

Freeport of Riga adds new berth at Baltic Container Terminal

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Construction works are underway in Kundziņsala at the Baltic Container Terminal (BCT), the largest box terminal of the Port of Riga, with the underwater works for the construction of a new berth section having been completed.

At the end of the project, the process of loading and unloading cargo at the terminal will be accelerated, increasing the terminal's operational efficiency and commercial competitiveness.

"Considering that the terminal accommodates military vessels, the berth capacity growth will be an investment into increasing military mobility and strengthening the common security of our country and NATO," said Freeport of Riga in a statement.

The project provides for the extension of the BCT berth KS - 34 by 57.3 meters, with the construction of its additional section. Therefore, the overall length of the BCT berth line, including three berths, will be 506.3 meters. Because of enhanced terminal capacity, it will be feasible to

moor and service two large ships at the same time, such as container ships, ro-ro vessels (cargo ferries), or military ships, as well as moor vessels up to 340 meters in length.

In addition, 280 sheet piles with a length of 20.5m were utilised in the building of the BCT's new berth section. Special technology was used to drive them into the riverbed 19.5 meters below the water level, making a continuous sheet pile wall.

Furthermore, 24 pipe piles with a diameter of 1.42m have been driven into the riverbed to support the rail-mounted gantry crane placed at the berth.

The outer sheet pile wall is also connected to the coast by 31m-long horizontal anchor rods. The anchor rods have a total length of 934 meters. During the riverbed cleaning, of inappropriate soil - silt and fine sand - was dredged from the berth area.

"The construction of port berths is a unique and complex process that requires great responsibility, specific knowledge, experience and extensive resources. A new berth is an important event for the port, an important contribution to the development of its infrastructure and increasing the port's competitiveness, improving our military mobility and that of allies of Latvia," emphasised Ansis Zeltiņš, CEO of Freeport of Riga.

Andris Razgalis, the author of the project from the engineering company "Kurbada tilti" noted, "The biggest challenge in the design of the berth is to provide the necessary load resistance. Ships weighing up to 79,000 tons with cargo will be moored at the new BCT berth, and it is planned to mount a 999-ton port crane on the berth. There will be a constant movement of trucks, port equipment and military transport, as well as the movement of containers, which can reach a maximum weight of up to 30 tons."

According to a statement, the BCT's new berth section is being developed under a tripartite agreement signed by the Freeport of Riga Authority, the European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Agency (CINEA), and the SIA Baltic Container Terminal (BCT). The agreement to increase the dual-use capacity of the Latvian port by improving port infrastructure in Kundzīšala was signed in the spring of 2023.