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Trade with the USA has become more multi-layered and complex with the advent of Donald Trump's presidency. Professor Rolf J. Langhammer explains in an interview with POHM editor Ralf Johanning how international and German foreign trade need to prepare.

POHM: The United States of America has established itself as the second strongest trading partner for the Port of Hamburg in recent years. One throughput record followed the next. Are those times over?

Prof Langhammer: They might well be if the US government continues its current course. The export industry is in uproar. Nobody can predict what the president will announce next. Doing politics this way, which is aimed at unsettling partners, is poison for global trade.

What is Donald Trump trying to achieve with his behaviour?

The American president wants to eliminate his country's bilateral trade deficits, one of his particular obsessions. He is drawing on two instruments to achieve this goal: restricting imports on the one hand, and boosting American exports on the other. But the latter will hinge on a weak dollar.

Let's start with exports. What are his options to drive American exports?

As I said earlier, he wants to use a weak dollar to promote the export of industrial goods. Until now, many of these goods have not been competitive in global trade, neither in regard to quality nor price. This has prompted his advisers to pursue the idea of forcing other countries to weaken the dollar in certain scenarios. One way of doing this is by exchange rate manipulation, so by intervening in the currency markets to the detriment of the dollar. The problem here is that the dollar still has a safe-haven function due to a lack of alternatives. This tends to

strengthen the currency. In truth, this role as a global reserve currency bothers him. In doing so, he is breaking with the tradition of all his predecessors, who always said: "It's our currency, your problem." This was the view they adopted: "We will uphold our monetary policy regardless of your interests." Now he might ask the world to contribute actively to weakening the dollar.

What could be the consequences of weakening the currency?

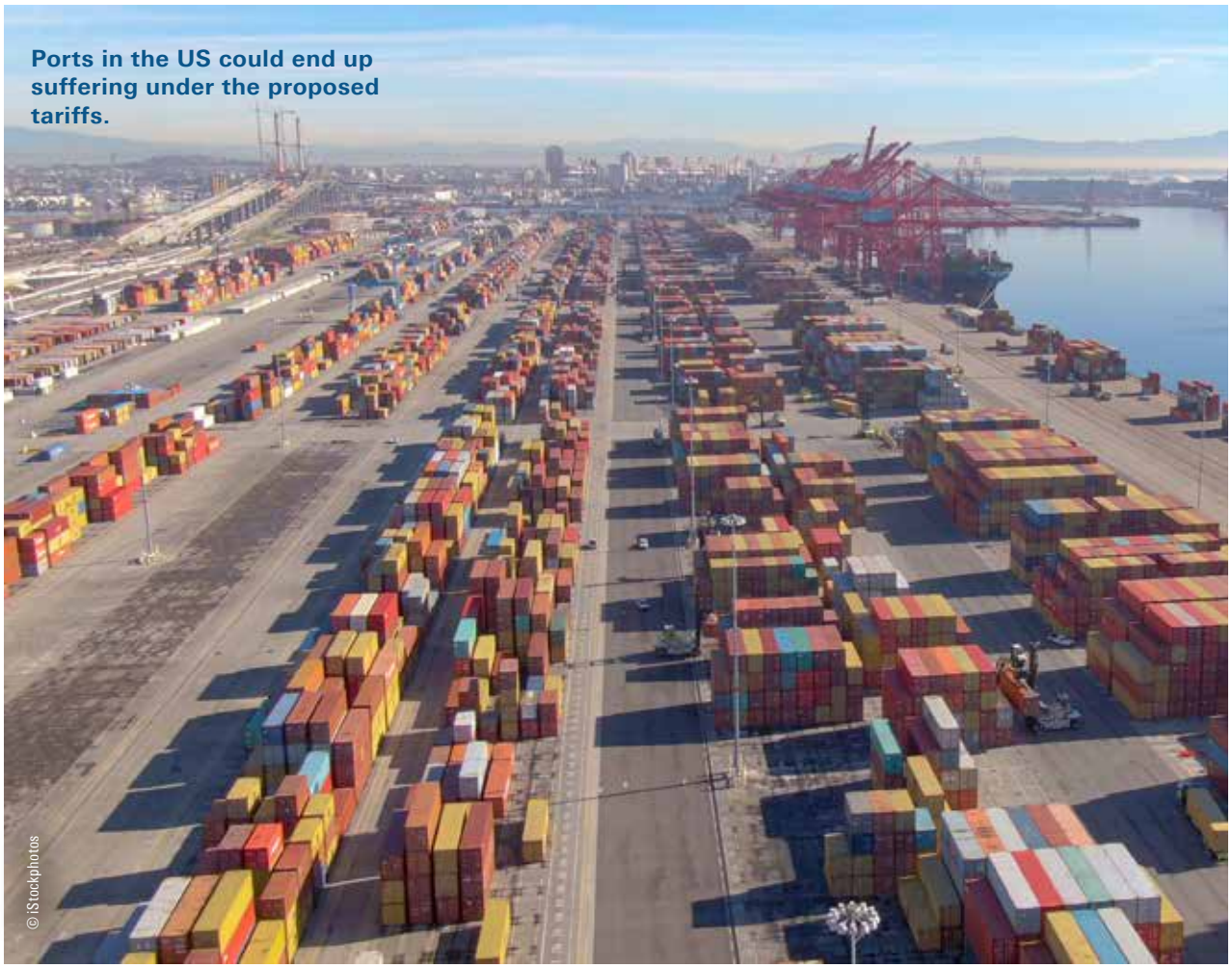
In addition to fragmentation on the goods markets, it might also lead to the same effect on the financial markets, with the dollar gradually losing its reserve currency function as a global currency. We should bear in mind that around 57 percent of global foreign exchange reserves are currently still held in dollars. This is happening not only because central banks are moving away from the dollar by buying gold, but also because they are turning to other currencies. And it is a very worrying development. Because it is – to put it bluntly – a crazy idea to hope that a weak dollar will restore the strong competitiveness of American industrial goods exports. The Americans are not and won't be a major exporter of industrial goods anymore. This opportunity disappeared a long time ago in favour of emerging countries such as China and other industrialised nations. The USA exports services – and is very successful here – but not industrial goods.

And yet this is precisely where the American president wants to grow.

Again: it is unlikely that the Americans will become a significant player in global trade in industrial goods – apart from a few agricultural products in which they are strong, such as soya beans. They will also remain successful in arms exports and in the area of fossil energy products such as liquefied natural gas. But these are also political transactions.

Bearing this in mind, the only other instrument left is to obstruct the import of goods. In recent months, the world has witnessed that he intends to achieve his goal by imposing additional tarrifs. Might this be successful?

No, because import duties hinder exports. This is the subject of every foreign trade lecture: an import



Ports in the US could end up suffering under the proposed tariffs.

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A significant amount of bulk cargo continues to arrive in Hamburg from the USA.

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duty acts as an implicit tax on exports. This takes place firstly by raising the price of intermediate inputs and secondly when the protected sectors claim far more resources for their own purposes than would normally be the case – resources that the export sector then lacks. His customs policy is therefore entirely counter-productive in regard to his declared objective. But he refuses to accept this truth. There is no other explanation for the fact that, following the clearly negative response of the financial markets to his so-called "reciprocal" tariffs, he has taken a break in the tariff conflict with China and temporarily suspended these tariffs for other countries as well, but continues to impose significantly higher tariffs across the board than before 2 April 2025. So he is not driven by insight, but by tactics.

What would be the macroeconomic or global impact if this trade war were to escalate further?

Well, let me give you an example: the International Monetary Fund (IMF) published its growth forecast for the global economy in January of this year – which was around 3.3 percent. It was interesting to note that this forecast placed the so-called upside risks, so opportunities for better growth, on the US side. Trump had already been re-elected by then, and it was said: good, he will breathe life into the US economy – which could have positive effects at global level as well.

But this case failed to materialise.

Exactly, this assessment has become completely obsolete just three months later. This forecast was revised significantly at the IMF meeting in April – and actually turned on its head. Now the American side is also at risk of experiencing a more negative development. In other words: the IMF is now forecasting global production growth at just 2.8 percent. Including the emerging markets, this is a significant step backwards and a considerable blow to the global economy. And this is before we get to the fact that German GDP is stagnating this year anyway.

Are there other factors behind a weakening global economy?

China is another factor here. The country's dynamic growth has slowed down significantly. A completely normal occurrence. The time of rapid catch-up growth is over for a country like China, which is approaching the level of high-income countries.

Irrespective of this, we are seeing hampering developments such as deflationary trends, youth unemployment, ageing processes, falling productivity growth and enormous overcapacity – triggered by policies that subsidise production instead of promoting consumption. And the negative effects are now being felt. President Xi Jinping tends to disregard the promotion of private consumption through more leisure time and higher wages – which is becoming a barrier to growth.

At the same time, the country is still locked in a trade dispute with the USA, despite the recent suspension. What will the consequences be if China extends its stop on the export of rare earth elements?

The situation vis-à-vis the Chinese export policy – and the issue of rare earth elements in particular – remains delicate. And these are not mere threats, China has created facts and restricted exports in this area. This could have far-reaching consequences for us and for the global economy as a whole.

What might they be?

This stop could still lead to precipitate price shock – with rapid price inflation that would make production uneconomical in the short term. But substitution processes are available in the long term, of course: new sources of supply, technical alternatives. The industrial sector is already attempting to replace "rare earth elements" with other materials – but these are all long-term developments. So it would certainly cause a shock in the short term.

Can it be stopped in any way?

That would be difficult. After all, China has imposed this export blockade on many countries. The country probably wants to prevent the raw materials from ending up in the USA after all, because markets behave like water – in other words, products flow to where demand is highest. If Europe gains access to "rare earth elements", for example, it is almost impossible to prevent them being forwarded to the United States – either directly or indirectly.

In the recent past, shipping companies have benefited from intensive trade with the USA.

By inverse logic, would this mean that the USA ends up with the short end of the stick?

Yes, the Chinese retain the strategic advantage in this area because they control the so-called upstream products – in other words, the indispensable raw material-related components that are at the beginning of the value chain. The Americans are currently unable to replace these with their own production. Maybe they will manage at some point – after all, they did so with oil and gas. Prior to 2000, the USA was a net importer of oil and gas – today it is a net exporter. One thing is certain: new supply sources will emerge. Everything will hinge on how selectively China uses its export policy as a geopolitical instrument. They clearly have the upper hand in this respect at the moment – simply because they control the source. And these raw materials are primarily needed for digital services, AI and the switch to non-fossil production, which use up a lot of energy.

Punitive tariffs currently remain suspended on the European and German side. But an additional tariff of ten percent continues to apply. Are these rates also noticeable in retail?

The USA has indeed imposed additional tariffs of ten percent on all products under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974, the so-called "Section 301". This is already a noticeable burden compared to the average WTO-bound tariff rate in the USA – which is around three to four percent, depending on the product group – especially for sectors such as the pharmaceutical industry that depend heavily on exports. This might still impact European exports, particularly because the exchange rate effect of a weaker dollar exacerbates the tariff effect.

What will this depend on?

History has shown – for example from the trade war with China – that the additional costs of the tariffs were passed on almost entirely to American consumers. We call this "pass-through". And it happened to almost 100 percent in the above case. At the time, this translated into direct price hikes for end consumers in the USA, which curbed demand.

But these developments did not relate to pharmaceutical products back then. And their situation is somewhat different: demand is barely elastic – as people quite simply need many of these drugs. There are no adequate substitutes from domestic production. In other words: higher prices directly affect the consumer – without any opportunity to opt for cheaper alternatives. As pharmaceutical prices in the USA are among the highest in the world anyway, President Trump has now resorted to executive orders to push prices down in the belief that although high prices promote research into new drugs, other consumers outside the USA will also reap the rewards. In his view, this means unjustified favouring of foreign nationals who behave like free loaders.

Would it be reasonable to assume that this will further weaken the American economy?

In all likelihood, yes, because there is another point. Aside from the price effect, we also have the demand effect – which depends on the general income situation. This plays less of a role for pharmaceutical products, as they are purchased on an as-needed basis. But in general: people reduce consumption when the economic situation deteriorates. This is particularly pronounced in the USA, where the so-called "wealth effect" plays a major role. Many Americans are guided by the performance of their equity portfolios. Falling share prices – driven also by the exodus of unsettled foreign equity investors in the USA – have a direct impact on consumer behaviour. What's more: many pension provisions are equity-based as well – for example via pension funds. So people will notice any losses immediately. And all of this has consequences – the foundation for growth-driven demand behaviour in the USA is weakening.

For how long can this policy remain sustainable from an American perspective?

Although the USA is still the largest economy – at least in terms of nominal exchange rates, not purchasing power parities – even it can only sustain these measures to a limited extent. Everything depends on the following questions: For how long will American voters accept these developments? For how long will the big tech companies hold their tongues? When will the first signs of disintegration begin in Trump's inner circle? Will the central bank remain independent? When will risk premiums be charged on US bonds? The president's primary concern is to keep his voters in line. We saw that the 2019 mid-term elections were a shot across his bow. Many people were dissatisfied with inflation and therefore voted for the Democrats. The EU counter measures were also specifically designed to target products from Republican-governed states – in order to build up political pressure there. These factors will definitely play a role in the next mid-term elections, unless Trump justifies his position by declaring a national emergency. He is, after all, currently governing de facto without Congress. ■

Brief introduction

Rolf J. Langhammer was Deputy President and from 2007 Vice President of the Kiel Institute for the World Economy in Kiel and Professor at IfW Kiel from October 1997 to August 2012. He retired on 31 August 2012, but continues to work at IfW Kiel. He was in charge of the President's business from April 2003 to September 2004. From July 1995 to November 2005, he headed the Development Economics and Global Economic Integration research department. Furthermore, he was Honorary Professor of International Economic Relations and Development Economics at the Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences at Kiel University from November 1995 and Professor of Development Economics and International Trade at the WHU Otto Beisheim School of Management in Vallendar/Koblenz from 2013 to 2016.

He began his career as a research assistant at IfW Kiel (1972–1978) and research group leader (since 1978) and was awarded various research grants and visiting professorships abroad.

Rolf J. Langhammer has served as a consultant for a number of international organisations (EU, World Bank, OECD, UNIDO, ADB) as well as for the German Federal Ministries of Economics (BMWI) and Economic Development and Co-operation (BMZ). He was a member of the BMZ Scientific Advisory Council from 1995 to 2007. His research, which has been published in numerous national and international journals, focuses on international trade, trade policy, regional integration and international capital movements. He is co-author of "Regional Integration among Developing Countries" (1990), "The International Competitiveness of Developing Countries for Risk Capital" (1991), "Regional Integration in Europe and its Effects on Developing Countries" (1994) and co-editor of "Monetary Policy and Macroeconomic Globalisation in Latin America" (2005 with Lúcio Vinhas de Souza) and "Labor Mobility and the World Economy" (2006 with Federico Foders).

Every country has its particularities

The international freight forwarder Alfons Köster includes many American countries in its main destinations. But the company essentially operates worldwide.

BY **RALF JOHANNING**

Whether drop shipments or project cargo – they are both among the day-to-day tasks for Köster, the international freight forwarder from Hamburg. "We are specialists for global sea and air freight transport. With our large network of partners, we cover the entire world", says Peter Vasilopoulos, Managing Director of Alfons Köster. The company sees itself as a traditional freight forwarder that organises door-to-door transport. "As a medium-sized enterprise, we also accommodate many individual wishes expressed by our customers", emphasises the Managing Director.

American countries are also among the important markets for the forwarding company. The company has been working with many customers who export goods from Germany or import goods from the USA for many years. "We are particularly strong in the automotive supplier sector here", Vasilopoulos states. For example, a lot of routed transport also goes to the United States where German car manufacturers such as BMW, Mercedes and Volkswagen have established operations in states such as Georgia, North Carolina and Tennessee. Köster mainly receives its orders from suppliers – for components such as oil filters or other car parts.

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From containers to project loads such as ship propellers, Alfons Köster takes care of the entire supply chain.

Special permits are required for oversized goods in the USA and Canada.

The freight forwarder's portfolio also includes a lot of project cargo. "One example is the transport of huge brewing systems to Chicago. This caused quite a stir on site. The heavy goods transport was even filmed for television", says Vasilopoulos. But the political changes in the USA have created a lot more work for him and his team, as the international transport of industrial goods requires precise planning, detailed coordination and numerous applications for special transports.

For the freight forwarder Köster, the process begins at the consigner's doorstep. Routes must be agreed upon and applied for with the transport partners, especially for oversized project consignments. Exports from Germany to America are prime examples here. Even the first leg of the journey from the consignor to the port requires precise planning, as there are now only a few routes that are suitable for this type of transport. What is more, heavy goods transports with possible excess widths or weights must be accompanied. The freight forwarder requires a number of special permits here and must apply for them in advance. "The workload involved in this process is rising steadily, although we have many specialists working in this field", the Managing Director explains.

"Even though international business is becoming more complicated, we always find a way to transport the goods entrusted to us."

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Peter Vasilopoulos
Managing Director of Alfons Köster

The second phase usually begins in or near the port. This is where the cargo is correctly packed for the sea voyage and then loaded onto the vessel. "Shipping via the Port of Hamburg is becoming increasingly difficult. Overall, it is fair to say that without sweeping structural reforms and targeted investments, the German logistics industry – particularly in the port and heavy goods transport sector – will come under increasing pressure. Strategic action is urgently needed to safeguard long-term competitiveness and economic stability. This is why more generous subsidies are immensely important for the German ports", emphasises the Managing Director.

The international freight forwarder works closely with one or two partners in America. Once the cargo has arrived, they take care of the onward transport right through to delivery. They must comply with specific regulations, for example regarding the height of the means of transport. Lowering the load after removal from the container may require additional authorisations, which is a demanding logistical and administrative task.

The current situation in transatlantic freight transport is shaped by numerous structural and regulatory challenges. Complex authorisation processes are especially tricky in the US market. Responsibility at federal level initially lies with the Department of Transportation, although additional authorisations are also required in the individual states.

The competent authorities such as the Department of Transportation or Customs and Border Protection (CBP) in particular often lack the necessary human resources, which leads to delays in approval procedures. The Federal Maritime Commission (FMC) is also affected. Among other things, it examines the deposit of freight rates and the contracts between shipping companies and logistics service providers. Companies such as Alfons Köster must have the appropriate NVOCC (Non-Vessel Operating Common Carrier) licences to operate as shipping companies without their own vessels. "The large-scale redundancies in the government agencies exacerbate the process of obtaining approval for relevant applications", says Vasilopoulos.

Despite these hurdles, the workflows can remain stable with early communication and precise planning. Many logistics providers coordinate their processes closely with their customers' production plans and provide shipping companies with reliable forecasts that are updated weekly. Personal contacts remain important, especially in view of increasing digitalisation, which complicates direct accessibility.

About the company

Alfons Köster and Willy Julius founded Köster as an international freight forwarder in 1929. Fritz Wessel joined the company as a partner in 1972. Today, the company is owned by Olaf Wessel and Frank Wessel.

It is headquartered in Hamburg. There are also permanent establishments in Hallbergmoos (Munich), Waiblingen (Stuttgart), Tauberbischofsheim, Wiesbaden, Mörfelden (Frankfurt), Düsseldorf and Bremen. Other international locations are in Prague, CZ and Shanghai, CN.

The company has 170 employees and annual revenue of around €150 million. It focuses on overseas transport with air and sea freight shipments.

Overall, it is clear that international logistics is influenced by a variety of political, economic and technical factors. Flexibility, regulatory expertise and international partnerships are crucial to remaining competitive in this complex environment. Vasilopoulos believes that one thing is certain: "Even if international business becomes more complicated, we will still manage to handle the goods that are entrusted to us." ■

Project shipments are securely packed and shipped.

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Customs conflict as a driver of reorientation

HLS Eurocustoms24 supports strategic planning

The decision by the US government under President Donald Trump to impose import tariffs of up to 50 percent on a wide range of products from the European Union has made waves around the world. What might appear strategically motivated has in fact triggered a chain reaction of systemic shifts. “Although Washington has extended a temporary reprieve on these trade restrictions, this translates not only into increasing operational uncertainties for exporters and importers within the EU, but also the urgent need to adapt flexibly to a new trading environment”, analyses Radoslaw Andrzejewski, Managing Director of HLS Eurocustoms24, a company that has operated in the area of customs clearance for 15 years.

Maintaining transatlantic traffic requires clever strategies.

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"MADE IN THE USA"

The American change of course towards a tougher customs policy is part of a larger trend in which the global economic balance of power is increasingly shifting. Even if certain sectors in the USA might benefit in the short term, this course will still undermine the efficiency and predictability of international trade in the long term. For European companies, this will complicate market access, increase costs and introduce the need for a fundamental rethink of export markets and supply chains. "The current developments require more than just a reactive mindset. Companies need strategic advice in order to minimise risks and identify fresh opportunities", explains HLS Eurocustoms24 Managing Director Andrzejewski.

The customs expert advises companies to use US duty-free warehouses (Foreign Trade Zones – FTZ) when doing business with the USA. The benefit of these zones is that companies can import goods here without having to pay customs duties immediately. Duties are only payable when the goods leave the zone – and a more favourable customs tariff number may be issued if downstream processing and refinement take place. The goods even remain duty-free in the case of re-exports. "In the United States, FTZs come with significantly more extensive possibilities such as production, while bonded warehouses in the EU are more limited to storage and simple activities", says Andrzejewski.

Another strategy for companies would be to establish US subsidiaries. This means that domestic production steps can be imported to avoid some of the customs duties – for example through domestic value creation. "It is a common strategy to reduce customs duties through local value creation, for example due to 'substantial processing' in the USA, which enables a different label of origin", Andrzejewski explains, continuing: "Substantial processing is a central concept in customs and trade law for determining the originating status of a product. This is regulated by the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) in the United States. The aim is to determine whether a product is considered 'made in the USA' in order to exploit or minimise duties on imported components."

A formal application to CBP to determine the customs tariff number (Advance Rulings) prior to export can also help to obtain clarity on duty rates and

classifications. This increases planning reliability and mitigates the risk of downstream customs clearance. These applications are particularly useful for complex products or supply chains. But there is a caveat: the process can be time-consuming and the information only applies to the specific goods as described.

PRESSURE ON EXPORTS

EU countries with a strong export sector – including Germany, France, Italy and the Netherlands – are feeling the effects of the US tariffs particularly keenly. The mechanical engineering, automotive and industrial sectors are already experiencing a noticeable decline in overseas orders. This will also spread to other EU Member States, as the Union operates as a closely connected economic area. New trade barriers are disrupting internal logistics, slowing down processes and increasing the complexity of cross-border supply relationships in other countries.

Despite these potential barriers, the EU Commission presented a list of possible goods at the beginning of

All necessary permits and documents must be in place prior to each transport.

© iStockphotos

May on which tariffs would also be imposed once the US punitive tariffs enter into force. The EU has stated that the list is long and includes imports from the USA worth €95 billion, covering a wide range of industrial and agricultural products.

"It is important to note that the current customs conflict is not a temporary disruption in business, but an expression of far-reaching changes in global trade structures. The EU has the opportunity to position itself as a stable and reliable player – provided that it offers companies pragmatic support in operational implementation and not just legal guidance", analyses the HLS Eurocustoms24 Managing Director.

NEW MARKETS, NEW PARTNERS

The EU is already intensifying trade relations with strategic partners: concluded just recently, the Mercosur Agreement opens up access to a market with 260 million consumers. The Mercosur Agreement (EU with Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay) provides for a gradual reduction in tariffs for over 90 percent of goods traded between the two sides. Preferential origin control is of particular relevance here: only goods with proven sources in accordance with the Agreement's rules of origin – such as supplier declarations or certificates of origin – are eligible for the customs advantages. Companies must ensure that products comply with the rules of origin and are correctly documented, as the customs advantage will otherwise be cancelled. ■

HLS Eurocustoms24

Headquartered in Hamburg, HLS Eurocustoms24 Zollservice GmbH & Co KG is a specialised customs company with locations in Hamburg, Gdynia and a partner network in Rotterdam. The company offers comprehensive customs clearance services for importers, exporters and logistics service providers – from small to medium-sized enterprises to international corporations.

Its service portfolio includes export declarations, import declarations, transit procedures (e. g. T1), veterinary and phytosanitary clearances and the organisation and support of customs inspections.

Fascination Atlantic

German professional sailor Boris Herrmann has crossed the Atlantic many times. In this interview with POHM editor Mathias Schulz, he discusses what makes the Atlantic special, the prospects for using sailing technologies in cargo shipping, his commitment to marine conservation and the future plans for Team Malizia.

POHM: Boris, you live with your family in Hamburg. What does this city and its port mean to you?

Boris Herrmann: Hamburg is our gateway to the world – in the most literal sense of the word. It is my home port and also the embarkation point for my sailing regattas. We can draw on the Hamburg network and its companies to launch our projects from here – our races and all related tasks: the education campaign, our sustainability ambitions and housing projects. It all begins in Hamburg. Many things would remain nothing more than bright ideas without the support and the great people here in Hamburg.

You've sailed around the world several times now – most recently at the turn of the year as part of the Vendée Globe. Crossing the Atlantic is hardly worth mentioning in comparison. Do you remember the first time you sailed across the Atlantic?

Yes, very well. It was in 2001 – we set off on 12 September, immediately after the terrorist attacks in the USA. I exited from the hotel, walked past the kiosk to the harbour in La Rochelle, and then I saw those burning towers in the newspapers. But I was in my tunnel, focused on the race – so I only noticed the reports in passing. We didn't have a satellite connection back then – it was even forbidden in this race. So you were isolated at sea for weeks. I had taken along a world receiver to listen to my weather forecasts and used it to receive the BBC and Deutschlandfunk, which broadcast on long wave. So I was also able to learn what happened after the attacks. This means that I found myself in a different world when I set off – in more ways than one. All in all, it was a huge adventure for me, just 19 years old at the time.

What is the attraction of an Atlantic crossing or the myth of the Atlantic?

It's simply a great sea for sailing. There's wind almost everywhere, plenty of space, and a clear wind cycle – with the westerly winds in the northern part of the Atlantic and the trade winds in the southern part. You can even turn it into a kind of round trip: first from east to west to the Caribbean, then back north from west to east. So you can sail there and back, predominantly

Arrival of Boris Herrmann aboard the Seaexplorer in New York.

© The Transat CIC

During his racing tours, Boris Herrmann also devotes much of his time to marine research and collecting data.

© Boris Herrmann | Team Mal

with tailwind. But sailing across the North Atlantic against the prevailing wind is fascinating as well. I've sailed back and forth maybe 15 to 20 times – and have collected some great impressions and memories along the way. The Atlantic is the big wide world – but it's now almost like a second home to me.

Are there transatlantic regattas on your calendar for this or next year?

Yes, we will compete this in a race called the "Transat Jaques Vabre" – a double-handed race from Le Havre to Martinique. The following year – 2026 – we will sail from New York to Barcelona as part of the Ocean Race Atlantic.

You've already mentioned it: you and your team are strongly committed to environmental protection, and protecting the oceans especially. What is your main focus?

We have adopted a two-pronged strategy. On the one hand, we communicate a general message about climate protection – and climate protection also means marine protection. This is because one of the most massive planetary changes caused by climate change affects the oceans. Global warming – caused by the continued burning of fossil fuels and the emission of greenhouse gases – is having a particularly strong impact on the oceans. They absorb most of the thermal energy, which mitigates climate change. This is a central message that we convey in our educational project and in the public relations with our partners. Our concern is to demonstrate the importance of oceans in the context of climate change – combining this message with a call for more ambitious climate protection...

...and what does your second approach look like?

We have an automated laboratory on board to support science by measuring CO_2 concentration in the ocean along the routes we navigate. This data we collect is crucial to research and helps us to acquire a better understanding of climate change: How much CO_2 do the oceans absorb – and where do they release it again? This balance is still relatively inaccurate in climate research and the international research community is determined to reduce this inaccuracy. The situation today is as follows: if you divide the ocean into a grid of 120 x 120 kilometres – which translates into roughly one degree of latitude and longitude – you would still only acquire measurement data for around one percent of the grid's surface area each month. The aim is to grow this figure to at least ten percent – in other words, to obtain significantly more information. And we actively contribute to this undertaking. Our data is particularly important because we cross the southern seas – travelling through regions that are usually bereft of seagoing vessels and where data is otherwise not collected.

And does this have a definite effect on scientific assessments?

Yes, absolutely. The impact is immense. The results change by up to ten percent, depending on whether or not you feed our data into the models. We are even mentioned as a main contributor in the major annual scientific publications. An achievement that makes us very proud.

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THE PERSON

Boris Herrmann started his professional offshore sailing career in 2001 as the youngest participant in the Mini Transat race. Since then, he has circumnavigated the world 6 times. In 2020, he became the first German to ever compete in the Vendée Globe, finishing in 5th place. After launching the new Malizia-Seaexplorer in 2022, he finished 3rd with his Team Malizia in The Ocean Race, winning two legs, and breaking the 24-hour distance record. He took part in his second Vendée Globe in 2024-2025, finishing in 12th position.

Boris Herrmann and his Team Malizia run the "A Race We Must Win – Climate Action Now!" campaign since 2018, combining sailing, science, and education. Since then, the German skipper has been carrying a laboratory onboard his boat that measures valuable ocean CO_2, temperature, and salinity. This data is used by scientists worldwide to better understand the role of the ocean in climate change and is very valuable, as the Malizia-Seaexplorer sails in the most remote areas of the world where almost no research vessels go. Through the award-winning "My Ocean Challenge" programme, his Team Malizia also educates children around the world about the ocean and climate change.

Christening ceremony of the Seaexplorer in Hamburg's HafenCity in 2022.

© HHM / Schulz

You also founded the "My Ocean Challenge" initiative. Is this intended to ensure that children and young people also learn more about marine conservation?
Exactly. The initiative is based on something my wife experienced as a teacher at the Stellingen district school in Hamburg for ten years. She watched my sailing regattas with her classes and realised how enthusiastic the children were – about the adventure, the special circumstances and a person with a face and a name. They were gripped by the competitive idea as well. So my wife started to realise that we could build on this. The story could be used to teach children about the oceans – about geography, marine life and ecological relationships.

Team Malizia's supporters also include shipping companies such as Hapag-Lloyd and MSC, who are major players at the Port of Hamburg. Do you think wind power will play a greater role in cargo shipping again in the future?
I have sat on Hapag-Lloyd's Sustainability Advisory Board since 2019 and have repeatedly raised the topic of "auxiliary sail propulsion" – and I do not mean classic sailing, but the use of modern, computer-assisted wingsails on cargo ships. In the meantime, an internal working group has been established at Hapag-Lloyd to develop a cargo ship powered by sails. The project has been in the planning stage for two years and has already been presented and discussed in public. This sailing technology can save up to 15 percent in fuel – at an average speed of 15 knots on a suitable route, for example across the Atlantic.

Will we see these vessels in operation?
I believe it would be spectacular and a genuine milestone. Let's not forget: all the various efficiency measures in shipping – novel propellers, special paints, optimised hull shapes – usually equate to savings in the range of 2 to 5 percent. Vessels with sailing technology must not suddenly lose speed or fail to meet deadlines. That's why they need a hybrid drive – engine and sails – and continue to sail on schedule. Routes are optimised to catch the most favourable winds – controlled with modern climate data and statistical routing. So it is now possible to accurately calculate the extent of potential savings on a particular route – based on a ten-year average.

Surely there's a parallel to your sailing sport, isn't there?
Definitely. We work constantly with climate models in competitive sailing – for example, when designing our boats or choosing the equipment for the individual races. We conduct precise analyses: Which sails do we take along? What average winds can be expected? Which wave direction? Which cross seas? Everything is analysed in detail – just as you can do in cargo shipping to make the most of the circumstances.

Do you also collect data that might perhaps even improve weather models for cargo shipping?
No, we don't do that ourselves – it would simply be too much work. But major institutes do produce excellent weather data and, of course, the global weather models. In addition, most shipping companies work with specialised providers who provide this kind of data. There is another exciting aspect: start-ups have

emerged from our community that have developed tools based on our experience and technology that can be used for statistical routing. You then take the performance data of a vessel – a 280-metre Hapag-Lloyd ship with six sails, for example – and simulate how much fuel can be saved under certain wind conditions. The wind force, angle of incidence, intended speed and machine speed are taken into account.

What happens then?
This data is then combined with climate models – together with information on wave heights, ocean currents and seasons – which enables quite accurate predictions of potentially realistic savings on a specific route from port A to port B. This cannot be done by hand, of course – you need software, and it is precisely these kinds of applications that have evolved from sailing and are now used in cargo shipping.

The media reported on the first commercial cargo sailing vessel – a RoRo ship that will sail between France and the USA – at the beginning of the year. Do you believe that the Atlantic region is particularly suitable for this kind of project?
Yes, absolutely. The Atlantic is ideal because the wind conditions are usually favourable. And because you can also deviate from the direct course on a west-east or east-west route in order to optimise use of the prevailing winds. Let's take a typical Atlantic crossing: around 3,000 nautical miles. If I deviate 10 percent from the course to the north or south, I already have 200 nautical miles of leeway. I can then use this freedom to sail deliberately through a low-pressure area, avoid it to the north or south and therefore ensure better wind conditions. This works very well on the open sea. In contrast, you are far more dependent on whichever winds are there if you are travelling along the coastline.

Finally, back to you as Team Malizia. The current "Seaexplorer" has been sold – what are your plans for the next four years?
Yes, the ship has been sold – but it won't actually change hands until the end of the year. We will therefore keep using the current boat this year. We will set sail for the "Ocean Race Europe" regatta on 10 August. Next year we will compete in the transatlantic regatta from New York to Barcelona. And the "Ocean Race" is on the schedule for the year after next. The Vendée Globe will follow in 2028.

Does that mean you're building a new "Seaexplorer"?
Exactly.

Hopefully it will be christened in Hamburg again?
I hope so, too. The 2022 christening here in Hamburg was a very special experience – in September, with a view of the port. These are great memories.

I'm sure many people in Hamburg feel the same way and hope to see you again. Until then, thank you for the interview.

Encounter on the high seas: "Seaexplorer" spotted near a container ship.

© Antoine Auriol

Port News

TWO HYBRID POLICE BOATS FOR HAMBURG

This year's Port Anniversary featured the christening of two hybrid police boats from Flotte Hamburg. Senator for Economic Affairs Dr Melanie Leonhard and actress Rhea Harder-Vennewald ceremoniously christened the two boats with the names "Bürgermeister Brauer" and "Bürgermeister Weichmann" in the presence of numerous invited guests and visitors to the Port Anniversary.

© Flotte Hamburg / Christian Bruch

Both radio patrol boats were handed over to Flotte Hamburg in December of last year and have been deployed by the waterway police since spring. They succeed their 30-year-old predecessors and mark yet another important step towards sustainable shipping in the Port of Hamburg.

The two new police boats were built in the Estonian shipyard Baltic Workboats and are equipped with a green plug-in hybrid drive system. The powerful electric motors, each with 500 kW, enable fully electric travel time of at least two hours at a speed of seven knots.

The Port of Hamburg is actively pursuing the goal of becoming climate-neutral by 2040 and is increasingly focusing on the transition towards greater climate neutrality. Promoting sustainable technologies and energy sources plays a pivotal role in this shipping process.

Karsten Schönewald, Managing Director of Flotte Hamburg: "Today's double christening flies the flag for modern, sustainable shipping at the Port of Hamburg. Flotte Hamburg has been pooling its urban watercraft since 2017 and has already made significant progress. The use of hybrid watercraft by the water police is another measure to reduce emissions."

Olaf Hagenloch, Deputy Head of the Hamburg Water Police: "Not only are the new boats technical masterpieces, they also symbolise change. With their hybrid drive systems, we are actively protecting the environment – without taking away from our operational force. This is what sustainable and modern waterway police work looks like."

MSC BUILDS GERMAN HEADQUARTERS IN HAMBURG

The MSC Mediterranean Shipping Company has brought the architectural competition for its new German headquarters in Hamburg's HafenCity to a successful conclusion. The Frankfurt office of Wandel Lorch Götze Wach (WLGW) submitted the winning entry with an innovative design that catches the eye with its open structures, lightness and sustainable building principles. "Our new German headquarters will be visible proof of our continued commitment to significant expansion in Hamburg. The style is a perfect match for our corporate DNA: its combination of architecture and water stands as a symbol of our core business, international maritime shipping. The modern and sustainable building will create an inspirational and healthy working environment for around 700 employees. What's more, our showroom will invite anyone interested to learn more about MSC, its history and mission. We would like to thank Wandel Lorch Götze Wach for the persuasive design. Now we will push ahead swiftly towards the start of construction", said Nils Kahn, Managing Director of MSC Germany.

The planned office building is located in the Am Lohsepark quarter of HafenCity, directly on Brooktorhafen, and will be partially integrated into the port

basin. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2026. The light façade will provide shielding from the sun and add clear structure to the sizeable window fronts. On the interior, modular workstations will make it easy to adapt the office space to the needs of its users. Cultivated areas and quiet zones will nurture productivity, while telephone booths and informal workstations will also feature alongside concentration zones with acoustic partitions. Public areas such as a showroom and restaurant are earmarked for the ground floor.

The submitted design adheres to a holistic sustainability and energy concept that is intended to fulfil the criteria of the DGNB (German Sustainable Building Council) special eco-label award. The building consists of a solid base that draws on recycled concrete and clinker bricks. A reversible heat pump will be used to supply heat and cooling. Waste heat in the building will be reused. The plans also include solar panels. (jh)

BLUE CONTAINER ON A TRIP THROUGH EUROPE

Hamburger Hafen und Logistik AG (HHLA) launched its anniversary campaign to mark the company's 140th year with a spectacular show at Port of Hamburg's 836th anniversary. At the heart of the campaign is a container resplendent in HHLA blue, which, on it's trip through Europe, symbolically underscores the importance of the European logistics group's networks and brings the brand claim "The Power of Networks" persuasively to life.

In front of an impressive backdrop on the floating stage at Elbe in Concert, the blue HHLA container was presented to the public for the first time during the 836th anniversary of the Port of Hamburg. It will travel through Europe by rail and road over the weeks ahead, visiting central HHLA locations such as Prague, Budapest, Tallinn, Trieste and other hubs.

"We have been helping to shape European logistics for 140 years. From our unique warehouse complex in Hamburg's Speicherstadt – an unparalleled facility anywhere in the world – HHLA has evolved into a key player in European goods transport", says Angela Titzrath, CEO of HHLA. "We connect people, markets and companies every day – across borders. And the centrepiece of our network is Hamburg: goods are shipped from here all over the world, while containers are transported to their destination in the European hinterland via the rail network of our subsidiary METRANS and by road. Our bright blue container impressively visualises these extensive connections – symbolising the performance and reach of our European network."

The container will feature in a very particular highlight on its return to Hamburg in September: a part of the 10th Blue Port Hamburg, it will again illuminate the waterfront – staged by the internationally renowned light artist Michael Batz. "I have bathed the Port of Hamburg in expressive blue light every two years since 2008. This year's light-flooded trip through HHLA's European network will create a very special visual spectacle to underline Hamburg's relevance as a logistics hub", explains Batz. "The blue container stands for the interconnectedness of Europe, the power of modern logistics and the ability of light to bring people and ideas together." (jh)

Port News

DIGITAL RELEASE PROCEDURE FOR ALL SEAPORTS

The registration phase for the digital release procedure for container imports via the seaports of Hamburg, Bremerhaven and Wilhelmshaven began back in April. Freight forwarders, logistics and transport companies can sign up on the German Ports website www.germanports.com

This new service is intended to introduce a secure release procedure as an effective way to counter the smuggling of narcotics during imports. The project is backed by the port community platforms of the seaports, dbh Logistics IT and DAKOSY, which developed the new digital process in collaboration with the port industry and operate it jointly on the German Ports platform.

PROMPT REGISTRATION RECOMMENDED

The new release procedure is expected to be mandatory for all companies involved in import processes from 1 October 2025. With this in mind, DAKOSY project manager Sven Reimers recommends prompt registration: "Freight forwarders and transport companies should allow sufficient time to implement the technical connection and pilot the new processes during the test phase, which will begin shortly." Companies can connect their own IT systems via open interfaces, use their existing digital access to the PCS platforms from DAKOSY (IMP) or dbh (BIT), or process releases on the German Ports web platform.

"DIGITAL RIGHT TO COLLECT" REPLACES PIN PROCEDURE

The new release procedure is based on the "digital right to collect", which will replace the previous PIN-based release reference. This new "digital right" ensures that it is always possible to trace who is authorised to handle the container from its arrival at the port by sea until its collection by the transport company. A container with the "digital right" can only be released by one authorised party to the next. "For this to work, it is imperative that companies harmonise their internal workflows with the new release procedure", Reimers explains.

The new release procedure for imports is expected to become mandatory on 1 October 2025.

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moin@elbreklame.de
Tel.: +49 40 2530 4771
elbreklame.de

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info@portofhamburg.com
@portofhamburg

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