

ZEEBRUGGE HEAVES SIGH OF RELIEF AS POST-BREXIT DEAL IS SIGNED

With the signing of a deal between the EU and UK after Brexit, the port authority in Zeebrugge says it is relieved that a “No Deal” is finally off the table. “After several years of question marks and uncertainties, we can now finally start looking forward again,” says Tom Hautekiet, chief executive of the Port of Zeebrugge, who stresses the importance of the trade agreement between the EU and the UK for the port.

Aside from a key role in the automotive trade, Zeebrugge – a “Clean Port” without polluting industries – has a large variety of companies in situ that specialise in the handling and storage of food products, as well as a Border Inspection Post where plant and animal product checks are performed. “Without a deal between the EU and the UK, extra tariffs would have been imposed on food products, which would have made them more expensive for the consumer,” says Hautekiet. “Medium-term, this would have had an impact on the cargo volumes in the port. Seeing the high activity and employment in this sector in Zeebrugge, we are all pleased this has been prevented. Our fast Zeebrugge/UK door-to-door distribution model is a guaranteed trump card in the port of Zeebrugge, which will not be influenced by import tariffs.

“We are also happy an agreement was reached about the future of European fishery and we hope this agreement is, now or in the future, in line with the expectations of the Flemish fishery. An impact on the activities in Zeebrugge is, however, inevitable. We can only hope that the adjustment period offers the sector good prospects.”

The announcement of the trade agreement does not influence the operational working of the port as of 1 January 2021. However, cargo between the EU and the UK will be submitted to extra customs formalities and checks. “The entire port community has really come together to make sure that everyone in the logistics chain is prepared for the post-Brexit formalities,” says Hautekiet. “What the first days and weeks will bring, is always an uncertainty. We can only trust in the many preparations and be hopeful for the new chapter.”

IMO UPDATES CREW CHANGE GUIDANCE

Ensuring safe crew changes during the covid-19 pandemic has been a key issue in ports, and for owners and operators of vessels visiting them. Much criticism has been levelled at port states for their treatment of seafarers, who, after all, have been responsible for ensuring that vital supplies reach their destinations during the difficult months since the pandemic broke out.

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has issued updated protocols to ensure safe crew change during the pandemic. The framework of protocols was first issued on 5 May 2020 and has now been revised, with the principle purpose of emphasising the need for compliance and strict adherence with covid-19 testing and quarantine requirements, reflecting that these are now a reality in many national jurisdictions.

The changes also reinforce the importance of seafarers not commencing or continuing to travel if they feel unwell or suspect that they may have covid-19 symptoms.

Some additional recommendations have also been included to prevent infection on board when seafarers join their ship.

NEW GUIDANCE ON ECDIS

The Oil Companies International Marine Forum (OCIMF) has released a new information paper, “Recommendations on Usage of ECDIS and Preventing Incidents”, which provides guidance to enhance policies and procedures regarding the safe use of Electronic Chart Display and Information Systems (ECDIS).

With more vessels using Electronic Navigational Charts (ENCs) for primary or secondary navigation, there have been several significant navigational incidents over the last decade where one of the contributing factors has been ECDIS-related. The paper takes into account ECDIS-related navigational incident findings and safety-related observations from OCIMF’s “Ship Inspection Report Programme” (SIRE). To provide practical support and guidance, the information paper draws upon this analysis to provide recommendations for improving ECDIS-related practices and preventing ECDIS-related navigational incidents.

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IMO AGREES TO SHORT-TERM GHG MEASURES

The meeting of the IMO's Marine Environment Protection Committee in November reached preliminary agreement over a package of short-term technical and operational measures to address greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from ships. The package sees the combined introduction of the Energy Efficiency Existing Ships Index (EEXI) and the Carbon Intensity Indicators (CII)-based operational measure, a carbon intensity rating mechanism, and the strengthening of the Ship Energy Efficiency Management Plan (SEEMP) framework.

The International Association of Ports and Harbors' (IAPH) technical director Antonis Michail participated in the discussion and expressed regret that the compromise reached favours the less ambitious of the proposals put forward, regarding scope of application, reduction factors and enforcement. Nevertheless, and despite its shortcomings, he expressed the willingness of IAPH to work with all relevant parties for the efficient implementation and use of the package. "More concretely, we will be evaluating options for the potential integration of the EEXI and/or the CI rating mechanism in the formula of the IAPH Environmental Ship Index (ESI) for the assessment of GHG emissions performance of vessels. MEPC 75 also discussed a proposal for establishing an International Maritime Research and Development Board (IMRB) to foster innovation and to accelerate the introduction of low- and zero-carbon fuels and technologies," IAPH said in a statement.

INDUSTRY CALLS FOR END TO SOARING DEMURRAGE FEES

Complaints over demurrage fees have reached a crescendo in recent months, with calls that the issue be addressed as a matter of urgency.

British International Freight Association (BIFA) director general Robert Keen says that freight forwarders and the shippers they work for are reeling from unjust demurrage fees linked to congestion in ports around the world.

"They should not be penalised by demurrage and detention practices when circumstances are such that they cannot retrieve containers from, or return containers to, marine terminals because under those circumstances, the charges cannot serve their incentive function," Keen says.

The Federal Maritime Commission (FMC) carried out six years of investigation with all participants in the supply chain and concluded that there had most likely been a long history of unjust and unfair demurrage and detention practices.

While there are country and port-related variances, the FMC findings apply globally as demurrage and detention is a common and widespread topic of contention.

Keen says: "If the FMC has identified demurrage and detention practices that are likely to be considered as unjust for the US, these practices are also unjust and unreasonable for the rest of the world.

"Governments must therefore have greater scrutiny over demurrage and detention practices to ensure that they are considerate and reasonable for the good of their own economies. It is crucial to ensure fluidity and good function of the supply chain in unprecedented times, as illustrated by covid-19 and the chaotic state of international container shipping at present."

BIFA is urging decision makers to ensure a level playing field for all actors in the supply chain of the reasonableness of demurrage and detention charges. This includes consideration of the extent to which demurrage and detention practices are serving their intended purposes as financial incentives to promote freight fluidity.

All international maritime supply chain stakeholders should also benefit from transparent, consistent and reasonable demurrage and detention practices that improve fluidity in global ports and terminals for the benefit of fair, reasonable and ethical interactions between stakeholders in the maritime supply chain.

IBC CODE REVISES OSV ADVICE

Amendments to the IBC Code will take effect from 1 January 2021. Although the IBC Code regulates the transport of dangerous chemicals in bulk on tankers, it also impacts offshore service vessels (OSVs) transporting chemicals in bulk. Consequently, some important considerations will be needed to keep the vessel fit for purpose. DNV GL has written an article giving details of the IBC Code revisions for OSVs. This outlines some of the challenges facing owners and operators, as well as guidelines published by the Norwegian Maritime Authority in preparation for the introduction of the new rules.

<https://www.dnvgl.com/news/transport-of-liquid-chemicals-in-bulk-for-offshore-support-vessels-osvs--1925>

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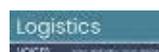


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FREIGHT DERIVATIVES ON THE UP

The freight derivatives markets for both tankers and dry cargo vessels saw increased traded volumes in 2020, according to data released by the Baltic Exchange.

Tanker Forward Freight Agreement (FFA) volumes were up 31% on the previous year, reaching 603,261 lots, with a daily record of 33,677 lots achieved on 16 March at a time when Time Charter Equivalent earnings for VLCCs exceeded US\$275,000.

Dry FFA volumes hit 1,548,127 lots, up 17% on 2019. Options trading in the dry market hit an all-time high, up 37% on the previous year to 318,183. One lot is defined as a day's hire of a vessel or 1000 metric tonnes of ocean transportation of cargo.

Commenting on the figures, Baltic Exchange Chief Executive Mark Jackson says: "2020 was another impressive year for the freight derivatives market. Underpinning these volumes are volatility, trust in the Baltic Exchange's settlement data and increased participation by owners, charterers and traders. Last year, both the dry bulk and tanker markets experienced big swings amid the IMO 2020 fuel change, collapse in oil price and covid-19 pandemic. The previous 12 months saw 1.5 million dry FFAs traded, representing growth of around 70% since 2012."

TEMPERATURE CONTROL LOSSES ON THE INCREASE

Losses involving temperature-controlled cargo have been the subject of recent research by the TT Club. Analysis of claims records for transport operators over the past three years shows temperature-controlled incidents ranking in third place. Almost 30% of these incidents involved a miscommunication of operational instructions on care of the cargo, with a further 23% down to temperature setting errors. Reefer equipment failure or damage accounted for a quarter of the claims.

In an attempt to minimise losses for members, TT has issued a number of guidance documents, such as StopLoss - Temperature Controlled Cargo, and increasingly provides advice via online webinars, one of which was held recently.

"Our own experiences and the data drawn from our claims history was reinforced by over a third of webinar attendees, who when asked their perception of the primary risk factors, pointed to communications errors

with ambiguous or incorrect instructions passed between supply chain stakeholders," comments Mike Yarwood, TT's loss prevention managing director.

The sensitivity of many commodities transported under temperature-controlled conditions puts the care of the product both before and during transit as a paramount concern. During TT's recent webinar, Carsten Jensen, a consultant and surveyor specialising in perishable goods transport gave a comprehensive insight into the five key aspects that impinge on loss prevention: product quality; preparation of the goods; correct packaging and stowing; attention to temperature irregularities and prolonged storage and transit.

A number of these processes are outside the control of forwarder, carrier and terminal operator, comments Yarwood. "As the demand for unitised transport of perishables continues its upward trend, it is vital that the transport links in the chain become more informed about all the relevant processes to improve the collaborative efforts of all stakeholders."

CYBER SECURITY UPDATE

The fourth edition of the industry cyber risk management guidelines, "Guidelines on Cyber Security Onboard Ships", is now available and lays the foundation for further improvements and refinement of companies' cyber security risk assessments.

Version 4 of the guidelines is published at a time when shipowners and managers are faced with a requirement to implement cyber risk management in their safety management systems (SMS) by the time of their first Document of Compliance audit after 1 January 2021.

"In recent years, the industry has been subjected to several significant incidents which have had a severe financial impact on the affected companies," says Dirk Fry, chair of BIMCO's cyber security working group and director of Columbia Ship Management. "While these incidents have had little or no safety impact, they have taught us some very important lessons which have been incorporated into the new version of the guidelines."

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Course Leader: Mike Bradley,
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BEUMER GROUP PIPE CONVEYOR ENSURES DUST-FREE TRANSPORTATION OF ORE CONCENTRATES WITHOUT POLLUTING THE ENVIRONMENT

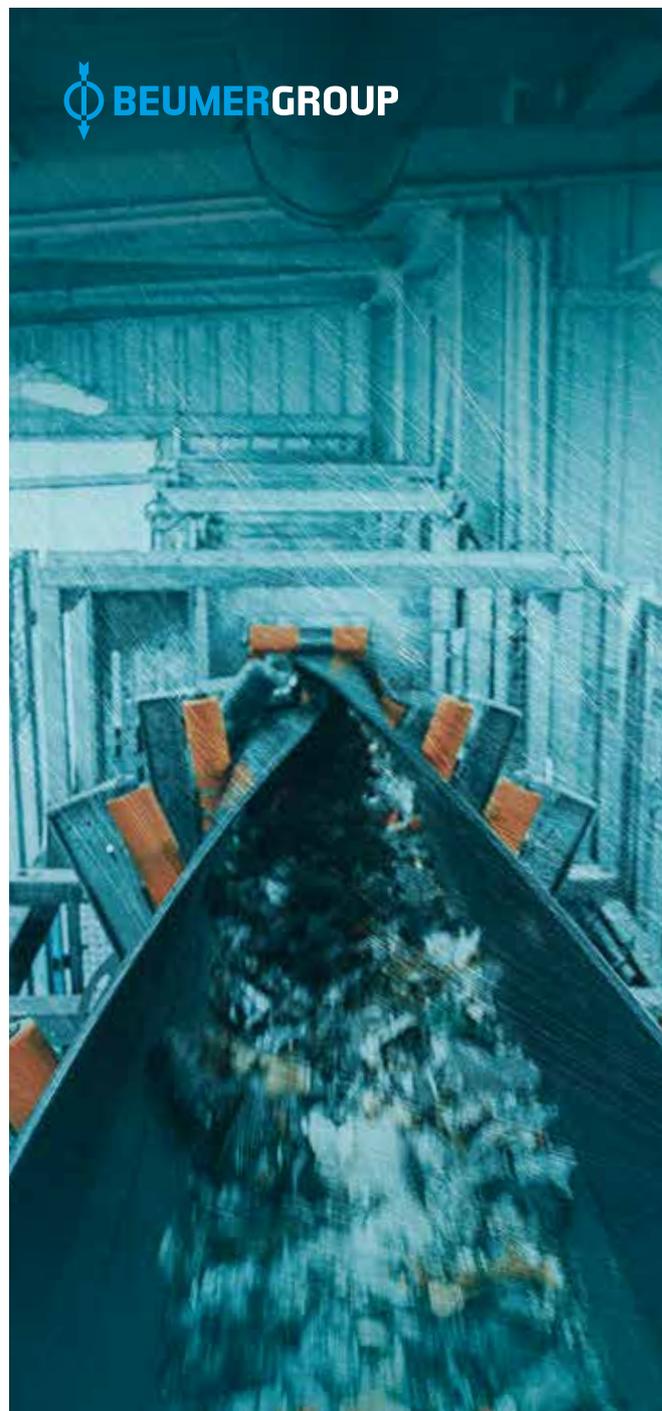
Transportadora Callao S.A., the logistics operator of a special cargo terminal in the port of Callao/Peru, relies on a BEUMER Group Pipe Conveyor for the transportation of zinc, copper and lead concentrates of different mining companies from the warehouse to the terminal. With its ability to navigate curves in three dimensions, the conveyor can be optimally adapted to its routing course of approximately 3,000m. What is even more important: the conveying system prevents the concentrates from coming in contact with the environment and ensures dust-free transport to the ship's holds. BEUMER Group was responsible for engineering and supply, including the steel structure, supervision of the installation and putting the Pipe Conveyor into operation.

Due to the system design and the required system capacity, BEUMER designed it with a diameter of 400mm. The conveyor transports 2,300 tons per hour, at a speed of 4.5m/s and is driven by three motors with a capacity of 650kW each. BEUMER Group equipped the system with filters, strippers, a dedusting unit and a control system and was responsible for engineering and automation, and supplied the steel structure and the necessary components. The site managers supervised the installation and put the system into operation.

The process is practically free of faults and, above all, safe: trucks or trains transport the mining commodities from the mines to the ore storages, from where they are transported to the open access station. Here, the concentrates are received by a feeding 43m belt conveyor that transfers it to the Pipe Conveyor at a height of 6m. A dedusting unit ensures that no material is emitted during this process. BEUMER Group equipped the feeding belt conveyor with a metal detector and an electric magnet. This prevents damage of the downstream Pipe Conveyor by metal parts. At the end of the route, the conveying system runs along the seaside in the naval port of Callao to the transfer tower. Here, the belt opens automatically. It transfers the material to another belt conveyor that conveys the ore to the ship loading system.



View from the pier: the last section of the Pipe Conveyor runs along the sea to the transfer tower.



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