



PORT OF KIEL

# PRESS RELEASE

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## PORT OF KIEL strengthens its partnership with MSC Cruises Enhanced Ostuferhafen Cruise Terminal is homeport for MSC cruise ships

(Kiel, 27<sup>th</sup> April 2019) The PORT OF KIEL and the shipping company of MSC Cruises are going to intensify their long-lasting partnership. The corresponding letter of intent was signed on 27<sup>th</sup> April by Pierfrancesco Vago, Executive Chairman at MSC Cruises, and Dr Dirk Claus, Managing Director at the PORT OF KIEL when the cruise ship “MSC Meraviglia” berthed in Kiel for its maiden call. Dirk Claus: “This agreement offers both partners good prospects for the future. Through the expansion of our terminal capacities in the Ostuferhafen port area, MSC will keep on expanding its presence in Northern Europe.” This morning, Pierfrancesco Vago, Dirk Claus and the President of the City of Kiel, Hans-Werner Tovar, opened the enhanced cruise terminal in Ostuferhafen which has been custom-tailored to the processes of MSC. During the on-board reception that followed, the traditional inaugural plaques were ceremoniously exchanged with Captain Mattia Manzi. The “MSC Meraviglia”, measuring 171,000 GT, is the vessel with the most international cruise ship passengers that visited the capital city of Schleswig-Holstein so far. And in the following 2020 season MSC will base a second cruise ship in Kiel, namely the “MSC Splendida”.

The “MSC Meraviglia” arrived in Ostuferhafen in the early Saturday morning (27<sup>th</sup> April) to conclude its transfer journey from the Mediterranean Sea. The ship will head off to a total of 22 voyages throughout Northern Europe starting from Kiel as its homeport. The itineraries include the metropolises on the Baltic Sea (route: Kiel, Copenhagen, Helsinki, St Petersburg, Tallinn, Kiel) as well as the Norwegian fjords (route: Kiel, Copenhagen, Olden, Flam, Stavanger, Kiel). Dirk Claus: “The geographic location of Kiel makes it the perfect starting point for the so-called Butterfly Cruises. Furthermore, the combination of the Baltic route and the Norway route is an interesting option.” Next to its position as a passenger turnaround port, Kiel is also a touristic destination. International guests boarding the ship in Copenhagen take international flair to the city and/or go on shore excursions throughout Schleswig-Holstein and to Hamburg. A shuttle service takes these guests from the terminal to the city centre. The first departure of the “MSC Meraviglia” in the evening will be led by the water fountains of a harbour tug and accompanied by atmospheric piano music from the landside.



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MSC cruise ships have been frequently calling at the port for fourteen years now. The beginning was marked by the vessel “Rhapsody” on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2005 before Kiel became the shipping company’s port of origin and destination in 2006. Kiel has been part and parcel of the itinerary planning for Northern Europe ever since and has been visited 370 times by eleven different MSC cruise ships to date. Therefore, MSC ranks among the shipping companies with the most visits to Kiel. About 1.4 million MSC passengers have boarded or left a ship in Kiel so far. Another 200,000 guests are expected to come on top this year. During the Kiel Week, the “MSC Meraviglia” can be spotted twice on the fjord: on 22<sup>nd</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> June. The last call of the ship’s Northern Europe Season on 21<sup>st</sup> September will mark the 392<sup>th</sup> visit of an MSC cruise ship in Kiel. The shipping company’s vessels will exclusively dock at the 400 m long Cruise Berth No. 1 in Ostuferhafen. The terminal, which has been adjusted to the processes of the MSC shipping company, now boosts a large luggage and check-in hall on an overall base area of 4,000 m<sup>2</sup>. Furthermore, the Ostuferhafen port apron has been generously redesigned and now also comprises an exclusive Port Parking car park.

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