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Supplying industry despite low water levels: HGK Shipping orders another innovative gas tanker for its special fleet

HGK Shipping is expanding its low-water fleet once again. The company placed an order for the construction of another gas tanker able to operate in shallow waters with the Dutch TeamCo Shipyard at the beginning of February. Following the pattern pursued for the previous additions to the fleet, the “GAS 95” will also be equipped with a diesel-electric drive system. HGK Shipping is therefore continuing to pursue its strategic programme for new vessels to provide innovative and sustainable inland waterway shipping by signing the agreement on 9 February 2022.

Following the “GAS 94”, this is already the second gas tanker for HGK Shipping, which combines a design for operating in extremely shallow waters and an alternative drive system. “We’re continuing our journey towards sustainability with great determination with the ‘GAS 95’. At the same time, we’re arming ourselves to face the challenges of climate change by expanding our fleet that is able to operate in shallow waters. As a result, we’ll be in a position to safeguard supplies of raw materials for the industry despite increasingly frequent low-water periods on European rivers,” says Steffen Bauer, CEO of HGK Shipping. Anke Bestmann, the Managing Director of HGK Gas Shipping GmbH, adds, “HGK Shipping’s consistent focus on its customers also played a primary role in developing this new vessel. We always work closely with our customers when expanding our fleet and introducing innovations in order to offer them long-term planning reliability for inland shipping operations.”

The programme for new vessels meets the requirements of industry and society

The new gas tanker is due to go into service during the third or fourth quarter in 2023. It will be used to transport liquefied gases between the ARA ports and the Rhine region. The “GAS 95” will be characterised by an enormous degree of flexibility: through its dimensions (110 metres long and 11.45 metres wide), its features, which enable it to remain operational, even during periods with low water levels, and the design of the loading system make the gas tanker suitable for use on the canals in Western Europe too. By making use of the power management system that has been installed, the output that is made available will be ideally adapted to the power requirements and this will reduce both fuel consumption and waste gas emissions. The basic design, the fundamental idea and the engineering for the new vessel were once again developed at HGK Shipping’s Design Center. The “GAS 94”, which went into service in 2021, has served as the valid basis for continuing to develop the concept and as a clear benchmark

for optimising operations in shallow waters. The forward-looking design has once again been developed in line with the clear ideas formulated by the transport management experts at HGK Gas Shipping GmbH in Hamburg. This ensures, for example, that HGK Shipping's programme of new vessels both fulfils the socio-political requirements and complies with the interests of the chemical industry.

Fleet development as a commitment to “innovation & sustainability”

An order is due to be placed for a third forward-looking gas tanker – the “GAS 96” – this year. Four others – “GAS 97” to “GAS 100” – are already being planned and are due to be gradually completed during the next few years. HGK Shipping is also making use of the combination of draught optimisation and an alternative drive system in other fields of transport. The “Synthese 18” – a type C tanker, which combines these features for transporting liquid chemicals – is due to go into service this year. Two other type C tankers, which are in addition H2-ready, are currently being constructed.

Photo caption: HGK Shipping signed an agreement with the Dutch TeamCo Shipyard to build the “GAS 95” on 9 February. From left to right: Nikolaus Schellenberger, Head of Fleet Management, HGK Shipping, Marcel Zweers, Managing Director, TeamCo Shipyard b.v., and Tim Gödde, Business Unit Director Ship Management, HGK Shipping.

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About the HGK Group:

Häfen und Güterverkehr Köln AG (HGK) is the logistics company within the City of Cologne's public utilities group. Formerly just a port operator, HGK has developed into a group that provides integrated transport and logistics services with operations across Europe. Divided into its five divisions, Logistics & Intermodal, Shipping, Rail Operations, Infrastructure & Maintenance and Real Estate, the HGK Group operates the largest inland waterway port network in Germany through its subsidiaries and holding companies, one of the largest private railway companies for transporting cargo, specialist logistics firms and terminals as well as its own railway network and workshops for railway goods traffic. HGK Shipping GmbH is the largest inland waterway shipping company in Europe.

About HGK Shipping:

HGK Shipping is part of Häfen und Güterverkehr Köln AG. Its fleet comprises about 300 vessels, including owner-operated ships. The spectrum of goods transported ranges from liquid chemical products and liquefied gases to dry goods and even break bulk cargo.