



Logistic innovation

crane vessel

In order to efficiently move containers, seaports are busily searching for innovative alternatives to overburdened motorways. A floating container transferium using the crane barges of the Mercurius Group can be such an innovative alternative. It only occupies space on the water and is mobile, so that the waterborne shuttle services from the hinterland can collect their containers at exactly those locations where they can be best served. Shuttle services to the sea terminals take the containers to the transferium.



Innovative crane barges for 'new logistics'

The presence of large industrial clusters in and around ports can sometimes make the complex logistics surrounding the movement of raw materials, semi-finished products and end products a highly complicated process in which roads become congested and production processes incur delays. The availability of waterways however offers a unique solution: as long as a quay is present, ultramodern container crane barges can use their own on-board cranes to load and discharge cargo at any location.

When production rapidly expands, transport grows along correspondingly. It is especially in these situations that transport over water can add value. Since 2006, the Mercurius Shipping Group has

already been deploying the crane barge Mercurius-Amsterdam to offer an innovative waterborne logistical service; using its own crane, the Mercurius-Amsterdam picks up containers and then distributes them in certain regions.

Following the introduction of the container, the transshipment of cargo has become an activity of specialised companies which use high-quality, expensive handling equipment to this extent. At present, containers are moved by truck from the production companies to the container terminals. As increasing volumes of containers are transported, roads become even more congested. Needless to say this has a negative impact on nuisance levels, delivery times, reliability and CO₂ emissions.

The Mercurius-Amsterdam demonstrates that inland shipping can also add value when it comes to transporting cargo across short distances in and around seaports. The innovative container crane barge offers a combined service: storage/transshipment and transport. In 2009, a second crane barge – slightly larger and 'smarter' than the Mercurius-Amsterdam – will be taken into commission.

Using their cranes, the vessels pick up containers at companies and deliver them to the inland barge shuttles or container terminal. The crane barge-based container collection service reduces road congestion and boosts the reliability of delivery times, thus benefiting the entire business chain within the region.



The powerful on-board crane means smart use can be made of the quays which the production companies have at their disposal. If necessary, the ship itself can put containers on the quay at the terminals. As a result, there is no need to make use of the expensive terminal portal cranes. These can consequently be optimally used for the transshipment of containers to and from the inland barges and feeders which maintain the shuttle services to the hinterland: to various locations in the Netherlands, Belgium and destinations on the Rhine River in Germany. Vice versa, containers from all corners of the globe arrive at the terminals, where the crane barge sees to it that they are further distributed throughout the region.

	The Mercurius Amsterdam (2006)	The second crane ship (2009)
Loading capacity	144 TEU	164 TEU
Tonnage	2,152 tonnes	2,400 tonnes
Crane capacity	± 20 moves/hour	± 22 moves/hour
Lift capacity	35 tonnes at a reach of 30 metres	40 tonnes at a reach of 28 metres
Automatic anti-heeling system	x	x
Dimensions	86 x 11.55 metres	97 x 11.55 metres
Propulsion power	2 x 860 hp	2 x 1.500 hp



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The shipping industry is constantly in motion. The demands that clients make in terms of availability, safety and the environment become more stringent from one year to the next. Developments rapidly follow upon each other. Boasting high levels of expertise and years of hands-on experience, the Mercurius Shipping Group can offer advice on the construction and conversion of all sorts of floating equipment. Innovative projects constitute an extra challenge. The Mercurius Group in addition focuses on activities in the fields of shipbuilding, investment, brokerage, personnel services, logistical services, the exploitation of inland barges and providing barge operators with management services.

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