

# shortsea shipping

TAILBACK-FREE TRANSPORT ON EUROPEAN SCALE 



Too small volumes?

Not familiar with shipping?


**This is how you organise  
maritime transport**

Europe: the hinterland of Flanders  
**12 best practices**

SSS

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## European Shortsea Network

By 2000 it had become clear that the promotion of shortsea shipping on a merely national or regional level was not a satisfactory solution: logistics chains, and SSS also, are by definition cross-border matters. In addition, the removal of obstacles required a wider *European* approach. There was a clear need for communication.

On 1 December 2000 the Flemish promotion centre was one of the founders of the European Shortsea Network (ESN), an informal network. At that time six promotion centres were instrumental in starting up the network, currently there are 20 members.

Some of the promotion centres have meanwhile started to work *intermodally*: the Netherlands (rail-SSS), Flanders (inland navigation-SSS) etc. In 2007 the European Commission has asked for such an extension.

The mission of ESN is to promote SSS and to develop initiatives pertaining to it. Bottlenecks are tackled and networking intensified. The exchange of best-practice examples between the promotion centres is particularly important. Also, ESN brings together very extensive expertise, which the players in the market can call upon.

*Year after year the roads have become more congested, threatening the fluent flow of goods within the expanding European economy. Evidently, other modes of transport have to be looked for, in particular the transport of goods using short-sea shipping.*

# Shortsea shipping Geared to

**A**s the transport of goods is often, by definition, a cross-border matter, the problem has to be tackled on a *European* level. The immensely long European coastline and the hundreds of harbours along it, offered perspectives to promote maritime transport across the European coastal waters as an alternative to the congestion on the roads. Actually, *coastal navigation*, as a form of transport, has been around for a long time, but it remained geographically restricted to the West-European coast and was carried out by ships with a relatively limited capacity.

### *Wider than coastal navigation*

In the middle of the 90s the European Commission launched the trendy concept of *shortsea shipping* (SSS) to replace the *old* coastal navigation, giving the notion a firm extension at the same time. Geographically the area in which shortsea shipping takes place was extended to the whole of Europe, including North Africa, the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. Additionally, the capacity limitation was abandoned. In certain countries SSS vessels (*coasters*) can also sail on the internal waterways. Such sea-river navigation is also considered to be part of SSS. Often so-called *Rhine/Sea vessels* have to be used, which can lower their

## The Flemish perspective

The Shortsea Promotion Centre Flanders was established in 1998. It has a neutral, non-commercial status and acts as a go-between to bring parties around the table. By consistently positioning itself in that way and by its extensive networking, the promotion centre has become a contact centre for all questions regarding international door-to-door transports.

We are in favour of a wider interpretation of the term *hinterland* that covers more than just the North of France, the Ruhr region and Switzerland: the landward side is important, but from the four

Flemish ports the whole of Europe can be served with regular, frequent and reliable services. Through our ports, Europe is the hinterland of Flanders, both on the export and the import side. That vision is in keeping with the Flanders Port Area concept ([www.flandersportarea.be](http://www.flandersportarea.be)).

We inform the market about new services on a very regular basis and we illustrate the functioning of shortsea shipping using practical examples. That information is made available free of charge via the website ([www.shortsea.be](http://www.shortsea.be)), a printed newsletter (4x/year), an e-newslet-

ter (2x/month) etc. Interested? You can register on the website mentioned or via e-mail. We also publish specific brochures (on container dimensions, country specials etc.) to keep you informed of all new developments.

**i** Do you have practical questions about your transport chain and does shortsea appear to offer possibilities to you? You are free to contact us at [shortsea@shortsea.be](mailto:shortsea@shortsea.be) or by phone on number +32 (0)3 20 20 520.

# Europe

wheel house in order to negotiate low bridges. The advantage of this sea-river traffic is that the cargo can be loaded and unloaded inland, close to the customer. For this, facilities are used that have been built expressly for inland navigation.

Europe has become the hinterland of Flanders: no less than 40 coastal countries are accessible via the Flemish ports through a network of regular, frequent and reliable shortsea services. Also, there are ships available for any kind of freight. With shortsea shipping shippers and their logistics partners obtain a durable link in their transport chain.

### Co-modality and trends

The rather strict *modal shift* some European support programmes *demand* has by now evolved into a new notion introduced by the European Commission: co-modality. In that context the merits of each mode of transport are calculated in order to compose the logistics chain.

Shortsea shipping is a fast-evolving activity: almost unknown ten years ago, it now turns up frequently in the world of transport and logistics. In recent years a number of specific trends have emerged:

- A wave of take-overs and joint ventures among shipping companies

has turned some of them into larger and more substantial players. At the same time their area of activity within Europe has widened considerably.

- The shippers firmly believe in the further development of shortsea shipping: they invest in new ships and increase their capacity and range by deploying extra vessels.

- The ports continue to develop their hub function: larger *round-the-world* players can only be attracted if they are convinced that their cargo can be conveyed through a network of maritime links. Today, the so-called feeder services, as well as the purely intra-European shipping companies, offer an enormous range of services to the shippers and their logistics partners.

**'Whatever the cargo, there's always a suitable vessel available'.**

- Road haulage companies too show a growing interest: they also have to cope with difficulties to meet their contractual lead times. Increasingly they become *multimodal providers* looking for synergies with shortsea shipping.

# 12 Shortsea shipping best practices

## 1. Bruhn Spedition *opts for SSS for its Denmark traffic*

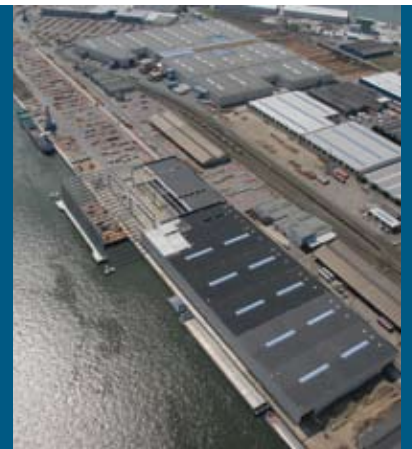
Since the start of the regular Zeebrugge-Esbjerg ro-ro service at the beginning of 2005, Bruhn Spedition has been giving preference to that service for an important part of its shipments to Denmark. Some 40 of its own 30' bulk containers are shipped to Esbjerg on weekly basis, with an equal number making the return voyage. As far as frequency is concerned, the weekly sailings from Zeebrugge meet the requirements of the customer. The shortsea option offers the possibility to optimise the weight of the cargo to 44 tonnes, thus aiding to support the competitive advantage. Out of Rotterdam yet another Danish destination is served with a similar number of bulk containers. Both solutions avoid the impact of the German Maut.

## 2. Project cargo *from Willebroek (Brussels-Scheldt Canal) (G&G)*

G&G is a company specialised in project cargo, in particular the transport of large and indivisible items. To transport the cargo to European destinations coasters are used, which are loaded at the company's own quay. The load is shipped as fully completed items, thus reducing to a minimum the work required at the destination site. Shipments have been made, for instance, to Fawley (near Southampton) involving pieces weighing 30 to 50 tonnes each, to Le Havre with a 120 tonne column, 50 metres long, and to Iceland (360 tonnes - 23 x 12 x 17 m). The distance of the after-transport, which may be necessary in exceptional cases, remains limited.

## 3. Iron and steel *handled in the All Weather Shortsea Terminal in Antwerp.*

One or twice a week a coaster carries 3,000 tonnes of steel from Oxelösund (just north of Norrköping) to Antwerp. The journey between Oxelösund and Antwerp takes three days. In view of that steel traffic work has begun in Antwerp for the construction of an all-weather terminal (Antwerp Stevedoring International). From there, the goods are delivered to the customer using various modes (sea-going vessel/coaster, inland navigation vessel, wagon, lorry).



*Many shippers opt in favour of intermodal transport, of which shortsea shipping is a sustainable part. There is, indeed, for any kind of cargo a shortsea vessel available that can reach the whole of Europe and North Africa. 12 practical examples will illustrate this:*

#### **4. Stora Enso's SECU units** *don't return to Scandinavia empty*

For some time now, optimum use has been made of the SECU units, the purpose-built loading units used for Stora Enso's paper transport, which in the port of Zeebrugge are unloaded from the Göteborg-Zeebrugge service. Instead of returning empty to Scandinavia, they are now each loaded with two Volvo cars. The shortsea service then takes them to Kotka in Finland, after transhipment in Göteborg. There, the Volvo cars are discharged and forwarded to Russia. The empty SECUs are once again loaded with the Finnish paper products of Stora Enso and sent back to Flanders. This way some 7,000 cars are shipped to Russia annually.

#### **5. Sand delivered** *to NHM's new sand terminal* *in Ostend*

At the end of September 2006 the MS 'Swalinge' discharged 2,000 cubic metres of sand at quay 608, which is occupied by the Nieuwpoortse Handelsmaatschappij (NHM). The ship was the first to unload its cargo at the new state-of-the-art sand and gravel terminal, which in fact is an addition to NHM's previously existing operations in Nieuwpoort and Bruges. The shortsea traffic to the port of Ostend is an important activity for the De Cloedt Group.

#### **6. Household appliances** *in especially designed* *containers*

The ACB group ships household appliances for Bosch/Siemens Household Appliances (BSH) with the support of the Marco Polo programme. Together with forwarder Robert Kukla of Munich the group invested in 72 pallet-wide 45' high cube containers with a special height of 3 metres, needed for this kind of industrial traffic. Since November 2006 the freight from Southern Germany has risen to 9 containers per day, which is the equivalent of some 2,200 lorries per year. This traffic is a nice example of intermodal transport to the UK, using a combination of road haulage, rail, inland navigation and shortsea shipping.





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## 7. Shortsea shipping offers possibilities for refrigerated goods (EFT)

It is sometimes said that shortsea shipping and refrigerated goods don't mix, yet European Food Transport (E.F.T.) demonstrates that a shortsea-road combination is perfectly feasible. E.F.T. uses ro-ro and ferry solutions for the transport of its lorries and thus perfectly meets the agreed delivery times (just-in-time) for temperature-sensitive products like fruit, fruit juice, vegetables, medicines etc.

This particular haulier uses shortsea services to Helsinki (5 containers a week), to Göteborg (12-15 containers a week), to Norway (4 containers a week) and to the UK (10-15 containers a week).

As far as the return cargo is concerned, capacity is still available from Scandinavia in the forwarder's own refrigerated containers. From the United Kingdom empty pallets and end products such as fruit juice are already taken along. The temperature-sensitive merchandise requires an adequate follow-up by tracking & tracing.

## 8. Facing bricks on pallets by coaster from Lanaken (Albert Canal) to the United Kingdom (Heylen Bricks)

In February 1999 a first load of pallets weighing approximately 1,000 tonnes was put on board the MV 'Eldor' and taken directly from the loading site of Heylen-Bricks (Veldwezelt, Lanaken) on the Albert Canal to Mistley (100 km north-east of London). Despite the good experience, Heylen-Bricks later decided for reasons of cost-effectiveness to switch to road transport again.

At the beginning of 2004 Heylen-Bricks made a recalculation in consultation with the recipient in the United Kingdom. In April 2004 a first sea-river coaster was loaded with 1,300 tonnes of *hand-moulded facing bricks*, destined for Shoreham (UK). After that first, smooth operation, the shipper mobilised a second coaster in September 2004, again with Shoreham as its destination, but this time with 1,500 tonnes on board. With the latter operation a modal shift from the road to the waterways, the equivalent of some 60 lorries, was realised. In the past three years some ten shipments have been organised.

## 9. Bridgestone (Zeebrugge) chooses shortsea for its European tyre distribution.

Until recently Bridgestone operated distribution centres in a large number of European countries for its tyres ex Japan. In order to avoid over- or underestimation of the outstanding orders and to fine-tune the deliveries correctly, a new distribution concept has been introduced. Three 'super' centres ('North' in Zeebrugge, 'East' in the Czech Republic and 'South' in Spain) now supply some 20 regional distribution centres.

The incoming cargo amounts to 8,500 x 40' containers per year, largely originating from Japan (80%), Thailand (15%), and Turkey (5%), the latter being shipped in via shortsea.

As far as exports are concerned, Zeebrugge uses shortsea links to Ireland, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Iceland, Spain and Greece. Overall this concerns some 80 containers (45' and 40') weekly.



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## 10. Ghent-based AWS is counting on shortsea for the conveyance of tens of thousands of tonnes of soil

AWS, a Ghent-based soil cleaning company, has 2 decontamination centres at its disposal: one along the canal in Ghent, the other in Sint-Katelijne-Waver, which together boast a processing capacity of 350,000 tonnes/year. AWS also has a loading quay in Paris (Nanterre), from which contaminated soil is conveyed to Ghent via the inland waterways. From the South of France, on the other hand, one anticipates a shortsea supply of 20 to 30,000 tonnes annually.

The activities surrounding the organisation of the 2012 Olympic Games in London create the need for the transport of considerable amounts of contaminated soil. AWS is the sole soil cleaner in Belgium with an export licence from the United Kingdom. Coasters can be loaded on a site along the Thames in the vicinity of the Olympic village. Expectations are that approximately 50,000 tonnes will have to be brought in per year. After decontamination all soil received will be reused as secondary material.

## 11. Transport companies find synergies with shortsea services (Halléns)

Transport companies increasingly present themselves as *intermodal providers*. One company who consistently opted for synergy with shortsea shipping, is the Ghent-based firm of Halléns. This has been a deliberate choice, given the environmental circumstances, rising congestion on the roads etc. Halléns uses the regular roll-on-roll-off services to different European destinations. To Norway, Sweden and Finland, for instance, more than 43,000 (return) transports are organised in that manner each year.

It is important to mention that in recent years pure hauliers also have found their way towards shortsea, in most cases as a consequence of the ever congesting European road network.

## 12. Windmill foundation elements shipped to the Irish Sea

The Hoboken-based construction company Smulders has used shortsea shipping to transport 11,000 tonnes of foundation elements for a windmill park to the Irish Sea. Specially adapted coasters, took the heavy elements straight to their destination. Loading was done at Hoboken on the river Scheldt.

**i** You can find the full story in our electronic newsletters.

Surf to [www.shortsea.be](http://www.shortsea.be) > news > newsletters, or contact the promotion office.

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# Short Sea Shipping: Long Term Vision



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