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HGK Shipping and BASF commission innovative gas tanker

The “Gas 94“ was officially put into service with a ship-naming ceremony on 30 September 2021. The innovative, low-water gas tanker operated by HGK Shipping has been specially designed and constructed on behalf of BASF. It will help ensure that supplies of raw materials reliably reach the BASF business site in Ludwigshafen, even if the water levels in the river Rhine are critical. The diesel-electric drive system on board the vessel will help the two long-standing partners to achieve their sustainability goals.

The river Rhine and inland waterway shipping are crucially important for supplying the BASF Group’s site at Ludwigshafen. Most of the inland waterway shipments have to make their way through the critical water levels at Kaub in the central Rhine valley. The “Gas 94” has been designed in such a way that it can still transport 200 t of liquefied gases, even if the water level at Kaub is just 30 cm. This is possible because of the optimised uplift properties on the vessel’s hull, which has been achieved using a complex arrangement of components such as cargo containers and the drive system technology. The gas tanker is 110 metres long and, with a width of 12.5 metres, broader than the other vessels in the HGK Shipping fleet.

The search for new solutions was caused by the effects of the ongoing low water levels on BASF’s logistical processes in 2018 as well as recurring low water levels on the river Rhine. New kinds of ship designs should therefore make a significant contribution to safeguarding the competitiveness of the Group’s business site at Ludwigshafen. “HGK Shipping is a long-standing partner of BASF and was able to convince us with its innovative design for a low-water gas tanker conceived by the company’s own Design Center,” says Barbara Hoyer, Vice President Domestic Deliveries, BASF SE. “The ‘Gas 94’ will be used to transport liquefied gases between the ARA ports and Ludwigshafen in future and will therefore make a major contribution to supplying the business site in Ludwigshafen with critical raw supplies,” says Derya Kurus-Ebermann, Business Manager C4 & Heavy Cracker Products, BASF SE.

The new gas tanker represents a further milestone in optimising the design of vessels and the drive concept for HGK Shipping too. “The combination of an innovative drive system with a ship design, which is optimised for extremely low water levels, provides an impression of how we think that inland waterway shipping will develop in future,” says Steffen Bauer, CEO of HGK Shipping.

“However, HGK’s top priority is to meet the requirements of industry,” says Anke Bestmann, Managing Director of HGK Gas Shipping GmbH. “It’s our goal to put into service six modern

low-water vessels with optimised drive systems during the next few years and therefore construct the 'Gas 100' by 2026."

Tim Gödde, Managing Director Business Unit Ship Management, HGK Shipping, says, "The 'Gas 94' is characterised by its unusual aft and foreship designs and the low-water properties that they achieve. While the foreship has been designed as a very large unit and therefore ensures increased uplift, the stern part of the vessel is rather like a diffuser. Despite the comparatively small diameter of the propeller, we can guarantee the necessary operational performance, while optimising the fuel consumption behaviour created by the diesel-electric drive system at the same time."

The concept, the basic idea and the engineering for this forward-looking design have been developed by the team at HGK Shipping's Design Center in close cooperation with the transport management experts at HGK Gas Shipping GmbH in Hamburg. An order was placed with the Partner shipyard in Szczecin to construct the hull. The TeamCo shipyard in the Dutch town of Heusden handled the complete outfitting work. The completion went according to plan, so that just 22 months elapsed from the design and engineering work until the vessel was put into service. The "Gas 94" is therefore the fifth vessel that HGK Shipping has commissioned during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Photo captions:



(from left to right): Dr Dieter Steinkamp (Stadtwerke Köln), Steffen Bauer (HGK Shipping), Wolfgang Birlin (HGK Group), Susana dos Santos Herrmann (HGK Group), Derya Kurus-Ebermann (BASF SE), Karl-Uwe Bütof (Ministry of Economic Affairs, Innovation, Digitalisation and Energy of North Rhine-Westphalia), Anke Bestmann (HGK Shipping), Uwe Wedig (HGK Group), Tim Gödde (HGK Shipping)



In line with nautical tradition, Derya Kurus-Ebermann, Business Manager C4 & Heavy Cracker Products, BASF SE, named the vessel by smashing a champagne bottle against its bow. *Source: HGK Shipping*

Making contact:

Would you like any more information? You can reach HGK press spokesperson, Christian Lorenz, on +49 221 / 390 11 90 or send an e-mail to: lorenz@hgk.de.

About the HGK Group:

Häfen und Güterverkehr Köln AG (HGK) is the logistics company in the “Stadtwerke Köln Konzern” (City of Cologne Public Utilities Group). Formerly a port operator, HGK has developed into a European-wide group for integrated transport and logistics services. Divided into the five business areas, Logistics & Intermodal, Shipping, Rail Operations, Infrastructure & Maintenance and Real Estate, the HGK Group operates the largest inland port network in Germany, one of the largest private freight railways, specialist logistics companies and terminals as well as its own rail network and workshops for freight transport operations through its subsidiaries and associated companies. HGK Shipping GmbH is the largest inland waterway shipping company in Europe.

About the HGK Shipping division:

HGK Shipping is part of Häfen und Güterverkehr Köln AG. The fleet comprises about 300 of its own vessels and chartered ships. The spectrum of goods transported ranges from liquid chemical products and liquefied gases to dry goods and even break bulk cargo.