

PORT MOVE MAKES FAST LINK FASTER

As ro-ro ferry Norröna switches to Hirtshals for year-round port of call in Denmark, freight forwarder Smyril Blue Water has operations there streamlined — resulting in improved logistics and shorter processing times.

SMYRIL BLUE WATER has gained logistical advantages in Denmark by having two of its operating units combined into one after roll-on/roll-off ferry Norröna moved to Hirtshals for Danish port of call last October. Prior to the new arrangement, Smyril Line's superferry called at Esbjerg most of the year with the port of Hansholm taking over during three-month summer seasons.

"The decision to switch port of call has proved successful," Smyril Blue Water managing director Bent Rasmussen said. One main reason for that, he added, is that what used to comprise the company's Esbjerg and Hansholm operations has been merged together under one joint management in Hirtshals with offices and warehousing concentrated there rather than split between different locations.

The Faroese ferry operator's choice of port was linked to the fact that Hirtshals offers improved passenger services compared to Esbjerg while at the same time surpassing Hansholm as a natural harbor, Mr. Rasmussen said.

In addition, the sailing distance to the Faroe Islands and Iceland is shorter from Hirtshals compared to Esbjerg. Importantly, Hirtshals' road connectivity is superior as well with a freeway to the harbor making it highly suited for freight traffic.

To fast-track its establishment in Hirtshals, Smyril Blue Water has preliminary rented a warehouse facility and a truck terminal with a total 1,700 square meters of available indoors storage space, Mr. Rasmussen said.

'WE MEAN BUSINESS': An exclusive agent for the Norröna's commercial freight service, Smyril Blue Water relies heavily on the comparative advantages of the ferry's ro-ro capability. As provider of the only international ro-ro freight service in the northeast Atlantic, the company holds a key position in the transport sector.

With own offices in the Faroe Islands, Denmark, and Iceland, Smyril Blue Water is also part of the Blue Water Shipping group, an international freight specialist headquartered in Esbjerg.

"Rolling cargo," said Smyril Blue Water Tórshavn general manager John Frandsen, "is the preferred means of transport for those who are keen to ensure that their goods are taken from A to B with minimal risk of damage."

Mr. Frandsen added: "The combination of our trailers and the Norröna makes it possible for Faroese and Icelandic seafood exporters to have their fresh



produce shipped safely and quickly to the European Continent. To them, Smyril Blue Water is therefore the first choice for quality. It's the same thing when it comes to goods going in the opposite direction, from the Continent to Faroe or Iceland in the safest and fastest way. Our service is not the cheapest but we believe it's the best, especially when time is of the essence and minimizing the risk of damage takes priority."

The time it takes to complete the transport of goods is greatly reduced in a closed system that avoids the potential hazards of container loading and unloading, with the Norröna's operating speed of 21 knots and Smyril Blue Water's fleet

of 150 trailers easily trucked from the ferry once it arrives in port.

Backed by Blue Water Shipping's global network of 50 offices in 26 countries, the service becomes even more convincing for many.

Smyril Blue Water was formed as a joint venture between Smyril Line and Blue Water Shipping in 2005. Since then the freight service has been available year-round from the Faroe Islands, Denmark, and Iceland.

"We've had more business lately than say, a year ago," Mr. Frandsen noted. "This is true of seafood exports from both the Faroe Islands and Iceland but judging from some construction activ-

ity, there are also signs that the Faroese economy is recovering."

More construction could mean more specialty transports, which is one of Smyril Blue Water's special strengths — concrete elements, roof sections, building parts, or any items whose length, width, or height exceed normal limits.

In this context, Blue Water Shipping's expertise in international transport of wind turbines has helped Smyril Blue Water develop its range of services, Mr. Frandsen said.

Meanwhile, as far as concerns freight transport from Iceland, persistence is beginning to pay.

"We wanted to prove from the outset

Smyril Blue Water

Smyril Blue Water Tórshavn
PO Box 3296, FO-110 Tórshavn

www.smyrilbluewater.com
E-Mail: cargo@smyrilbluewater.com
Tel.: +298 309600
Fax: +298 309601

Managing Director: Bent Rasmussen
General Manager: John Frandsen

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Lloyd's Agent for the Faroe Islands

General manager John Frandsen;
Smyril Line ferry Norröna (bottom left).

that we mean business in Iceland," Mr. Frandsen said.

"So we've been prepared to keep the service running through the first few winters without expecting to generate much in the way of revenues. We're pleased that it's now starting to show positive results."

Smyril Blue Water also offers a daily airfreight service to and from the Faroe Islands.

"The courier service is used for express transportation of all sorts of goods, from documents to ships' spare parts. For example, we send fresh fish on a daily basis to markets in Central Europe, Asia, and the United States."

