

CRUISE GATEWAY NEWS

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The popularity of cruising, with all its attractions, continues to grow

Cruise Gateway North Sea, an EU Interreg IVB North Sea Region project, was set up to consider ways of encouraging and promoting much more cruise activity in the NSR.

In a programme of research, workshops and best practice visits, the project partners are considering a broad range of topics linked to cruise and cruise potential, including joint lobbying and marketing, the creation of a regional maritime identity and innovative ideas for passenger excursions, as they seek ways to develop the NSR as a cruise destination in its own right.

The common thread through all of this is sustainability – including the promotion of environmental awareness and eco-friendly transport structures, and avoiding congestion.

THE MID-POINT: AIMS & ACHIEVEMENTS

Achievements so far? Challenges ahead? As the Cruise Gateway North Sea project reaches its mid-point, it's a good time to reflect on the project's key aims, report on activities completed and consider the programme ahead.

The popularity of cruising, with all its attractions, continues to grow – and not only among those who might be considered 'traditional' cruise passengers. Increasing numbers from younger age groups, as well as families, are coming on board.

However, while the growth of cruising in the Baltic and Mediterranean seas has been particularly notable, the North Sea Region (NSR) has so far been less recognised as a major cruise destination in its own right. Yes, the region offers incredible diversity – beautiful landscapes, world-class cities, history and heritage, and an unrivalled variety of food, all within easy cruise distances.

Cruise Gateway North Sea, an EU Interreg IVB North Sea Region project, was set up to find ways of encouraging and promoting much more cruise activity in the NSR.

In September, Cruise Gateway delegates will gather in the Haven Gateway, where the project's English partners will host a special mid-term conference in Colchester and at Harwich International Port.

Among the topics to be discussed will be the findings of a major report by SeaConsult,

examining the 'Decision Criteria for Cruise Port Selection in the North Sea Region'.

In a busy schedule during the first half of 2012, Cruise Gateway made some major steps forward.

Among the programme highlights, partners met in Copenhagen in February for an 'Energy Efficient Terminal' workshop hosted by project partner Copenhagen Malmö Port (CMP). The provision of onshore power (so-called cold ironing), with all its associated costs and the problems of ensuring compatibility between ship and shore, was examined and delegates also discussed the need to reduce emissions from cruise ships while at sea.

The workshop also considered the use of LNG, hybrid and low-sulphur fuel and the implications of the new low-sulphur fuel requirements once the 2015 SECA regulations are in place.

CMP's head of construction, Peter Landgren, outlined details of Copenhagen's new cruise terminal, designed with a special focus on energy efficiency and environmental solutions. The terminal buildings will be built with green roofs to provide insulation from both cold and heat and absorb much of the rain, relieving the drainage

system, solar energy panels, a sustainable indoor climate solution, translucent building elements of polycarbonate, roof windows minimising electricity consumption, and a special surface for preventing solar overheating.

The quay will be equipped with waste water reception facilities including elaborate systems to prevent smells, cleaned by rain water. The quay will be built with channels for possible future cold ironing options.

In June, Cruise Gateway partners attended a conference in Bremerhaven, entitled 'Shore Excursions for Transit Passengers: How to Develop a Successful Cruise Destination/ Cruise Port'.

What do cruise passengers want from a shore excursion? What do the cruise lines expect? And what can excursion organisers and cruise destinations do to ensure they provide attractive options and make the most of the economic opportunities from serving the cruise sector?

These were some of the questions tackled during discussions at the conference, which was organised in the Columbus Cruise Center Bremerhaven. **Continued overleaf...**

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The main conference programme included a presentation by Prof Dr Martin Lohmann, managing director of the Institute of Tourism Research in Northern Europe (Kiel), who considered demand dynamics and consumer orientation in cruise holidays, including an analysis of long-term market research data for Germany as a source market for the cruise industry.

The second day of presentations focused on the success criteria for transit calls and the practical aspects of choosing a transit port of call. The Cruise Gateway partners and delegates boarded the MS Oceana, travelling from Bremerhaven to Bremen.



The Cruise Gateway conference in Bremerhaven considered what cruise passengers want from a shore excursion

FINDING THE NSR'S SELLING POINTS

Sebastian Doderer, project leader, explains the importance of Cruise Gateway and considers what the project can achieve.

Last year, Cruise Gateway ran an online survey, to build an idea of the image of the North Sea Region. A key theme came back – the region is described as 'very diverse'.

"According to the evaluation of our survey, nature is a very important aspect; the definition of the region by its natural environment, and the sustainability focus of Cruise Gateway, offer a fruitful basis for the project to build on," says Sebastian Doderer. "In addition, the involvement of big-name cities within the NSR is another aspect to consider. This will be especially crucial for the promotion of the region as a cruise destination in its own right."

Finding out about the key 'selling points' of the NSR is a major goal of the Cruise Gateway project, he says: "One advantage seems to be the location of the ports being situated quite close to one another, which saves fuel at a time when fuel prices are increasingly rapidly."

As well as carrying out studies into service and sustainability, Cruise Gateway is conducting a survey to identify the unique selling points from best practice cases, to strengthen the position of the North Sea Region – the results will be ready soon.

Sebastian Doderer is head of project development at Port of Hamburg Marketing, which is Cruise Gateway's lead partner;

he played a major part in the initial project application and is now representing the project when working with the EU, the partnership and further stakeholders.

Last year the Port of Hamburg saw a 13.5% increase in cruise calls, to a total 118, and 28% increase in cruise passengers, to 314,500. This year figures are dramatically up again – it's forecast that the port will handle 164 cruise calls and more than 400,000 cruise passengers in 2012.

So Hamburg, which is at present mainly handling turnarounds already has a well-established position as a cruise hub. Why did it get involved in Cruise Gateway?

"Cruise business is growing steadily – that's an opportunity but also a challenge," says Sebastian. "The aim is to contribute to improved cruise accessibility in the NSR on a sustainable basis, enabling comprehensive economic and social benefits. We are looking to create a framework that enables and promotes sustainable, economic growth of cruise tourism in the NSR while simultaneously increasing environmental awareness among stakeholders."

The diversity within Cruise Gateway itself is one of the project's strong points, he adds: "Our partners are not all the same and this variety is

important to the success of the project; we want to provide knowledge transfer from established ports to the new, emerging ones."

Closer cooperation and best practice exchange between project partners will contribute to the development of a regional cohesion and stronger identity, Sebastian believes. Cruise Gateway allows for partners to work independently in their own Work Packages while always bearing in mind the project's overall goals – an approach that is working well.

But how does all this fit into Sebastian's 'day job' with Port of Hamburg Marketing? His department is involved in a number of collaborative projects investigating issues relating to transport policy or logistics, and it also produces analyses and studies on various transport issues.

For Cruise Gateway, Port of Hamburg Marketing is working with Hamburg Cruise Center, one of its own members.

"Of course, everyone has their 'real jobs'; time schedules are rather strict and short," says Sebastian. "This is why planning well in advance is crucial. The fact is, all the partners in this project have their own demanding schedules; their involvement reflects the importance of Cruise Gateway's topics and the partners' commitment to these topics. Cruise Gateway has become a part of their 'real' job too!"

"An opportunity but also a challenge"

Sebastian Doderer,
Project Leader



SEACONSULT STUDY SETS OUT THE ISSUES

The findings of a unique study investigating 'Decision Criteria for Cruise Port Selection in the North Sea Region' could make people think again about the North Sea, according to David Ralph, chief executive of the Haven Gateway.



Building a brand: it's time to show off what the NSR can offer

"This study sets out the offers from each of the ports, and is based on consulting with the cruise industry," he says. "Certainly, the industry is looking for innovation; this study is part of Cruise Gateway's work to establish the NSR as a market for slightly different cruise trips."

The study was carried out by Hamburg-based consultancy SeaConsult HAM as part of Cruise Gateway's Work Package 3, 'Marketing and Branding'. It will be presented to delegates at the mid-term conference, to be hosted by the Haven Gateway.

SeaConsult's early findings make fascinating reading. First and foremost, the North Sea Region lacks a clear identity – something Cruise Gateway is determined to tackle.

Other issues raised include a marketing conflict – between individual and regional marketing; very diverse forms of presentation, from brochures to DVDs to web pages; a lack of straightforward tourism and non-marine infrastructure information; and the need for more of an overview on cost structures.

Cruise lines interviewed for the study confirmed that costs are overwhelmingly important, and increasingly so. Fuel prices

are key, but so is the introduction in 2015 of low-sulphur fuel regulations in the North Sea. Finally, a key issue was service. Cruise lines want to be treated as customers, they emphasised.

The SeaConsult study's authors interviewed 17 top management representatives of international cruise lines, as well as the Cruise Gateway partners themselves.

At an early stage of work on the report, Helge Grammerstorff, managing director of SeaConsult, said: "One finding becoming apparent is that for the North Sea Region there is a lack of clear identity. Predominantly, the NSR is perceived to be part of the Northern Europe shipping routes and not as an independent cruising area. The study's participants show a large diversity regarding positive and negative characteristics – for example, associations with culture and nature, but also as an area of stormy weather or industrial facilities."

Cruise Gateway will use the findings of the final study as the basis for tackling negative images of the NSR and getting across strong, positive messages about what the region can offer for the cruise sector – building a strong NSR cruising identity.

HAVEN GATEWAY HOSTS MID-TERM CONFERENCE

Cruise Gateway's mid-term conference, to take place on 25-26 September, will be hosted in the UK by the Haven Gateway.

FirstSite, a prestigious new arts centre in Colchester, will be the base for an evening reception and the main conference. The focus will then switch to Harwich International Port (HIP), where delegates have been invited to lunch aboard the cruise ship Thomson Spirit, followed by a tour of the port.

HIP, owned by Hutchison Ports UK, is one of the UK's busiest cruise ports – well established as a turnaround facility and also welcoming increasing numbers of day calls, as cruise lines explore the many visitor attractions in the area.

During the port tour, Cruise Gateway partners will learn about the successful growth of cruise business at Harwich and recent investments at the port.

At the main conference, the keynote speaker will be James Berresford, chief executive of Visit England, who will focus on what cruise passengers are looking for – and how cruise business can benefit the local economy.

"We are making steady progress in the Cruise Gateway project and the mid-term conference gives us the opportunity to report back on what has been achieved so far," says Haven Gateway chief executive David Ralph. "In addition, we are looking forward to hearing the findings of the SeaConsult study into cruising in the North Sea Region."

Cruise Gateway will continue in its programme of research, workshops and best practice visits, considering a broad range of topics linked to cruise and cruise potential, including joint lobbying and marketing, the building up of a regional maritime identity, and innovative ideas for passenger excursions, says David.

"In parallel, we are focusing on issues such as environmental awareness, eco-friendly transport structures and avoiding congestion – in short, issues of 'sustainability'. The aim is to create a raised awareness of the NSR as a cruise destination – and a sustainable one. Cruising in the NSR offers a very 'green' way to travel between high-profile landscapes and destinations, with a wide diversity of landscapes, food and culture and in many cases, shorter cruising times between ports of call."

The mid-term conference is being supported by Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines, Readers Offers Ltd and Seatrade – all of which are based locally, part of the Haven Gateway centre of excellence for cruise.

To register for the conference, contact mark.smith@haven-gateway.org



"We are making steady progress"
David Ralph

THE CRUISE GATEWAY CONCEPT: CHALLENGING BUT SO CONVINCING

Cruise Gateway has been a real joint venture of all partners involved, from the very beginning. And that, says Hans-Ulrich Wolff, makes managing the project so much more rewarding.



The European way: Cruise Gateway partners work together and learn together

Known to his colleagues as 'Ulli', he leads the project management team provided by Hamburg-based transport consultancy Uniconsult, which is responsible for the overall organisation and financial management of Cruise Gateway.

"As with other Interreg projects, the concentration of management tasks into a specific component frees up the lead beneficiary and partners to concentrate their contribution to the project more on the thematic and strategic inputs required for a successful project implementation," he says. "However, since Uniconsult was also involved in the application phase to develop the project concept, we are also assisting with project activities, based on our experience in the multimodal transport and maritime sectors, including cruise shipping."

Ulli says keeping the Cruise Gateway project moving forward has definitely been made easier by the enthusiasm of the partners.

"The project idea, to market the North Sea as a cruise destination of its own – which could only be achieved by cooperation of ports – is so challenging but also so convincing, that it brought together the main leading ports in this region, despite the fact that they may be competitors in other transport areas," he says.

For Uniconsult, the main tasks within Cruise Gateway are: to build a sound internal structure for the project – partnership agreements, internal working budget, etc.; to prepare the overall half-yearly activity and financial reporting to the Interreg Secretariat; to run a separate trustee account for the project, including managing the ERDF (European Regional Development Fund) co-financing flows; and to keep the lead beneficiary and partners informed on the status of project implementation and progress.

"As well as all of this, we are also involved in the ongoing conceptual discussions throughout the project's duration. All of this will end with the preparation of the project's final report, based on the various partners' activity reports," says Ulli.

Regular contact with the Interreg team is a vital part of the work; as well as the half-yearly reports, smaller reports must be prepared as the direction or activity of the project is adjusted along the way. "All in all, the consultant and the lead beneficiary have a trusting, day-to-day working relationship with the Secretariat to ensure the right answers at all levels; this helps very much to safeguard a smooth project implementation."

What are the rewards of working on an Interreg project like Cruise Gateway? Ulli says: "The rewards are that all partners learn from each other how cruise is handled in the respective countries. And partners, as well as us as consultants, learn how to act as a 'European' – for example, by launching jointly financed tenders or simply by understanding the different attitudes and approaches to work better."

The benefits of networking are clear, he adds. "To build up a network on a professional level helps greatly in your day-to-day work – in this specific project today, and perhaps in different projects tomorrow. Like an old Hanseatic business rule: nothing is more important than personal contacts and respectively the understanding of 'foreign' habits and cultures."

And finally ... Ulli says the Interreg programmes have the potential to quieten the sceptics and increase the EU's positive profile, by promoting convincing project concepts with serious partners.

Lead Partner:



Port of Hamburg Marketing

Partners:

Port of Kiel (Germany)
Columbus Cruise Center
Bremerhaven (Germany)
Bremen Senate Department for
Economy and Ports (Germany)
Cruise Destination Hardangerfjord
(Norway)
City of Gothenburg (Sweden)
Copenhagen Malmö Port AB
(Denmark / Sweden)
Port of Esbjerg (Denmark)
City of Antwerp / Tourism (Belgium)
Port of Oostende (Belgium)
Cruise Port Rotterdam
(The Netherlands)
Haven Gateway Partnership (UK)
Aberdeenshire Council (UK)
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*Investing in the future by working together
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