

PRESS RELEASE

MAGPIE reaches milestone in autonomous shipping: inland vessel sails independently between Rotterdam terminals



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Rotterdam, 11/06/2026 -This week, the Port of Rotterdam formed the setting for a significant milestone in the development of autonomous sailing. During a demonstration, the Port of Rotterdam Authority and partners within the European MAGPIE project showed how an inland vessel can sail independently from one terminal to another in a busy port. The vessel navigated safely among regular maritime traffic.

The MS Letitia (HTS Group) sailed from Amaliahaven on the Maasvlakte via Europoort and the Nieuwe Waterweg to Waalhaven in Rotterdam. The conventionally powered inland container vessel MS Letitia operated autonomously during the demonstration. The vessel was able to perform manoeuvres such as undocking, sailing through the port and along the river as well as docking independently. At the same time, the system continuously monitored its surroundings, detecting other vessels and safely avoiding them where necessary, taking the environment into account. The skipper remains ultimately responsible and can intervene at any moment, while the system provides support for the navigation and decision-making.



Funded by
the European Union

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Why autonomous sailing is needed

“Autonomous sailing enables new logistics concepts that improve the flexibility, efficiency and reliability of inland shipping, which is an important hinterland transport modality for the port of Rotterdam. Containers, bulk and liquids transported via inland waterway reduce pressure on the road network and are moved more energy-efficiently than by road. With growth in freight throughput, it is essential that inland shipping maintain and expand its share of freight transport. Autonomous sailing could play a role in this.” - Oscar van Veen, Director of Innovation at the Port of Rotterdam Authority.

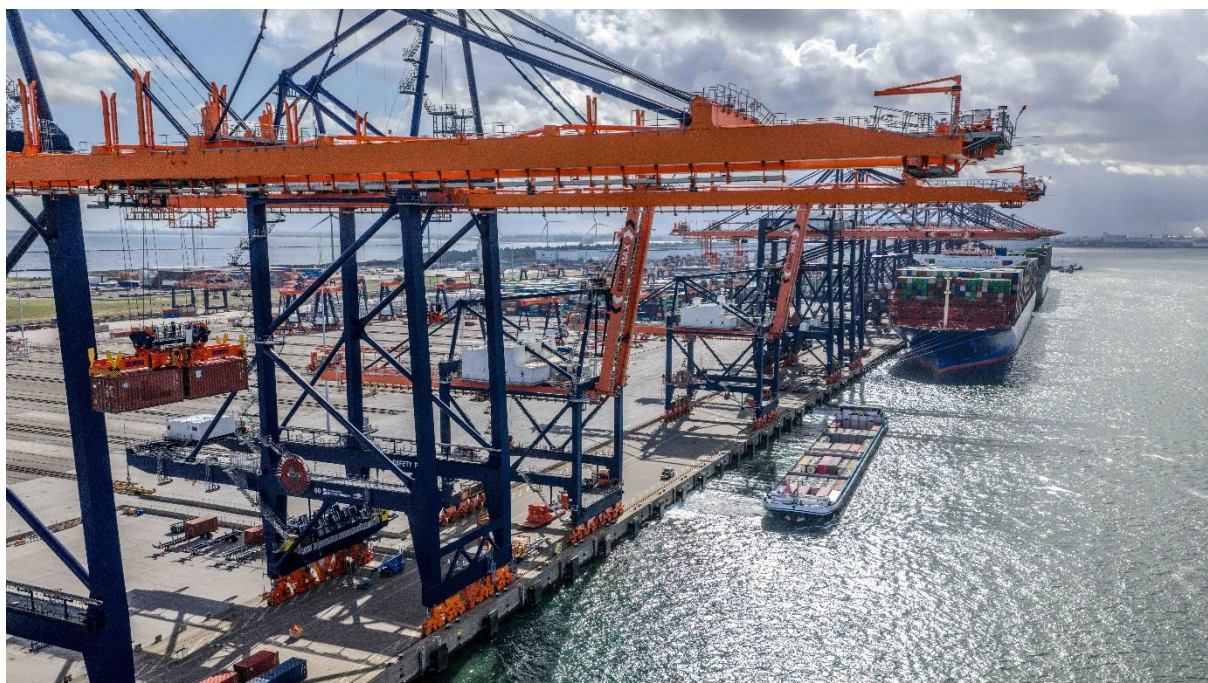
The future of smart ports

Europe faces major challenges related to the energy transition, industrial competitiveness, climate targets and strategic resilience. Ports are playing an increasingly important role as locations where innovations are developed and applied in practice. The MAGPIE project was established to accelerate this development.

Autonomous shipping is one of the ten demonstration projects within MAGPIE. These demonstrators across maritime, inland waterway, rail and road transport provide practical insights that ports can implement immediately to support the transition towards greener operations.

Turning innovation into practice

Project partners Alphonat Marine, Argonics and Argonav will integrate elements of this demonstration in their assistance products for inland vessels. argoPositionPilot is now available for vessels with a fixed propeller and rudder, while argoRadarPilot can display intentions and will feature collision detection.



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About MAGPIE

MAGPIE (sMArt Green Ports as Integrated Efficient multimodal hubs) is a European innovation project focused on accelerating the transition to climate-neutral ports. Coordinated by the Port of Rotterdam and co-funded by the European Union, MAGPIE brings together 42 partners to develop, test, and scale innovations in clean energy, digitalisation, and sustainable logistics.

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About the Port of Rotterdam

The port of Rotterdam creates significant economic and social value in the Rotterdam-Rijnmond region, the Netherlands and Europe through employment and security of supply of energy, food and other products needed in society. Thanks to the favourable location, excellent infrastructure and hinterland connections, the port serves as an important hub for industry and global trade.

The Port of Rotterdam Authority's core tasks are the sustainable development, management and operation of the port and industrial complex and maintaining the effective, safe and efficient handling of shipping in the port and the offshore approaches to the port. The Port of Rotterdam Authority aims to strengthen the port's position as a future-proof logistics hub and industrial complex. Quality is central to this. The Port Authority's ambition is to develop a climate-neutral port that is in harmony with its surroundings

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