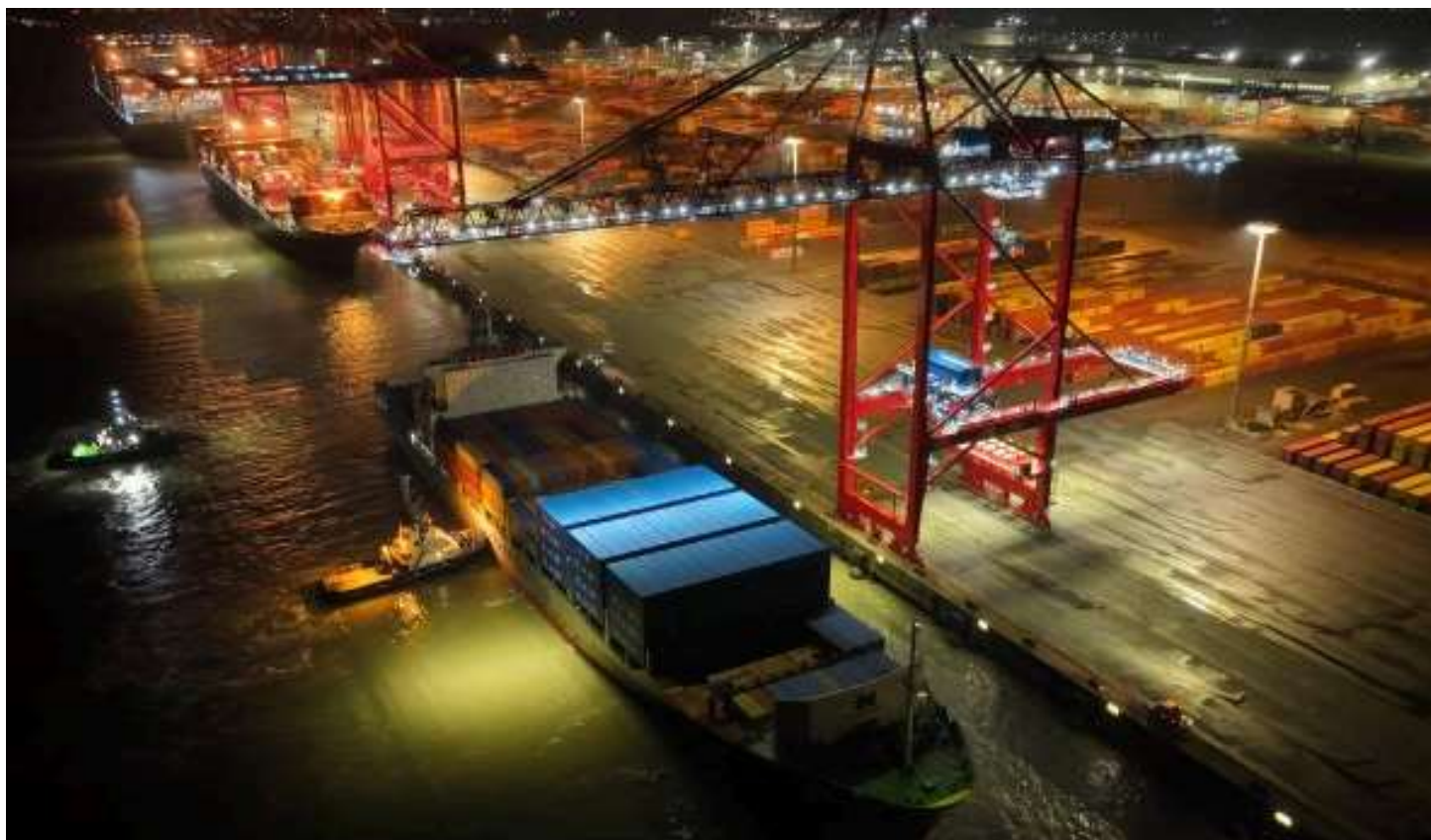**S&P** **Journal of Commerce**

Suez routing allows rapid transit of new expedited China-Europe service

The 2,500-TEU Kawa Ningbo pulls up at JadeWeserPort in northern Germany. Photo credit: JadeWeserPort / Lemon8.

Greg Knowler, Senior Editor Europe | Jan 27, 2025, 11:40 AM EST

Kawa Shipping's new China-Europe Express service is being routed via the Suez Canal, enabling the carrier to offer a 26-day transit direct from Ningbo to Germany's JadeWasserPort in Wilhelmshaven, billed as the fastest service on the Asia-Europe trade lane.

The first ship of the CEX expedited service was the 2,500-TEU *Kawa Ningbo* that called at JadeWasser Port last week carrying time-sensitive products, including batteries and consumer goods.

As a Hong Kong-listed carrier with no affiliation to Israel, Kawa Shipping has been able to offer the new CEX service using the shorter route through the Red Sea, apparently

with no fear of facing attacks by Houthi militants that have forced most ocean carriers to divert around southern Africa for the past 14 months.

"Since the Chinese shipping company, Kawa Shipping, does not make a stop in an Israeli port because the CEX is a direct service between China and Northern Europe, the company does not expect any problems with the route selection through the Suez Canal," a spokesperson for JadeWeserPort told the *Journal of Commerce* Monday.

While using the shorter route through the Suez gives Kawa Shipping a competitive advantage over its peers, the carrier is only offering a monthly service From Ningbo to Wilhelmshaven for the first half of the year. It will be operated by four vessels ranging from 1,600 TEUs to 2,500 TEUs, with plans to expand to a fortnightly service using 5,000-TEU ships in the second half of the year.

Marc-Oliver Hauswald, managing director of Container Terminal Wilhelmshaven JadeWeserPort Marketing, said the CEX service was a unique link between two strong economic regions — the Shanghai River Delta and Northern Europe.

"This waterborne fast lane will connect Northern Europe and China in just 26 days without any further stopovers, complementing existing liner services," Hauswald said in a statement Monday, adding that JadeWeserPort was fast developing as a regional hub with a hinterland rail network reaching as far inland as Budapest.

Wilhelmshaven is also one of the hubs for the new Gemini Cooperation alliance between Maersk and Hapag-Lloyd that launches next week. It is Germany's only deepwater port that is not affected by tidal flows that can limit access of large container ships.

Diversions continue despite Houthi pledge

Most of the world's ocean carriers continue to divert their ships around southern Africa, a route that takes about 45 days from China to North Europe, despite recent pledges by the Houthi that attacks will now be limited to ships affiliated with Israel.

Ocean carriers are closely monitoring the situation in the Red Sea, with CMA CGM noting that despite the positive progress being made toward stability in the region, the fragile nature of that stability meant it was not yet possible to end diversions around Africa.

"Given the ongoing tensions and associated risks for commercial vessels in certain areas, CMA CGM will for the time being continue to prioritize alternative routes, including a significant reliance on passage via the Cape of Good Hope," CMA CGM said in its latest update.

However, the carrier did not completely close the door on Red Sea transits. "While this approach applies to the majority of our network, adjustments may be made on a case-by-case basis depending on security and global operational conditions," it said.

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