

Bremer Zeaborn swallows shipping company of Erck Rickmers

After the Rickmers Holding of Bertram Rickmers, the Bremen-based Zeaborn Group also acquires the E.R. Shipping ship management of Erck Rickmers - and thus a second Hamburg heavyweight.

The Zeaborn Group continues to expand: With the acquisition of 100% of the shares in the shipping company business of Erck Rickmers - retroactively to January 1 - Bremer will become one of the largest commercial managers of tramp tonnage worldwide. In the future, 165 ships will be the joint fleet.

The move had been announced: Already at the beginning of the year, Zeaborn CEO Ove Meyer announced further company acquisitions and had set a fleet of up to 250 vessels in management as the target.

Last autumn, Rickmers Holding, including the shipping division Rickmers Maritime Services, was taken out of bankruptcy. As a result, the fleet had grown to a total of 94 units in management. Now follows with the E.R. Shipping the other Rickmers brother Erck another renowned shipping address Hamburg.

The corresponding contracts were signed on 1 February, but the execution of the transaction is still subject to antitrust clearance. About the purchase price and other financial data confidentiality has been agreed, it is said.

With retroactive effect from 1 January 2018, the management of E.R. Shipping, all employees, subsidiaries and participations integrated. This also includes the shipbroker Harper Petersen, previously the Rickmers Group and E.R. 50% were involved in shipping, 100% of the Zeaborn group.

The technically and commercially managed fleet at Zeaborn grows by 61 container ships and 20 bulkers to a total of more than 165 ships. Together, the group will now employ around 360 people ashore and more than 5,000 at sea. With locations in Asia, Europe and the United States, the company is represented worldwide.

The transaction is another major consolidation step in the German shipping industry scene. Peter Döhle and Costamare's joint venture "Blue Net Chartering", which was recently launched, will manage 220 medium and medium-sized container vessels of up to 14,000 TEU, the chartering association Hanseatic Unity Chartering of Borealis, shipping company Nord and Bernhard Schulte by Leonhardt & Blumberg (including Buss Shipping) and brings it to 233 units between 900 and 9,000 TEU. For this purpose, Claus-Peter Offen took over the Conti shipping company from Munich in March 2017 and has meanwhile brought it to Hamburg.

About three years ago, both Rickmers brothers had tried to merge the ship management activities of their companies. This had failed. Zeaborn had later taken over the Rickmers line and thus the MPP business of Bertram Rickmers and after the insolvency of the holding also the ship management (Maritime Services). Only a year later, the E.R. Shipping under Bremer control.

The sale of the ship management is not a farewell to shipping, Erck Rickmers clarifies. The group remains committed to its 34 owned and jointly financed E.R. ships. In addition, a newly established company at the turn of the year under the traditional name Blue Star Group will develop shipping investments for institutional investors. Jochen Klösger remains CEO of E.R. Capital Holding.