



DEUTSCHE AFRIKA-LINIEN  
JOHN T. ESSBERGER

# news

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The Group's In-House Magazine

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Looks good: rendering of 7,900 dwt chemical tanker on her virtual maiden voyage

## The future is now – new orders for JTE fleet

Contract signed for two 7,900 dwt chemical tankers placed in China for delivery in 2028

John T. Essberger's current newbuilding programme takes another step forward with the order of two 7,900 dwt chemical tankers. Following the four 7,100 dwt vessels in the centennial anniversary year 2024, and the four 13,800 dwt tankers currently under construction at the Rainbow Shipyard near Shanghai, who will carry the family names of members "Ann-Mari Essberger", "Nofretete Essberger", "Eduard Essberger" and "Lucy Essberger", a contract for the building of two 7,900 dwt tankers was signed shortly before Christmas 2025.

The contracting party is once again the Dingheng Shipyard on the Yangtze River, with which we are familiar. It now operates under the name "China Merchants Shipbuilding Industry Group Yangzhou Dingheng Shipyard". Construction of the first of the two vessels is scheduled to begin in September 2026, with delivery expected in 2028. Options exist for an order of further 2 + 2 vessels of this type at Dingheng.

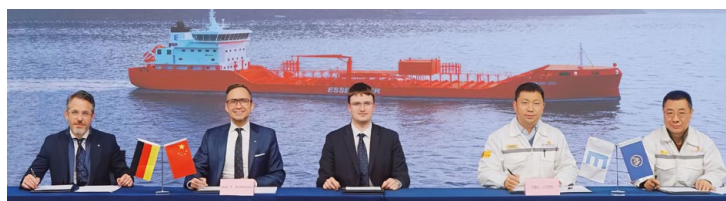
The newbuilds, adapted in design and size to current market conditions, will gradually replace the older part of the E&S Tankers fleet. The new vessels feature the standard specifications typical of Essberger, such as 16 stainless steel parcel tanks and a high ice class (1A). They will run on Marine Gas Oil (MGO) and environmentally friendly Biofuel, with the option to convert to methanol if required.

Johan Isaksen (Ship Management) and Dr Ricardo Alvarez (Finance) travelled to Yangzhou to sign the contracts, accompanied by Philipp von Rantzau, who represented the family as an assistant to his father, Dr Eberhart von Rantzau. Essberger has a high level of the ves-

sel specifications and outfit, but the final makers selection is still in progress. The names of the two ships are not yet known. However, the following are main particulars:

**Length overall:** max. 119.9 m  
**Length between perpendiculars:** 117.1 m  
**Moulded breadth:** 18.0 m  
**Moulded depth:** 9.2 m  
**Design draught / scantling draught:** 6.50 / 6.85 m  
**Deadweight at design / scantling draught:** 7,400 / 7,900 tonnes  
**Maximum air draught:** 34 m

The vessels will feature engines of 3,500 kW / 4,600 hp – designed for a service speed of 12.5 knots.



Signing: Dr Ricardo Alvarez, Johan Isaksen, Philipp v. Rantzau with yard managers



The world is undergoing a period of upheaval the likes of which we have not seen since the end of the Second World War. The geopolitical situation is changing daily, and it is impossible to venture economic forecasts. John T. Essberger has not yet been directly affected by the many conflicts, as we have no ships in the Persian Gulf. But we are certainly feeling the negative consequences indirectly.

Since the start of the war in Ukraine, the Baltic Sea has been regarded as a hotspot where cyber warfare is jeopardising the safety of shipping, primarily through interference with navigation. In the Middle East, shipping has virtually ground to a halt due to the "hot" wars. Our ships do not operate there. But the consequences of the enormous energy costs affect our fleet, as it relies on MGO and LNG as fuel. And they affect the oil- and gas- chemical industry, which employs our fleet.

JTE is well prepared for the future. With the two 7,900 dwt chemical tankers we have just ordered, our ambitious newbuilding programme is moving forward. This enables us to rejuvenate our own fleet and replace the vessels of our partner Stolt-Nielsen that are being phased out due to age. This will increase our share in the E&S Tankers joint venture.

The icy winter in the Baltic Sea has shown how important it remains that all newbuilds continue to be designed for the highest ice class (1A).

In these uncertain times, we must focus our efforts on the areas where we can make a direct impact: internal cohesion within the company, customer satisfaction and the optimisation of our costs in ship operations.

Yours Heinrich von Rantzau

# Where we are and where we want to go – an inside look by Dr Eberhart von Rantzau

*At the invitation of the DAL/JTE works council the von Rantzau family gives an overview of the economic situation/ Pros and cons of working from home discussed and decided*

The group's annual works council meeting took place on 5 February. At the invitation of the works council, not only the majority of the employees from the Hamburg office were present, but also the von Rantzau family: Dr Eberhart von Rantzau and his wife Patricia with their children Caroline and Philipp, as well as Heinrich von Rantzau and his son Georg. After a welcome speech by Gotthard Iгла, chairman of the works council, Dr von Rantzau took the floor in his capacity as managing partner. Here is his speech.

Quote: "I am pleased to take this opportunity at this works meeting to give you an overview of the economic situation of our group of companies – and how we assess our prospects for the future.

As always, the heads of the various divisions will then provide you with detailed reports. Today, these are Ms Steinfurt, Mr Isaksen, Mr Vang, Mr Willer and Dr Alvarez, who will also be available to answer your questions: Where we are and where we want to go.

We are living in a time of great political, economic and social upheaval, the likes of which we have not seen since the end of WW2. Since shipping is also affected, no one can yet say where the journey will take us. It harbours dangers, but also opportunities. This is why it is important that we redefine our position every day. We cannot change the



*We are family: In the front rows Heinrich von Rantzau, Dr Eberhart von Rantzau, Johan Isaksen (Shipmanagement), Philipp von Rantzau, Caroline von Rantzau and Georg von Rantzau*

world. Nor can we change the markets. But we can influence our costs, and that is what we must work on.

Over the past 102 years, we have proven time and again that our shipping company can overcome crises, most recently during the coronavirus pandemic and the global shipping crisis. And I am confident that the fourth generation of our family, who joined our office on 1 October last year and are familiarising themselves with the tasks ahead, will continue to lead the company safely towards its 200th anniversary.

We have often emerged stronger from crises. The founding of E&S Tankers, for example, was a groundbreaking decision and strengthened our leading position in the market. Since then, chemical shipping has been at the heart of our business activities and has proven its profitability.

However, we also know that this success must be worked for every day. It does not just fall into our laps. Especially not in an industry as dependent on economic cycles as shipping.

Unfortunately, the economic environment for E&S Tankers has recently deteriorated significantly. The chemical industry,

our largest customer, is undergoing a period of upheaval and is in the process of consolidating itself in a difficult geopolitical environment. Since the middle of last year, the spot market has weakened, meaning that we fell well short of our budget targets for 2025.

## "We have to counter the negative trend"

We currently assume that the market will not recover quickly. Our budget planning for 2026 therefore had to be adjusted downwards and we expect a significant cash loss. We do not see any significant improvement for 2027 either nor, if the trend continues, for 2028.

How can we counter this negative trend on our own? Two recent successful measures are good examples of this.

The flag change on our three Dutch ships, which we carried out last year, involved considerable financial expenditure, but has since contributed significantly to reducing costs. Another example: internal measures to improve the monitoring of our fleet's bunker consumption led to a nine per cent reduction in fuel costs last year.

We are also on the right track with the four ships with dual-fuel engines delivered from China in our anniversary year 2024. These vessels often run on LNG. Cheaper bio-LNG is now available. This is good for the environment and reduces our operating costs. Of course, further cost-cutting measures are necessary.

What does the future hold for E&S Tankers? As you are all aware, we have implemented a very extensive programme over the last few years to optimise a large part of our older tonnage. Nevertheless, there are some ships that will soon reach an age limit that will make it impossible for them to remain in our fleet. We are therefore in the process of replacing the older ships with modern, environmentally friendly newbuildings.

Since our 100th anniversary, four new 7,100 dwt tankers have been successfully put into service. The ships have proven themselves and convinced us of the high quality of Chinese shipyards. However, it is not only the quality of Chinese shipbuilding that has increased, but also the prices. Nevertheless, we ordered four 13,800 dwt tankers in China

*(continued on page 3)*



*Works Council Chairman Gotthard Iгла addressing the guests*

(continued from page 2)

last year, the first two of which are already under construction. Shortly before the turn of the year, we ordered two newbuildings of 7,900 dwt each, again in China. As you can see, we are doing everything we can to further consolidate our leading market position in chemical shipping.

However, some of our competitors are also trying to renew their fleets. Our partner Stolt-Nielsen, however, is currently considering what to do with its older ships deployed at E&S Tankers. Two of them have already been sold and newbuildings seem not to be an option for our Norwegian partner. So, Essberger will have to fill the potential gap in the fleet with its ships and increase its share in the E&S Tankers joint venture accordingly.

Our ambitious newbuilding programme represents a huge financial effort that John T. Essberger and our family must bear. We are doing this to give the shipping company, and thus all of you, a perspective for the future. We will only achieve this future if we join forces and each of us contribute our personal share. Of course, we might also have to accept further inevitable restrictions if necessary.

Since the coronavirus crisis, we have lost some of our sense of community. This was due to circumstances that forced us to move part of our work into the home environment. Keyword: "working from home". We have survived the crisis, and coronavirus has largely been overcome. We therefore decided to allow only one day of working from home as of 1 June 2026. However, in view of the major challenges that

lie ahead, we need to make further joint efforts, to offset the negative results we expect this year, in the coming years. The best prerequisites for this are daily interaction, personal dialogue and close cooperation under one roof. It is a sign of loyalty if you not only accept future restrictions, should they be necessary, but also actively support them." End of quote.

### The focus was on mobile working

At the end of the works council meeting, questions from employees were answered. The focus was on mobile working and the new rule of eliminating one of two days of working from home. The topic of mobile working was discussed in the works council in the following

days, which then wrote to the owner family pointing out that the new working-from-home regulation was perceived as "an expression of a lack of trust and appreciation for the work performed". In addition, scientific studies have shown that mobile working does not reduce productivity but promotes it.

In his reply, Dr von Rantzau pointed to the shipping company's financial investments in renewing its fleet and the current uncertain market situation. He writes: "All consultants who are familiar with our company recommend restricting working from home entirely or at least partially. Of course, a manager can grant working from home if it is necessary, for example in the case of illness or urgent family problems as has been our practice for decades. But only in exceptional cases."

## Safe operation and strengthening the company culture

*Manila conference for officers and ratings and a special guest from Hamburg*

The Work Safe Home Safe Conference took place from 17 to 18 March for officers and on March 19 for ratings at the Admiral Hotel in Manila. The three-day programme focused on safe, reliable and efficient ship operations.

Participants gained valuable insights from sessions that covered many important subjects. The main focus throughout the event was safe operations and the aim of strengthening our culture of oper-

ational excellence. A fellowship night with a seventies and eighties theme was held for our attending officers, ratings, family members, TOS office staff, JTE representatives and our long-standing partners from the PTC Group.

Mr Philipp von Rantzau, fourth generation JTE, attended the conference. This was the first time a member of the owners family joined this event. His presence underlined the owners' continued

commitment to our business, to our manning pool in the Philippines and to our partnership with PTC. In his opening speech at the fellowship night, he among others stressed the importance and value of strong collaboration between ship and shore.

Loyalty awards were also presented to long-serving officers and ratings in recognition of their commitment and many years of service.



*Philipp von Rantzau in Manila*



*Face to face with the future captains and officers of the Essberger fleet: Aiming for a strong collaboration between ship and shore*

# A cold winter in the Baltic is a good winter for E&S Tankers

Why is that so? Christian Vang, Commercial Director of E & S Tankers, has the answers and explains why his fleet adapted well to the hard winter of 2025/26



Frozen Gulf of Finland, not unusual in the winter months. “Philipp Essberger” breaks its way through the coastal ice – and it is not alone. Another Essberger chemical tanker in the distance

**E**arly in March 2026, the Baltic Sea Ice Service published the following ice report: “In the Bay of Bothnia, there is fast ice along the coasts, up to 80 cm thick in the north and up to 45 cm thick in the south. At sea there is very close ice, 20 to 45 cm thick in the south. In the Quark (the passage between Sweden and Finland incl. the Åland Islands) there is close to very close ice and at the coast there is up to 50 cm thick fast ice. Along the coast of the Bothnian coast, there is level ice and up to 45 cm thick fast ice, further out open water and new ice, In the Gulf of Finland, there is 20 to 45 cm thick fast ice in the east, thinning out towards the west. The Gulf of Riga is covered by mostly 5 to 25 cm thick very close ice and up to 50 cm fast ice present in the northeast. Elsewhere in the Baltic region, open water or new ice is present outside the coast at places and in sheltered places like the

Bossen waters around Rügen, and in the lagoons in the south and southeast there is fast ice as well as very close ice, 10 to 50 cm thick. Close to open ice is drifting in the Pomeranian Bay.”

**DAL/JTE News: This data sounds quite impressive. In Germany we experienced blizzards and exceptionally low temperatures in the double-digits over a long period due to a stable high-pressure belt settled over north and eastern parts of Europe. In your experience: would you consider this an extreme winter for shipping in the Baltic or almost close to normal?**

**Christian Vang:** Based on the early-March 2026 ice reports and what is now known about this winter’s conditions, yes, 2026 qualifies as an extreme winter for Baltic shipping, clearly well above what has been considered “normal” in recent decades. Bay of Bothnia:

fast ice up to 80 cm, very close drift ice, ridging and compression – characteristic of severe ice winters. Gulf of Finland: extensive fast ice and 10 to 40 cm of very close drift ice; in 2026 it was reported as “completely frozen” at times. These are not typical for a “normal” modern Baltic winter, which in most recent years has seen limited fast ice mostly confined to the northern Bay of Bothnia and only patchy drift ice in the Gulf of Finland. The 2026 patterns showed a deep southward expansion of significant ice.

So, coming back to your question, I would say based on historical data and this year’s conditions that the ice extent was above average and the highest in 15 years. It was impacted by heavy ridging, compression, and fast-ice development far south of recent norms, high-pressure systems delivering prolonged double-digit sub-zero temperatures as observed in Ger-

many, and strained icebreaker capacity.

**E&S Tankers is operating in areas of up to 80 cm thick ice. The vessels feature A1 ice class. But where is the limit? When do they have to rely on icebreaker assistance?**

Our A1 ice class vessels are designed to operate independently in difficult ice conditions, allowing them to run for longer periods without icebreaker assistance, improving safety and reliability during the Baltic winter season. However, it does not mean the ships are “iceproof”. Ice Class 1A vessels can still become trapped in severe ice conditions and may still require icebreaker support. During winter, ships with higher ice classes are often prioritised for icebreaker assistance and access to ports, while vessels with lower ice classes may face restrictions or delays.

*(continued on page 5)*

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**What about additional hazards – icing of deck and superstructure, working on deck, boarding pilots, navigating in ice, delays...** When entering iced waters, the workload on the bridge crew increases dramatically. Navigation becomes an exercise in concentration. Officers must careful-



Christian Vang of E&S Tankers

ly search for openings, leads, and cracks in the ice and steer the ship precisely along them. A wrong decision or loss of momentum can cause the vessel to become trapped, sometimes within minutes, leaving it immobilised and dependent on icebreaker assistance to break it free. While this support is routine in the Baltic winter, getting stuck can mean delays, increased fuel consumption, and added operational risk. Life on deck is no easier. Freezing spray and snow can quickly build up thick layers of ice on the ship's decks and superstructure, raising the vessel's centre of gravity, affecting its stability. This ice cannot simply be ignored, it must be removed manually by the crew, working with tools in biting winds and sub-zero temperatures on slippery surfaces. Everyday operations such as mooring also take much longer, as lines become stiff with ice and, as the captain,

using a combination of spring lines and water flow from the propeller and bow thruster works to clear the ice alongside jetties. Together, these challenges make ice navigation not just a test of the ship's strength, but of extreme effort, teamwork and professional judgment in some of the harshest conditions at sea.

**Operating under ice conditions requires special ship designs, therefore higher investments in building and it is connected to higher operating costs, extra charter, higher fuel consumption and what else? How do you invoice your customers?**

Building a ship without ice strengthening and more simple design is "cheaper" to run but we are maintaining a fleet that is top of the line, also in terms of ice class. The same applies to our network. We don't charge extra for our ice-classed ships. We are more of the

belief that the clients who ship with us value our service level required.

**So, only a cold winter is a good winter for E&S Tankers...**

I would like to emphasise that delivering safe and reliable transport is a core component of what we do. Our aim is to be the strongest link in our clients' supply chains, especially during the challenging winter months. We are dedicated to ensuring that our clients' requirements are consistently met, and this means maintaining their trade lanes throughout the entire year, regardless of weather conditions. To support this, we engaged to operate a fleet of 46 highly sophisticated Chemical tankers, of which 36 are ice-classed and, notably, 27 of those hold the highest Finnish ice class certification. This robust capability allows us to guarantee safe and uninterrupted service even when conditions are most demanding.

## "Amalie Essberger" – Vessel of the Year 2025



**C**aptain Jakub Nadaj and his crew were announced winner of the "Vessel of the Year" award for 2025. Johan Isaksen, MD Essberger Shipmanagement, writes: "This year's competition was exceptionally strong, with many vessels across the fleet delivering consistently high performance. Against the very competitive fleet, 'Amalie Essberger' distinguished herself as the top performer. Throughout the year, 'Amalie Essberger' delivered outstanding results across all key performance areas, marked by safe and reliable operations, excellent vetting results, and zero customer rejections. The crew demonstrated a consistently high level of professionalism. The E&S team highlighted their collaboration with the vessel throughout 2025 as exemplary. These results reflected sustained, high-quality work both on board and ashore. No incidents were recorded in 2025. As a token of our gratitude, the vessel is awarded 2,500 US dollar to the welfare fund, and a plaque was presented to the vessel." Second place was shared by "Eberhart Essberger" and "Nordic Sola", and third place went to "Elsa Essberger".

# Whereabouts

April 2026

Ship name	Master	First Mate	Chief Engineer
Agnes Essberger	Yury Shcherbinkin	Daniel Bosek	Tomasz Wolczek
Amalie Essberger	Wojciech Nowak	Marcin Zietek	Jeremias Cerdenia
Anneliese Essberger	Leonardus Kanter	Kokou Gbegan	Geert Sap
Annette Essberger	Waldemar Literski	John Christopher Domingo	Marian Cornea
Birthe Essberger	Jacek Borysiuk	Robert Halicki	Sergey Panishev
Caroline Essberger	Chris De Boer	Dominik Kazior	Arnoldus Eland
Charlotte Essberger	Andrey Grzhibovskiy	Svajunas Ramanauskas	Lukasz Zeromski
Christian Essberger	Krzysztof Niedzielski	Szymon Stalica	Mirosław Jaworski
Coral Essberger	Paulo Santos	Iulian Tudorache	Adam Szwajka
Cuno Essberger	Dariusz Swierkosz	Edgars Seliverstovs	Pawel Wieclaw
Eberhart Essberger	Andrei Malenkov	Vedran Horvat	Vitaliy Kolesnyk
Edith Essberger	Krzysztof Nazorek	Maciej Maciejuniec	Pavel Semyonov
Ellen Essberger	Adam Incewicz	Dorian Glodowski	Roman Kulish
Elsa Essberger	Alexander Tkachenko	Dariusz Podsiadly	Sergey Kononenko
Georg Essberger	Henryk Bienenstok	Andrey Bykovskiy	Sylwester Leszczynski
Gisela Essberger	Lars Gronlund	Dominik Kulesza	Aleksey Plyasukhin
Heinrich Essberger	Pawel Bula	Igor Batakov	Volodymyr Yurkevych
Helga Essberger	Takhir Biazitov	Martins Taurins	Olegs Cerepanovs
Inga Essberger	Deniss Tatarinovs	Dmytro Kachur	Ian Christopher Bonhoc
Johann Essberger	Marcin Harasim	Damian Mandau	Piotr Trusinski
John Augustus Essberger	Piotr Tchorowski	Andrejs Kivko	Alexander Konstantinov
John T. Essberger	Maxim Klementevsky	Waldemar Rzepka	Andrzej Szyca
Liesel Essberger	Antonio Petinga	Farits Jambajevs	Mirosław Szylobryt
Lisa Essberger	Sergey Pogorelovskiy	Paul Gene Galotera	Ivan Nabatnikov
Liselotte Essberger	Arkadiusz Duczynski	Nikolay Kirillov	Marcin Prena
Nordic Saga	Menard Responde	Ronald Jr. Llanos	Alexey Yakovlev
Nordic Sira	Magnus Drake Af Hagelsrum	Sahabudin Nagle	Steinar Avlopp
Nordic Sola	Lorentz Lorentzen	Richard Calingacion	Lc Vincent Giuseppe Saul
Nordic Sund	Leif Arneback Moller	Marlon Bien Gonzaga	Sergiy Gruby
Patricia Essberger	Rafal Garbacz	Szczepan Pachula	Dagnis Gavars
Philipp Essberger	Viacheslav Leonov	Maksim Naumcik	Vitor Belo
Roland Essberger	Piotr Bes	Adrian Kuzmicz	Tomasz Kozlowski
Theodor Essberger	Ali Ayara	Ruslanas Karpovas	Dmitry Shcherbov
Ubena	Jaroslav Maciuk	Ihor Kuzmin	Yevhenii Moshkovskiy
Ulanga	Aleksandr Popov	Erwin Fanugon	Romeo Roman
Ursula Essberger	Jeroen De Koster	Sjoerd Rijndorp	Hendrik Van Schoonhoven
Wilhelmine Essberger	Dan Tocitu	Quirino II Agot	Oleksandr Burlaka

## Aus der Reederei-Familie

### Jubiläen

#### 40 Jahre

Anke Piper, *Finance*, 04.02.1986

Arnoldus Adriaan Johannes Eland, *C/E*, 01.03.1986

#### 25 Jahre

Frank Breuer, *E&S Tankers*, 1.2.2001

#### 10 Jahre

Pavlo Polishchuk, *Ship Management*, 26.03.2016

### Besondere Geburtstage

#### 90 Jahre

Hans-Hinrich Mewes, *Pensionär*, 08.02.1936

Klaus Jochens, *Pensionär*, 02.03.1936

Jürgen Kurth, *Pensionär*, 24.03.1936

Georg Stichel, *Pensionär*, 25.03.1936

#### 85 Jahre

Klaus Dieter Tittel, *Pensionär*, 03.04.1941

#### 75 Jahre

Janusz Ladkowski, *Pensionär*, 24.04.1951

#### 70 Jahre

Günter Rolf, *Pensionär*, 01.03.1956

#### 65 Jahre

Grzegorz Klepacki, *T/MAS*, 27.02.1961

Vitor Manuel Belo, *C/E*, 08.03.1961

Oleg Durach, *Elect*, 26.03.1961

#### 60 Jahre

Rogen Campomanes Calledo, *Master*, 06.02.1966

Fernando Laurea Rollon, *AB*, 07.02.1966

#### 50 Jahre

Carsten Ruthemann, *IT*, 19.01.1976

Daniel Kubacki, *Master*, 15.02.1976

Lukasz Zeromski, *C/E*, 16.02.1976

Taras Viktorovich Popov, 04.04.1976

Anthony Estuita Diaz, *AB*, 05.04.1976

### Neue Mitarbeiter an Land

Kay Benzel, *IT*, 01.01.2026

Kathrin Rudolph,

*Crew Accounting*, 05.01.2026

Charlotte Leube, *E&S Tankers Post-Fixture*, 01.03.2026

Kamil Kurczewski, *Azubi*, 1.2.2026

Adam Carlsen, *Azubi*, 1.2.2026

Max Van Oekel, *Versetzung zu E&S Tankers*

Paul Goetzmann, *Versetzung ins Operations*

### Geheiratet haben

Timo Wolff (ehemals Otto), *IT*, 13.02.2026

### Wir gedenken

Ilse Wecking (89 Jahre)  
Dezember 2025

Margret Wulf (80 Jahre)  
Januar 2026

Dieter Schoon (86 Jahre)  
Februar 2026

Hans Grimm (89 Jahre)  
März 2026



Our Chief Engineer Sergey Kokorin (60) sadly passed away on board the "Lisa Essberger" on 12 February 2026

## Rantzau fourth generation pays a visit

*In the port of Hamburg: Philipp von Rantzau was welcomed on board of the "Ellen Essberger"*



During a visit at the ADM Terminal on 27 February, the "Ellen Essberger" (8,571 dwt) was inspected by Philipp von Rantzau, the son and personal assistant of Dr Eberhart von Rantzau. An important part of his training for the job is to get familiar with the ships and

crews of the family-owned shipping business. Von Rantzau Jr. enjoyed a hearty welcome by Captain Adam Incewicz and Chief Engineer Dorian Glodowski and was supplied with the usual safety outfit and equipment on deck. Later the crew and their guest gathered in the officers' mess

for a souvenir photo. From left to right: AB Mark O D Damos, MTM Kim K R De Castro, AB Rennel, P Salalima, D/T John A L Tomagan, guest of honour Philipp von Rantzau, Master Adam Incewicz, PMP Rolly A Toling, 2/O Ramel J M Aro and C/E Marius Eugen Ion.

## 40 years' Ms Piper

There are a number of employees who have been loyal to the Deutsche Afrika-Linien/John T. Essberger shipping group for many years. At the beginning of February 2026, Anke Piper celebrated her 40th anniversary with the company. Today, she works in the Finance/Treasury department, where her responsibilities include liquidity management and bank transfers. At a reception in the Gartensaal on Palmaïlle, Dr Eberhart von Rantzau thanked her for her long service to the company and praised her extensive expertise, as well as her exceptional reliability and trustworthiness, in the presence of his son Philipp von Rantzau, currently assistant to the manage-



*Anke Piper with Dr Eberhart and Philipp von Rantzau*

## Annual Shipmanagement Strategy Meeting in Hamburg

Essberger Shipmanagement top brass had a meeting in what looks like a fancy restaurant. The team reviewed the performance of 2025 and set goals for 2026. A significant part of the discussion focused on measures to drive continuous improvement on the main deliverables: safety, reliability, cost efficiency and customer acceptance. The open format encouraged honest and constructive discussions. Improvement is important, because our business depends on a high degree of interdepartmental dependency. Only when all departments work together, we can achieve the best possible performance. The participants: Tina Doescher, Silke Steinfurt, André Rimmel, Askell Baardsen, Dejan Golub, Sergiu Bondoc, Bernd Schlamann, René Hogrefe, Niall Mushet, Henrik Bahnsen, Torsten Doernte and Johan Isaksen.



# Investing in sustainable fuels pays off

Sustainability Manager Kristof Kück and E&S Tankers Commercial Director Christian Vang on reducing emissions within our own operations / Christian Vang and Kristof Kück have the right answers

**DAL/JTE News:** There is growing discussion in logistics about reducing emissions within one's own operations instead of relying on external offsets. What does this approach mean for us and for our customers?

**Kristof Kück:** This approach is often referred to as "emission insetting". For us it means actively reducing greenhouse (GHG) emissions within our own operations instead of buying offsets from projects outside our industry. We invest directly in improvements in our fleet and daily operations, meaning the assets we own and over which we have both operational and technical control. The emission reductions remain within our fleet and are not sold on voluntary markets. That keeps the positive impact real, measurable and traceable for us and for our sector. It also means that our customers can directly benefit from emission reductions that are created within the transport services they use.

## How do we put this into practice on our ships, out on the water?

The most effective way to reduce our emissions is the uptake of sustainable fuels. In 2025 our focus was on biomethane, a fuel with a significantly better GHG lifecycle profile compared to fossil fuels such as marine gas oil (MGO). Last year a higher share of our overall fuel mix came from biogenic feedstocks compared to previous years. This was already sufficient for us to comply with the GHG intensity limits set by the FuelEU Maritime Regulation. A key milestone was sourcing European biomethane with an upstream footprint so favourable that it achieved a climate-positive balance. In simple terms, more CO<sub>2</sub> was removed from the atmosphere during production than was emitted through the funnel during sailing. For customers who are looking to reduce the footprint of their logistics, this creates a concrete opportunity to lower transport-related emissions within their supply chains. That is a strong signal of what is already possible today.



## Our fleet is known to customers for its flexibility. Does that flexibility create challenges when applying sustainable fuels?

Yes, it does! Our Chartering and Operations teams work every day to position the fleet quickly and efficiently to meet customer needs. However, sustainable bunker stems are still limited and not available in every port at every time. As a result, we cannot guarantee that a specific cargo will sail on the exact vessel that receives sustainable fuel at that particular moment on that specific route. This is not due to a lack of willingness. It is simply a question of current availability in the market. We have already been working with an insetting approach together with customers in recent years, and this experience has helped us understand what works well. Building on that foundation, we are now introducing an improved book-and-claim system.

## How does a book-and-claim system solve this problem?

Emission reductions achieved through the use of sustainable fuels on any vessel in our fleet are registered in a certified book-and-claim platform. Each verified GHG reduction is converted into a unique digital token. The system ensures that every token can only be used once. It cannot be duplicated or double-counted. Independent auditors verify the emission

reductions, and the platform provides full traceability of the chain of custody. This allows us to allocate the climate benefit to a specific shipment, even if the sustainable fuel was physically used on another vessel within our fleet. In this way, we decouple the physical fuel supply from the commercial allocation of the emission reduction, while maintaining environmental integrity. For our customers, this means flexibility. They can support lower emission transport without being dependent on one specific ship at one specific time. At the same time, they receive transparent documentation that they can use in their own emission reporting.

## Is such a system really credible and sustainable?

That is a fair question and, yes, it is credible! This approach is recognised under the EU Renewable Energy Directive as a mechanism to overcome constraints in the supply chain of renewable fuels. It allows decarbonisation even when sustainable fuels are not physically available at a specific port at a specific time. By creating additional demand through book-and-claim, we support the scaling of sustainable fuel production and the investments required for further market development. In that sense, it is not a workaround. It is a practical tool to help reduce GHG emissions of our industry.

## How do our customers perceive this initiative?

**Christian Vang:** With growing interest, GHG emissions have carried a price tag for several years now, and regulations continue to tighten. At the same time, end customer awareness of sustainability is increasing. There is, therefore, a business case for many of our customers. Most of them have defined decarbonisation strategies for their supply chains. As a carrier, we represent a relevant share of their overall emission balance. We have also learned that many customers do not want emission offsets from unrelated industries. They prefer emission reductions that are directly linked to their own activities. The book-and-claim system provides exactly that connection. Some of our customers already transport sustainably produced cargo with us. When these products are moved using lower emission transport, the overall carbon footprint decreases further. It creates a positive chain effect. The customer benefits, and we accelerate emission reductions within our fleet. Participation is entirely voluntary. Customers who deliberately choose lower or near-zero emission transport pay a sustainability premium. This premium directly supports further uptake of sustainable fuels in our operations. It is a transparent mechanism where ambition and impact are connected.

## What are the next steps?

**Kristof Kück:** We are exploring ways to expand our access to sustainable fuels, with biomethane remaining central in 2026. At the same time, we are further strengthening verification processes and developing dedicated customer pathways for low-emission or near-zero transport solutions.

**Christian Vang:** Our aim remains to find smart and practical solutions that decarbonise our operations while creating tangible value for our customers.

**Thank you, Christian and Kristof, for these insights into a promising initiative.**