

# New chance for feeder barge?

The Port Feeder Barge concept designed several years ago by Bremen University's Prof Dr Ing Ulrich Malchow for Elbe River navigation (see *WorldCargo News*, August 2007, p28) could see the light of day in the Port of Hamburg. The chaotic traffic conditions with chronic congestion on the roads within and around the port area call for an alternative transport mode. Making use of the many canals and tributaries of the Elbe River would be an ideal alternative for container transportation within the port, it is claimed.

Dr Malchow's idea has been acknowledged by political and business interests in the city, but so far that is all; he was even awarded the Rotterdam "River Dating" River Transport Innovation Trophy

for 2012, but what is needed is action.

However, the Liberal Party (FDP) raised the matter in the Hamburg Parliament in one of its last sessions before the summer recess. The deputy leader of the FDP, Dr Thomas Sönke Kluth, stated: "The Port Feeder Barge opens new opportunities. The self-propelled platform could cut costs and reduce trucking. Some 170 TEU could be moved with this equipment per sailing. It would bring immense advantages." He criticised the Upper House (the Senate) for not investigating the concept more thoroughly, and attacked what he described as HHLA's "negative reaction."

The local Green Party is also in favour of the Port Feeder Barge and its port expert Anjes Tjark sees it as an ideal tool for cost-effective logistics and environment-friendly transport. Both the SPD (government) and CDU (main opposition) agreed that the concept would have to be accepted by the port industry generally. It was agreed to form a working group to investigate the future prospects for Port Feeder Barge, but sceptics warn that this may be just another way to "kick it into the long grass" again.

*The Port Feeder Barge: an idea whose time has finally come?*

