

JAAR  
LOODSWEZEN



# navigator nl

Start of a new era • Something in  
common • Markab revisited • Vopak  
Agencies well-established player  
• Then and now: one single goal



# Colophon

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# Dear reader,

**Never a dull moment – that is the first thought that occurs to me in writing the foreword for this special edition of Navigator NL on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of Loodswezen in its present form. A form which has been successful for the last 25 years and, in my opinion, will remain so for the coming 25 years. Allowing people within the established legal conditions to be responsible for the operation of their own organization is - and remains - the key to this success. It's all about people, whether it involves being physically present on the ship's bridge or the training of new colleagues or navigating on board one of the pilot boats or being employed in other supporting services. This has been carried out by extremely dedicated people of Loodswezen for more than 25 years. It therefore goes without saying that we should express our gratitude to all these people for their enormous efforts during the past 25 years. Together, we have made a difference - and a successful one. Congratulations!**

In this edition of Navigator NL a large number of people will highlight this anniversary and also share with us their experiences with our organization. Marvellous stories and nice anecdotes. Of course, it is just a selection and not a complete list. That would be impossible, but there is a great variety which - in my opinion - makes this edition so special. Where an anniversary is concerned, you cannot help looking back and I have to say, that's always a nice thing to do. However, there should be no leaning back complacently, we must look ahead: where can we go, where do we want to go and where must we go in the future? An attempt to combine looking back and looking ahead leads to the following reflections. Professionally speaking, we still enjoy going on board ships that have to be piloted and

provide the captain with the best possible advice. Being able to look one another in the eye in critical situations - maybe even being able to smell one another - that is where the power of our profession lies. What a lot has changed though: just look at the pictures taken 25 years ago - the clothing, the equipment, the ships, and the ports. What will not change, however, is our ability to push the boundaries and - always in a professional way - to carry out our duties in the safest and fastest possible manner. Keeping in mind the public interest of all the parties involved in the provision of our pilot services. Yes, a lot has changed: our fleet has been more or less completely renewed in the last 25 years, enabling us to embark or disembark in practically all circumstances; and our relationship with those around us has become open and transparent.

On the basis of our own strength we enter discussions in order to make contributions in ensuring that the logistics in the ports served by us run as smoothly as possible. An important factor during the past 25 years has been our sense of national solidarity, a solidarity that allows room for regional diversity. I am convinced that this has also been one of the important success factors of the past 25 years. And this solidarity also concerns our sister organizations in Europe and around the world: we support, help and encourage each other, but also address issues with the aim of growing stronger together. That's where the possibilities and opportunities lie. Not letting go of each other must be one of our points for attention in the future. Adapting, where necessary, being open-minded about change, and being prepared to search for the best solution together. That is what will take us ahead, nationally and internationally. I am convinced that if we can continue in the spirit and with the energy of the past 25 years, we will be well on the way to Loodswezen's 50th anniversary. I hope you'll enjoy reading this special edition of Navigator NL.

Eric M. van Dijk  
President





*Hans Nijse and John Kluwen*

# Start of a new era

The privatisation of the pilots was formalised 25 years ago through the introduction of the Pilotage Act on the 1st of September 1988. Hans Nijse - responsible for drawing up the act - and John Kluwen - former president of the Dutch pilots - together reflect on the path towards autonomy.

The very first step towards privatisation of Nederlands Loodswezen in fact already dates from 1972, recalls Hans Nijse. "Back then, MP Van Rossum of the SGP party filed an amendment to strip municipalities of their power to appoint separate port pilots." For the next ten years or so, the subject would be inconclusively discussed in committees and project groups. Nijse: "As acting deputy director of Legislation and Legal Affairs at the Directorate-General of Shipping and Maritime Affairs (DGSM), it was up to DGSM to inform the minister responsible, Neelie Kroes, that the talks had definitely stranded. We sent her a memorandum to this extent in early 1983."

Minister Kroes was a member of the first Lubbers Cabinet, which had taken office just recently and for which the privatisation of government services was an important spearhead. The minister therefore refused to simply accept the memorandum. Instead, she asked whether it would be possible to integrate the state and port pilots and at the same time privatise the organisation. Nijse: "We responded that this would certainly be possible provided a number of conditions were met. Following on that, the cabinet decided on the 1st of July 1983 to further study and develop this integration and privatisation process."

## Raid tactics

The pilots themselves were initially unaware of the plans of the government in The Hague. "We only learned of their intentions through the grapevine," remembers John Kluwen, president of Vereniging De Nederlandse Loods (Dutch Pilot Association) at the time. "Their idea was to only autonomise the pilots and keep all the support services under government control. It all somewhat resembled a raid tactic. However, we were a very vocal group."

In The Hague, a governmental core group had indeed commenced the preparations for the privatisation. Nijse was part of this group and was already working on the formulation of the Pilotage Act. A Coordinating Council was to guide and manage the entire process. The minister appointed Roel van Heusden, also chairman of the National Ports Council, as her adviser and chairman of the Coordinating Council. The other members were the CEO of what was at the time still the Rotterdam

Municipal Port Management and the director-general of DGSM. Both Nijse and Kluwen praise the qualities of Van Heusden as a unifying factor and stimulator of the entire process.

Of course, the pilots also had to be represented. It however was not possible for the government to accept the VNL for this; it was considered a government organisation and as such deemed inappropriate as a consultation partner. Kluwen: "As pilots, we therefore formed guilds in all regions surmounted by the United Federation of Dutch Pilots Guild, FVNL. This became the interlocutor for the government. The guild by the way comprised exactly the same people as the VNL. We set ten conditions which had to be met in order for us to agree to privatisation."

## "It all somewhat resembled a raid tactic"

### Ceding privileges

To shape the path towards autonomy, Nijse took the initiative for writing a discussion paper on the future form of the pilots' organisation at the end of 1983/early 1984. "It is good to see that what I had envisioned in that document ultimately became reality as well: the formation of a Dutch Pilots' Cooperation (NLC), four Regional Pilots' Corporations (RLCs) and a corporate structure (a so-called BV in Dutch) with support services. The pilots settled for their internal economic and operational interests' and responsibilities four (regional) Pilots Associations."

What followed was an extensive negotiation process between the government and the pilots. Six different project groups with representatives of both parties addressed all the relevant aspects. The fact that the municipality of Rotterdam still had to agree to shed the port pilots constituted an additional complicating factor. After all, cessation of that privilege had been a taboo for many years. Nijse explains how minister Kroes practically solved this matter: "At that time, there was talk of replacing the network of shore radars in the port. Two-thirds would be financed by the State. Rotterdam however was offered full control, provided they agreed to the integration of state and port pilots, including privatisation."



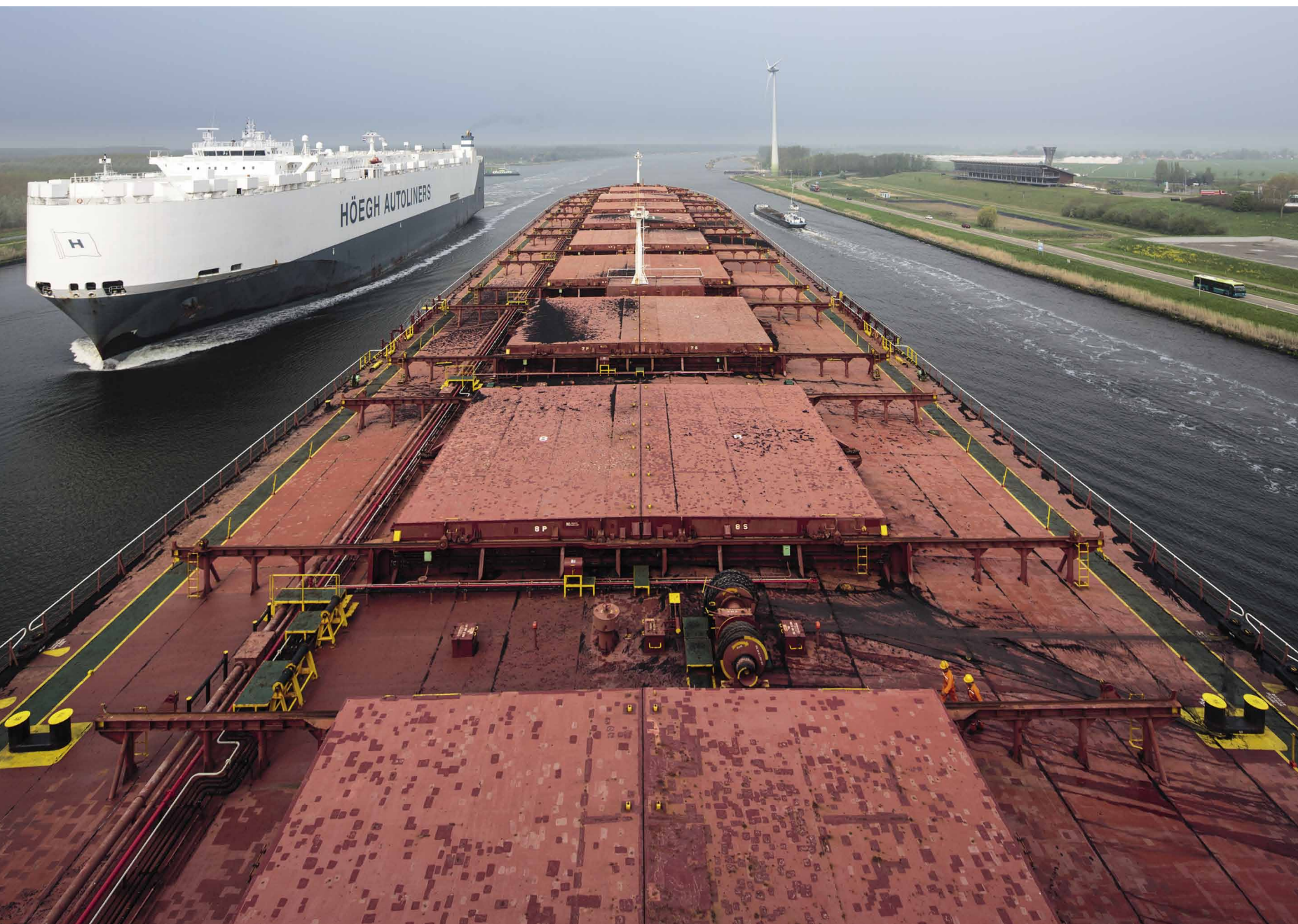
Kluwen also recollects the 'industrial action' briefly staged by the pilots during the process. "It was late 1984/early 1985. For a while, we had already felt that our remuneration at the time was not in line with our responsibilities. This was simply not acknowledged, so we in Rotterdam-Rijnmond decided to adhere to the hours of most civil servants, working from six o'clock in the morning to six o'clock in the evening, five days a week. After the first Thursday night that we were not on duty, plenty of ships were of course waiting. Port companies fiercely protested and as president I even received a personal claim for damages. The minister called almost immediately though to say that we had to stop our actions and discuss the matter. This we did on Friday evening. The discussions were lively, but at midnight we were able to announce together with the minister at the Dutch TV News that consensus had been reached on our salaries."

### Minister Kroes

The Pilotage Act was finally presented to the Dutch Lower House in October 1987. Following their consent, the Upper House ratified the Act in July 1988. As of the 1st of September 1988, the pilots would actually

be independent. Looking back, Nijssse feels that the input of all parties involved has ultimately resulted in a highly satisfactory result. "The ten conditions set by the pilots were met and both their legal status and a collective labour agreement for the support staff were well arranged. Furthermore, the Act explicitly anchors the public interest aspect. Setting the pilotage tariffs for example remained a matter for the government."

Kluwen became the first national president of the autonomised pilots. Nijssse had in the meantime also made the switch from government to Loodswezen. "You came up with this, so now you must also help us with the further implementation," summarizes Kluwen his thoughts of the time to Nijssse. Both also fully agree that Neelie Kroes, who continued her ministry in 1986 in the second Lubbers Cabinet, had played a crucial role. "Without Kroes, things may have developed very differently. She is responsible for eliminating many obstacles."









# A history of wrong discussions



Since the privatisation in 1988, Nederlands Loodswezen has almost constantly been the subject of government scrutiny.

Rein van Gooswilligen, board member of the Pilot Corporation Rotterdam-Rijnmond from 1990 and national chairman between 1997 and 2009, experienced everything up close. “One commission had not yet even finished or the next one was already starting.”

“Things started going wrong almost immediately after the privatisation,” analyses the now-retired Van Gooswilligen the difficult relationship between government and pilots since 1988. “We had hardly started operating autonomously when a study carried out by order of the Dutch Court of Auditors by Bureau Berenschot labelled the privatisation effort as a complete failure due to high costs. Since then, the Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management has consistently distanced itself from the privatisation and this negative attitude has permeated all sorts of dossiers.”

## Debunking myths

Of course, the pilots objected to this government perception right from the start. Van Gooswilligen: “We even published a white paper in 1997 to debunk all the myths which were floating about.” One of those myths was that the privatisation had resulted in an exorbitant increase in the pilots’ remunerations. “That is simply not true. Of course we benefited from making our operations more efficient. But so did the customer. The pilotage dues have

only moderately increased over the years. And also bear in mind that after 1988, a ship has never needed to wait for a pilot anymore. A common occurrence prior to the privatisation.”

## Market forces?

“All in all, we became entangled in the wrong discussions with the government,” concludes Van Gooswilligen. An important moment was the establishment of the Commission Frissen by the government in the mid-nineties. It was their job to evaluate the future organisation of pilotage in the Netherlands. In line with the spirit of the times, one of the commission’s main recommendations was the introduction of competition. A nonsensical idea as far as Van Gooswilligen and his colleagues are concerned. “For various reasons, pilotage should never be left to the market.” An additional objection was that part of the pension provisions, which had changed as a result of the privatisation, had been incorporated in the existing pilotage tariffs. “This means we would never be able to fairly compete with new pilotage providers.”

What followed was a lengthy battle with the government over the height of those extra pension provisions. A commission ultimately set this amount at 260 million euros. “But that was not acceptable to the government. A new commission headed by Lense Koopmans ultimately yielded a breakthrough.”

Substantial amounts of time and money. The discussions with the government have never stopped. For a long time, the pilots faced the potential introduction of competition. In the first decade of the 21st century, this threat was replaced by supervision by the Authority for Consumers and Markets (ACM, formerly NMa). Van Gooswilligen regrets all the energy that has been wasted throughout the years, up to and including court cases. “Since 1988, the government has been almost stalking our organisation. Absolutely unnecessary and disproportionally time-consuming. Looking at the costs involved, the shipping sector could easily have been offered a nice discount instead.”

# Something in common: Retired Harbour master

**Retired Harbour Masters Jaap Lems (67, Rotterdam) and Cor Oudendijk (69, Amsterdam) are unanimous in their comments about the time when the pilots' organisation was working towards privatisation. "It was quite an interesting time. We can be proud of the manner in which the organisation has transformed itself into an innovative group of maritime professionals. They have the urge to perform at the highest level. Pilots are such an innovative group of professionals that one may wonder whether Harbour Masters' divisions would have been able to show similar innovative results in the past."**

Lems and Oudendijk were more or less in their own habitat - the World Port Centre in Rotterdam - when they talked to Navigator.NL. After our interview had finished, they really relished the opportunity to catch up with former colleagues at the Harbour Coordination Centre.

It is rather easy for Lems and Oudendijk to go down memory lane. "We talk from experience," they say, and rightfully so. Lems was appointed deputy Harbour Master/manager Shipping Traffic Management, the department of the Rotterdam Port Authority Harbour Masters' division, in May 1987. As such, he was manager of the harbour pilots. The then MD of the Municipal Port Management, and somewhat later the manager shipping department, formally held the position of Harbour Master.

At the time, the Head Nautical Affairs at Rijkswaterstaat, the executive department of the Ministry of Transport, was responsible for the activities of fairway and sea pilots. In practice this meant that harbour pilots embarked and disembarked close to docks to safely navigate incoming and outgoing vessels on the fairways. So-called river and sea pilots took over when the job when the harbour pilots had completed their tasks.

"The step towards the pilotage of vessels from anchorage to berth was certainly an improvement in terms of safely and smoothly managing vessel traffic flow in general and substantially boosted efficiency within the port," Lems observes.

Oudendijk agrees, although the working situation for pilots in Amsterdam was different from Rotterdam in the eighties. Initially, Amsterdam-based harbour pilots resorted under the Ministry of Defence. In 1988, the Directorate Shipping and Maritime Affairs (DGSM) of the Ministry of Transport was in charge. At the time, Oudendijk was appointed Harbour Master for the port of Amsterdam. In 1993, he was appointed acting State Harbour Master. He had to report to the Head Engineer Director of Rijkswaterstaat, being mandated as State Harbour Master officially.

## **Witness to change**

Oudendijk says: "I have witnessed the process of change of the pilots' organisation from a civil service into a privatised organisation from an operational and official perspective, being the National Harbour Council (Nationale Havenraad). In fact, I was the only one in that council who knew what pilotage was all about. The remaining members of the national

harbour council had a commercial, financial or civil service background. As such they respected the issue about pilots' rates in a different way than those who were aware of the operational performance."

Once the negotiations about the privatisation of the pilots' organisation had been concluded, the port community could benefit from a number of improvements as regards pilotage operations. Lems sums up the advantages in the Rotterdam region: "The availability of 'total section pilots' for pilotage could be stepped up the moment one nautical policy ordaining authority, being the Harbour Master of the port of Rotterdam and the State Harbour Master Rotterdam-Rijnmond region, were appointed. The two positions were taken up by one person (being Lems, Ed.). That happened soon after privatisation of the pilots' organisation. It also resulted in the provision of one single Pilot Exemption Certificate, provided the navigation officers meet the requirements to obtain that certificate."

It is one example of how privatisation helped make the organisation more customer-driven, although Lems recalls another example from the old days, when he and a senior pilot were even available in the evenings to examine the candidate pilot exemption for his theoretical knowledge, in case that was most convenient for the candidate. "I even had the signed certificate at hand, provide the candidate passed the final theoretic exam. Though perhaps we were even a bit too customer-driven here."

Being as it may, the merger of the diversely skilled pilots to just the one organisation produced an even more customer-driven organisation, more transparency and more efficiency, although Lems recalls fierce discussions in the early days of privatisation with the pilots' board. They were about the need to avoid unnecessary pilotage and abolish these finally. "A businesslike approach of the matter prevailed relatively fast, suitable in this day and age."

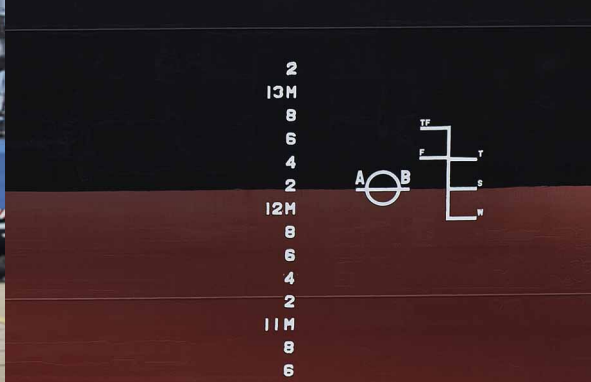
## **Maritime culture**

Both retired Harbour Masters conclude that the nautical background of pilots and harbour masters alike contributes to a better understanding of each other's operations and an excellent relationship. After all those years, there is no more distinction between "those from Rijkswaterstaat" and "those from DGSM" in the ports along the Noordzeekanaal and in Amsterdam. The shipping traffic managers of DGSM felt superior over staff at the IJmuiden locks, who were employed by Rijkswaterstaat.





Jaap Lems



Cor Oudendijk



Oudendijk adds: "In 1993 the two entities merged into one central nautical management body. Initially, it was a hell of a job to have the two cooperate. But nowadays, they operate as one collegial department."

Lems holds a similar opinion about the situation in Rotterdam. "In the early days the Rotterdam Port Authority port pilots felt superior over the State pilots. Manoeuvring into docks was respected as more complicated than navigating on the river. Fortunately, those days are over."

Further improvement of the quality operations within the ports came through the transition from the various civil services into just one single

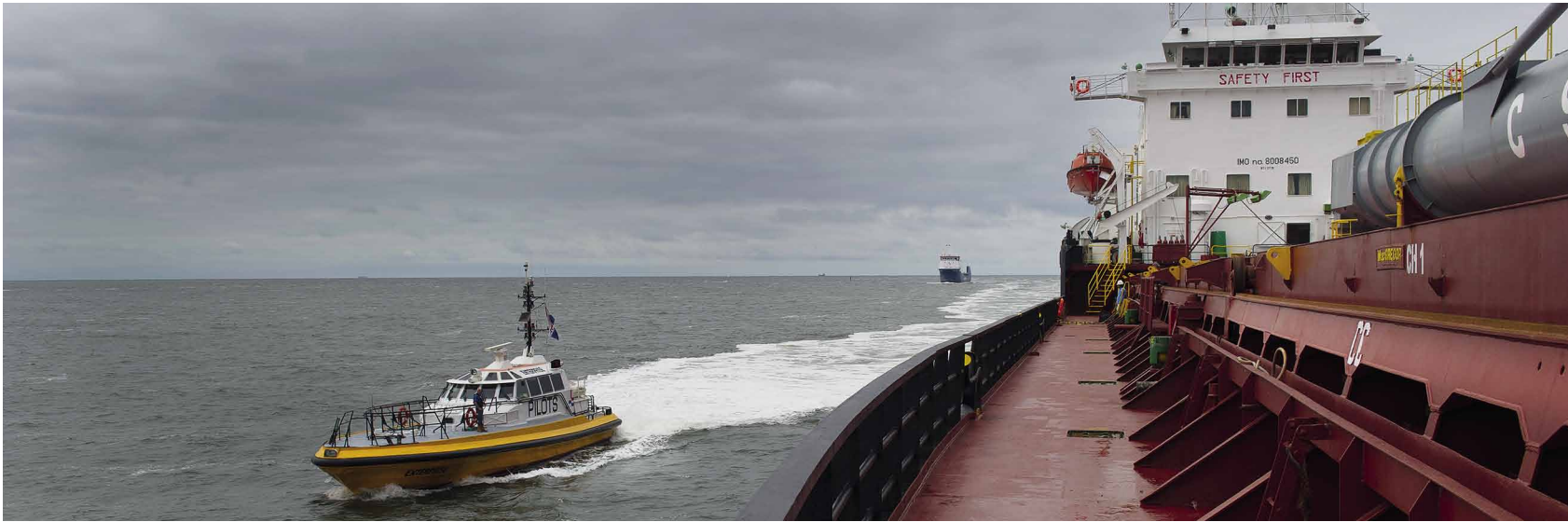
Dutch Pilots' Organisation, they say. Operations in the port sector have become more balanced, more professional and more efficient and transparent for customers of the port. They are convinced that the pilots' organisation can be integrated into the two ports authorities now that these are corporatised.

Lems and Oudendijk advise not to use surefire means to force an open market for pilotage, as proposed in a former version of the EU Port Package Directive. Lems ventures to call that a 'madman plan' leading to unnecessary tension. Both agree there should always be one corporatised pilots' organisation, for the benefit of all involved in the port community.









# Region North: Managing means anticipating

**Johan de Joode**, president of Region North, is rather surprised when asked for examples of how privatisation in 1988 has changed 'pilot culture'. "The very same people with comparable maritime backgrounds are still involved. In essence, the activities of the pilots and support staff have not changed. Since the privatisation, we do however feel that we have been truly operating our own company though."

According to De Joode, the benefits of the transition are undeniable. Pilots are partners in the formed corporations and as such are able to contribute more in terms of management and investments in the organisation. Over the years, this has resulted in a more business-oriented efficiency, more innovative developments and a continuous drive to further enhance the quality of the already excellent services. In that respect, De Joode notes that the core activity of the pilots is always to ensure safety on the waterways and on shore.

"In the initial stages of the privatisation, some pilots were concerned that the transition towards a commercial organisation would come at the expense of this core activity. In the twenty-five years since then, we have

however clearly demonstrated that safety is still at the heart of our activities. And this will remain the case in the future too."

In retrospect, it becomes clear that the move towards privatisation was mainly aimed at opening up the pilotage sector to market forces. Fortunately, minister Eurlings however abandoned this focus on market forces in 2011 during the first evaluation of the Market Monitoring Registered Pilotage Services Act.

"However, we do also realise that some form of supervision over a monopolistic organisation is desirable. Before the NMa (now the Authority Consumer & Market) started functioning as a watchdog, the market was already sceptical in that respect

and requested more transparency. For a number of years now, we have indeed provided our customers with a great degree of transparency and accountability. As regards the latter, there is also our quality standard ISPO which was developed by our pilotage organisation itself. The external, independent audits for ISPO are carried out by Lloyd's Register."

## **Forced changes**

From 1988 on, the privatised pilotage organisation saw itself confronted with changing legislation and circumstances. In that respect, De Joode notes that the function of the Executive Board has basically remained unchanged over the years. "But external circumstances have indeed forced us to anticipate changes. Changes in



compulsory pilotage, differentiation of the pilot stations and the issuing of dispensations and exemptions have resulted in a drastic reorganisation of the supporting service in Region North. In 1999, we said goodbye to the pilotage vessel ‘Wega’ and started serving shipping traffic with tenders from the Eemshaven.”

It is with some pride that De Joode mentions the Hercules, a new acquisition which will particularly be deployed in the northern Wadden area. The steel tender was especially designed to carry out pilotage duties in icy conditions. Region North are also waiting for the steel tender Hydra which will be delivered by shipbuilders Barkmeijer Shipyards Stroobos in September.

Another development aimed at increased efficiency is the integrated deployment of pilots in Region North. This means that a number of pilots are authorised to operate in both the Harlingen sailing area and the Eemshaven sailing area.

Things have also changed as regards the age structure of the pilotage organisation in the

region. Because of the reduced workload, no pilots were trained for many years. De Joode: “As a result, a discrepancy grew between the competencies and age structure of pilots. After 2005, the developments in our region were such that we were able to start anticipating growth. The collective in our region now has a balanced composition.”

If necessary, De Joode and his colleagues can count on the support of two pilots who still work in the Region Rotterdam-Rijnmond. They are authorised to also carry out pilotage activities in the Eemshaven area and can be called upon in the case of illness, leave or scheduled training sessions.

#### **Growth in the Eemshaven**

According to De Joode, it becomes easier to operationally organise and deploy pilots in a growing market. Growth in the port means that pilotage activities can be planned evenly and efficiently. “And there is growth in the Eemshaven,” concludes De Joode, pointing to the developments in the port’s energy sector, the planned construction of offshore wind farms off the islands and developments in the chemicals

sector. Ship movements in that direction could strengthen the ties between Dutch and German pilots and even promote cooperation. The Dutch and German pilots do already help one another when needed, but true cooperation still needs to be further developed.

The regions Rotterdam-Rijnmond and North however do cooperate closely. Since 2001, the two have formed on single partnership. De Joode: “It is quite remarkable that the largest region with the highest turnover and the smallest region with the smallest turnover can get along so well! The good cooperation is attributable to regular consultation and open communication.

The national tariff structure which will be implemented in 2014 is of particular interest to the northern ports. The plans to make the region completely cost-effective between 2008 and 2015 would have resulted in substantial tariff hikes in Region North. Through the introduction of this national tariff structure, these undesirable cost increases however are no longer relevant.

















Jan Willem Siewe, Herman Van Driessche and Francis Verreth



Rob Vliegenthart (Head Fleet Service)





Cooperation Flemish and Dutch pilotage  
services originated in Tender Service

# In perfect harmony



In terms of navigation on the Scheldt River, sea and river pilots take over from one another at Flushing. A true pivot point. For over sixty years, the pilotage services of Flanders and the Netherlands have been harmoniously cooperating in the Tender Service (Rededienst in Dutch) to ensure this crucial moment runs as smoothly as possible. The privatisation of Nederlands Loodswezen 25 years ago has not changed this in any way. Everything is geared to smooth and rapid traffic flows, short lines of communication and, above everything else, safety.

Bonhomie and harmony. That is the atmosphere when Herman Van Driessche, the Flemish Operations director, his Dutch counterpart Jan Willem Siewe and Francis Verreth, responsible for the Flemish operations in Flushing of the Tender Service or Rededienst, get together. And of course, there is also the light-hearted banter that characterises a good relationship. The men reflect on more than sixty years of unique international cooperation in the Tender Service; from Flushing, the Rededienst transports pilots to and from passing ships and the anchorage areas. Unfortunately Rob Vliegenthart, the Dutch counterpart of Verreth, is not able to attend due to an unexpected minor emergency.

**“In the distant past, the arrival of a vessel at Flushing would spur a wild race - initially with rowboats, later with steam vessels - to reach the rope ladder first”**

Of course, it has not all been peace and harmony throughout the centuries. Stories still abound about the days when the two services were in competition with one another. In the distant past, the arrival of a vessel at Flushing of which it was unknown whether a Flemish or Dutch pilot was required would spur a wild race - initially with rowboats, later with steam vessels - to reach the rope ladder first. This competition could get quite heated; a pilot's hat would sometimes end up in the water, even sparking diplomatic incidents. Fortunately though, those unruly days are well in the past now. After World War II, the Dutch and Flemish pilotage services started cooperating in a joint Tender Service or

Rededienst to transport pilots of both nations to passing ships or anchorage areas using the allocation ratio 72.5 to 27.5. Van Driessche: “The decision for this cooperation and allocation ratio had already been made in 1939. However, it was not actually put into effect until the end of 1944, under pressure of the British; they wanted to sail on the Western Scheldt, just recently cleared of mines, with their convoys to supply the allied troops through Antwerp.” Siewe: “The last thing they needed was bickering about whether a pilot was Flemish or Dutch.”

**“But there was simply no other choice. Without chain cooperation, no ship would be handled in Antwerp”**

“The collaboration between the Flemish and Dutch pilotage services which started with the Rededienst is hugely successful,” continues Siewe. “It is actually quite surprising that the cooperation went so well right from the start. After all, we are dealing with a heavily navigated border river between two countries, two government bodies, about five ports which all have their own port authorities and rules, a complicated sailing are.” “But there was simply no other choice,” says Verreth. “Without chain cooperation, no ship would be handled in Antwerp.” The lines of communication are short and easy. In addition, the two pilotage bodies formally meet once every two months. At the Rededienst, things however are far more informal. Verreth: “If necessary, we’re just a phone call away. Or I simply drop by Rob Vliegenthart’s office in person and vice versa.”





**“The excellent boat handling skills of the crew are always a popular tourist attraction”**

#### **Equipment**

Traditionally, the river, canal and sea pilots, Dutch and Flemish, have always changed at Flushing. This is where the facilities are located and where the offices of the Dutch and Flemish pilotage services are situated right next to one another. From the directly adjacent Koopmanshaven, the pilot tenders depart in turns to serve the vessels; the excellent boat handling skills of the crew are always a popular tourist attraction in that respect. Three tenders - two Flemish, one Dutch - are permanently on standby.

Coordination takes place from the Scheldt Coordination Center, which is still commonly referred to as ‘de Uitkijk’ (the Lookout) in Dutch. This is where the ships awaiting pilot change are allocated a pilot tender in accordance with the agreed-upon ratio. Both pilot services use their own schedules to determine which pilot is deployed. Of course, operations continue round the clock. One difference is that the Belgian pilots sleep in the Flemish pilotage building and the Dutch ones at home. The partners also select their equipment completely independently. Incidentally, both the Dutch and Flemish tender fleet will be fully renewed this year. For the Dutch, speed is an important prerequisite because in principle, it must be possible to deploy the Dutch pilot tenders in all regions in their country. For their three new pilot tenders, the Flemish DAB



Vloot have opted for a fast and innovative new beak hull design. But regardless of the characteristics of the vessels: safety, reliability and comfort must always take priority.

### Safety and trust

It goes without saying that all pilots must have full confidence in the professionalism and dedication of the crews. Boarding and disembarking the largest sea-going vessels, which approach Flushing roads at dead slow and often have to change their course 90 degrees to make lee for the pilot tender, is always a risky moment. Verreth: "And should a pilot fall in the water, then he must rest assured that he will be swiftly recovered by a well-trained and properly equipped crew. It is also important that there are enough eyes and ears aboard the tender. Next to the huge metal hull of the sea-going vessel, the radar image frequently falls away briefly. This means that when the tender is manoeuvring away from the sea-going vessel, everyone needs to pay close attention to everything. The crews, consisting of a helmsman, engineer and sailor, must be optimally geared to one another, back each other one hundred percent and be able to replace one another." Siewe adds: "There is no such thing as routine. Ship types and conditions always vary."

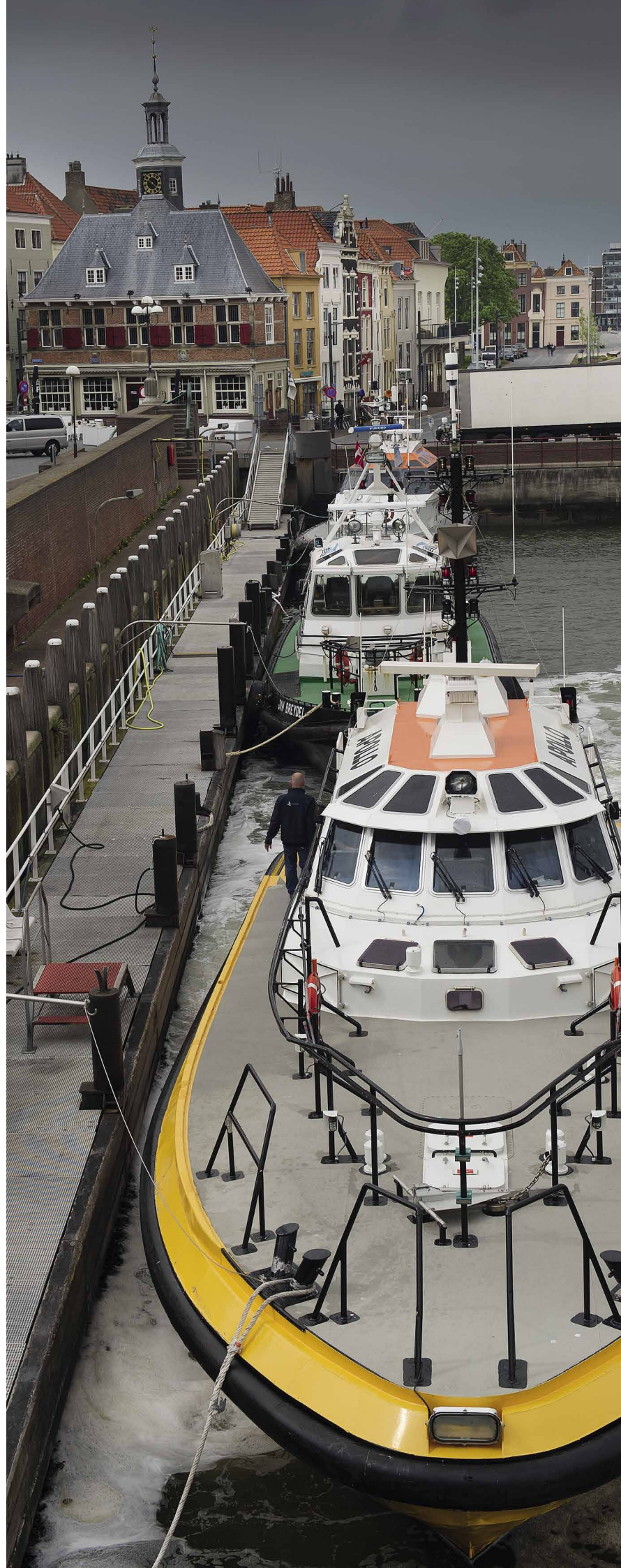
### "There is no such thing as routine. Ship types and conditions always vary"

### Training on the job

Another difference is that on the Dutch ships, crew members are trained to perform all tasks. Siewe: "When our new, jet-propelled Lynx tender was delivered, everyone had to attend a one-week training session and also familiarise themselves with all the technical aspects of the ship." Verreth: "Our approach regarding crew training is more task-oriented; but due to the large transition in functions on board, they can however fully replace one another in practice. In addition, it is permanent training on the job."

### Trends

The three predict even more cooperation in the future. Van Driessche: "Possibly also regarding the joint purchasing of new equipment. The contacts extend to German and French colleagues as well. In addition, there will always be a need for more speed." Siewe: "And not only in terms of reaching the ships faster from the Koopmanshaven; we will also study the possibilities for making the pilot change speedier. The ongoing scaling-up means larger and larger sea-going ships and when these sail dead slow at 6 to 7 knots they become difficult to manoeuvre. And that can prove problematic for Flushing." Verreth adds in conclusion: "ULCC's like the latest Maersk triple-E class have a length in excess of 400 metres. This will demand the utmost professionalism of the pilot services on Flushing roads. With the working relationship as it stands, these challenges can certainly be met."





# Markab revisited: Elegant lady fit for second life

**Before sustainability** became a household concept, the Markab (M-Class) ship design appeared to already exactly qualify as such. Arie Aalbers would not call the M-Class design revolutionary 'but certainly evolutionary'. Together with his business partner Peter van Welie at Alblaserdam-based ASD Ship Design, he made the initial design of the new Polaris class pilot vessels. "As a rule, the performance of the current vessels and their lay-out are the starting point for the improved design of a newbuilding."

Arie Aalbers was at Markab's inception as a student, attending the launch and the trials of the vessel. The Dutch Pilots' Corporation first deployed the vessel in 1978 and has been successfully operating three of these vessels day and night since then.

"In fact, the design was in line with the longstanding tradition of shipbuilding of pilots' cutters, as designed by the Dutch Royal Navy shipbuilding department. At the time, the design of the excellent single-point davits was revolutionary, as was the dual diesel-electric propulsion based on the design of the propulsion line of a submarine. Also the trim and stability characteristics were carefully determined and the smartly chosen tank lay-out means the ship is constant in all loading conditions. As a result, its seakeeping abilities in the intended sea states up to wave heights of 2.8 metres are good considering the size of the vessel. Furthermore, it is a noiseless, elegantly shaped vessel. All who sailed aboard the vessel fell more or less in love with her, perhaps even more as she grew older."

In 2005, Loodswezen started investigations on the future of the pilot services bearing in mind the construction of the Maasvlakte 2 and the requirement to reduce the downtime due to bad weather to an absolute minimum. The formulated requirement was to allow the vessels to continue operations up to a wave

height of 3.5 metres whereas the existing M-class was able to operate up to a wave height of 2.8 metres.

Together with ASD Ship Design, the Pilot Association explored various options including an upgrading of the existing vessels with an advanced mechanical anti-roll system. ASD then had a closer look at the condition of 'the old lady' Markab and found that in general safety-sensitive ship types like gas tankers and passenger vessels can reach the highest age, from 29 up to 36 years, provided the maintenance is up to standard. Dutch Walrus-class submarines will even be upgraded for a lifetime of over 50 years.

## Modern

ASD Ship Design observed that the Markab - the most intensively used vessel - is still representative and her appearance modern, despite the fact that she is over 35 years old. The surveyors stated that the materials used at the time were of the best quality according to navy standards.

However, the accommodations are outdated and worn out. Walking height and length of berths are insufficient for the current length of personnel. The standard of privacy within common sanitary spaces is out of date and not in accordance with regular European requirements for merchant ships."

In addition, the availability of spare parts and specialists to maintain the old prime movers and davit systems became critical.

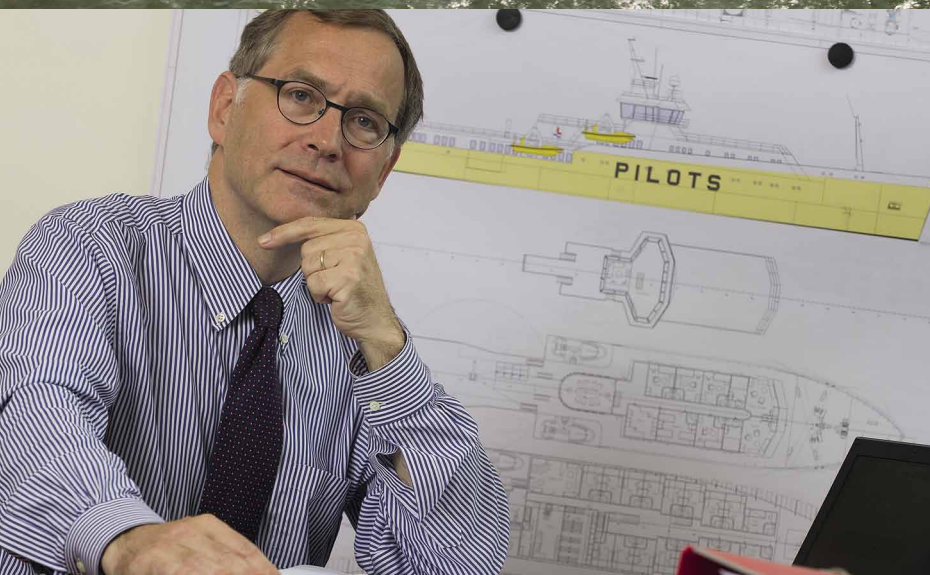
This implies that for an additional 20 years of operation the complete machinery, equipment and outfit had to be renewed at high costs. Respecting the size and shape of the vessel, the seakeeping requirements were difficult if not impossible to achieve.

## Newbuilding

Having established this, those involved chose for newbuilding. As PSV Polaris proves in practice, the Pilot Station Vessel (PSV) design has worked out satisfactory. It is the first in a series of three. The second vessel, the PSV Pollux, will be launched in September 2013 and the third one, Procyon, in 2014. The design is to replace the more than thirty-year old cutters. They will act as 'floating offshore bases' for pilots. They are transferred from the PSV by fast launches to and from inbound and outbound vessels requiring pilotage.

Arie Aalbers explains: "When we were considering the new design, our focus was on reducing pitching and rolling in particular. Pitching is mainly determined by the length of a vessel. In the southern North Sea, waves can reach lengths of 50 metres; the length of the old pilots' M-class cutters. Consequently,





they had to stop their services in wave heights of 2 to 2.5 metres. The new vessels have a much more comfortable length of 75 metres. Rolling is mainly a consequence of the initial stability known as GM, in combination with the breadth of the vessel in relation with the wave period.”

Aalbers adds that he and fellow designers have ‘played’ with the main dimensions length, width and draught to come up with the optimum dimensions. For instance, the length of the design was changed to between 45 metres and 85 metres and assessed against the specified acceptable accelerations of 0.2g

due to pitch and roll in the wheelhouse and at the davit positions. This finally resulted in the optimum length of 75 metres, width of 13.4 metres and draught of about 5.0 metres. He feels it is technically and economically viable to make the next generation of pilot vessels fit for LNG fuelling. In the past few months, his company has developed the design for an LNG tugboat to be deployed in the port of Rotterdam. This design includes a gas tank capacity for one week of fuelling.

ASD Ship Design has proven before that LNG-fuelled vessels are cost-effective. The company - established in 2003 - showed

that LNG-fuelled shortsea vessels, further equipped with Flettner rotors, can save 30 to 40% of the fuel costs.

Over the years, Aalbers and Van Welie were responsible for the design and cost estimation of over thirty newbuild vessels. Among them reefers, oceangoing deepfreeze trawlers, chemical tankers, heavy lift ships, gas tankers and container carriers, including the Ship of the Year 1998, the Sea Baltica. These are precisely the kinds of vessels the Dutch pilots feel at home at.





# Vopak Agencies well-established player: **Pilots crucial link in supply chain**

**Outgoing Vopak Agencies Rotterdam Managing Director Piet Hoogerwaard is in no doubt: “policy should be made by people who know what they are talking about” and “when one turns a deaf ear to the market, things are bound to take a turn for the worst”. His statements relate to the common practice of authorities rather than the goings-on in the port community. In his opinion, pilots are business driven, know what they are talking about and act accordingly.**

Hoogerwaard speaks from personal experience in reply to Navigator.NL's request to talk about his experience as a user of pilotage services and compare these with the services as rendered before the privatisation of the Dutch Pilots' Corporation. The Vopak Agencies MD started his career in the port of Rotterdam in 1967. At the time he was a shipbroker's clerk at Pakship. This company and its successors later became part of Royal Pakhoed. Today the enterprise in oil and chemicals is globally known as Vopak. It stands to reason that Vopak Agencies Rotterdam's core business is ship brokerage in the oil and chemical sectors.

“Before the privatisation in 1988, the outside world commonly perceived the pilots' organisation as being rather closed. The Ministry of Transport and the Royal Navy called the shots regarding pilotage. Back then, it was an entirely different world in which we wondered about the actual impact of privatisation. Since 1988 the organisation has turned one hundred and eighty degrees to become more market-oriented.”

In Hoogerwaard's opinion, a different approach to the market was needed at the time. The Dutch Pilots' Corporation appreciated that. Hoogerwaard recalls that pilots were keen to learn how they could improve their services; they talked to customers to that effect. Hoogerwaard: “Eventually the ISPO (International Standard for Pilots Organisations) Code was implemented. I know that this was a tough topic internationally, but it is good that pilots have such a code.”

## **Clear guidelines**

ISPO provides a kind of dedicated business plan with clear guidelines for pilotage in practice and a framework for terms of delivery. Hoogerwaard is convinced that a code written by the industry for customers within that industry provides a much better standard than one imposed on the pilotage sector by external legislators.

He feels the code fits in well with the commercial department the pilots'

organisation set up in the nineties of last century. “It is proof that pilots have listened carefully to the market and its needs,” he says. “In addition, everyone was pleased when the pilots' organisation introduced a discount scheme for frequent callers to the port.”

However, since the Authority for Consumers and Markets (ACM, formerly NMa) is involved in the pilots' practice, the scheme became a subject for discussion. If ACM deems that the tariffs are too high, the Authority could sanction the pilots' organisation. Should ACM decide to do this, then the Dutch Pilots' Organisation can bring the matter to court. Should the judge rule that ACM is correct, the pilots' customers are credited. However, if the pilots have calculated the tariffs correctly, these will be used.

Hoogerwaard suggests that the reversal of this kind of provision be taken into consideration as regards financial accounts. Adjusting tariffs can be done after ACM's approval or the judge's ruling. He adds: “The market was not against the ACM's decision to have a closer look at the cost structure of pilotage. Its policy is counterproductive, however, when nobody listens to what the market has to say about the matter.”

Fortunately though, the authority lent an ear to critics who expressed their worries about the imminent introduction of limited time slots. ACM's introduction of a regulation to that effect would have resulted in disorganisation of port services, Hoogerwaard observes. The planned scheme would have meant that in peaks in workload could not be handled.

## **Efficient traffic management**

He expects that the project ‘Het Schip Centraal’ (Ship in Focus) for efficient traffic management in the port will achieve its goal. Port services providers - the pilots included - have signed an agreement focussing on the efficient exchange of information within the nautical chain, thus reducing idle waiting times before the next provider renders its services. The introduction of the new information and communication system is planned for 2015.



Hoogerwaard applauds the initiative aimed at improving the planning of vessel handling by all parties involved in the supply chain. All for the benefit of efficient port performance; essential to meet the fierce competition of ports within the Hamburg - Le Havre range.

"Modern technology is available to monitor the vessel prior to arrival and beyond. Enough pilots and boatmen are always available, 24/7 and 365 days a year. Rotterdam may be one of the most expensive ports, but it is also the fastest and most innovative one in terms of performance."

He added that that the ships' agents association which he chaired in the past has always valued the availability of the Dutch Pilots' Corporation, the manner in which pilots render their services cost-efficiently and the state of the art equipment they use. However, Hoogerwaard does

observe the following: "Some categories of vessels do not need pilotage. Legislation states that hazardous cargo vessels carrying these kinds of cargoes need to use their services at all times. The odd thing is that within the port, pilots need to be on the bridge of gas tankers up to the Van Brienenoordbrug; after this, they can however continue their journey without pilotage up to Germany."

This may well be an issue for the Harbour Master in Rotterdam, who enforces this part of legislation. Besides acting as an authority, he will have a coordinating role within the Schip Centraal scheme. As such, the Harbour Master can do away with illogical legislation and procedures that hamper operations and efficiency, provided safety and sustainability are maintained. "Acting fast and efficient is profitable," Hoogerwaard concludes.









# Experience, experience, experience



Captain *Michael Watson* (L) is president of IMPA (International Maritime Pilots' Association). He has been involved in pilotage for more than 40 years and is based in Maryland in the USA.

*Stein Inge Dahn* (R) has been the new president of EMPA (European Maritime Pilots' Association) since April 2013. Dahn has already been a pilot for 21 years and hails from Norway.

For many years, the International Maritime Pilots' Association IMPA and its European counterpart EMPA have been committed to furthering the interests of pilots, ongoing professionalisation of the pilotage sector and more. IMPA chairman Michael Watson and Stein Inge Dahn, chairman of EMPA, together reflect on current developments.

## Why are you involved in respectively EMPA and IMPA?

**Dahn:** "Although not a member of the European Union, my home country of Norway does adopt all EU legislation. It is therefore important to be involved in EMPA. Furthermore, EMPA is an excellent platform to connect with colleagues and for example learn from each other's best practices."

**Watson:** "I love the sea, I love my profession. Unfortunately in today's world some people are so focused on maximizing profits and cutting expenses that they don't always see the importance of our profession. It's my job to explain who we are; pilots stand for safety in navigation. We serve the public interest. One mistake on our part is all it takes to negatively impact our reputation globally! I strive to keep our profession respected and to ensure that we can optimally perform our tasks."

## "Pilots are not only navigators, but also communication experts"

### And what are the main fields of interest for both of your organisations?

**Watson:** "IMPA's main field of interest is to maintain the position of the profession. We as pilots have to provide safe sailing. For that, we have to keep our profession ahead of the curve through professional training, quality of personnel, acting united and maintaining our integrity."

**Dahn:** "Just like IMPA is involved in legislation through IMO (International Maritime Organisation, ed), we as EMPA focus on the European Union in Brussels. For us, it's the main body that affects our industry in terms of relevant legislation. That's where we notice many of the discussions take place. But EMPA also regards it important to monitor the debate

and the legislative processes in the individual countries, and to assist our member associations there. As a pilot I work aboard the ship. I feel a great responsibility to communicate the knowledge I gain there to the legislators. I'm independent and have a strong sense of integrity towards the community."

### What is the relevance of technology?

**Watson:** "Technology can help pilots do their job better. For that reason, the pilots were among the first to embrace such innovations as electronic charts, PPU's, AIS and GPS. We contributed together and were far ahead of the rest of the industry."

**Dahn:** "We have embraced technology, but always with the understanding that the human factor is simply essential. The human knowhow and the interaction between the pilot and the rest of the bridge team is crucial. One of the most important things on board of a vessel still is the bridge window; what's happening outside? My three highest competences are experience, experience and experience."

**Watson:** "In some ways, all the available technology makes it more difficult to train new pilots nowadays. They're so used to technology, but in a different way though. Let's say you go to the mall and give your little child five euros to drive a race car simulator. No doubt your kid will beat you. Does that mean you give him the keys to your car and put him on the autobahn? Sure, simulation has a role to play, but it's experience, experience, experience that's far more important. So when we train pilots we first tell them to put away their computers and other gadgets. Instead, we tell them to open their eyes and look out the window. Technology will never replace basic piloting skills."



**Dahn:** "Automation is actually decreasing safety. If you don't keep humans in the loop, you will experience more accidents. People trust technology too much. They have become complacent. Some developments we see internationally with e-navigation raise serious questions."

### Is this also why it is so important for a pilot to be aboard a ship?

**Dahn:** "The most important place for judging how to handle a ship will always be on board. Of course there are circumstances in which it is not possible to have a pilot in the wheelhouse; in these cases, it's an added value to have competent pilots on shore. But I'm opposed to shore-based pilotage as a full-fledged alternative."

**Watson:** "Too many people today try to compare the movement of a ship with that of an airplane. The two are really not comparable. Every ship is different, the engines are different, the crew members are different, etc. And our duty as pilots is to ensure safe navigation, even in the most treacherous areas."

### "One of the most important things on board of a vessel still is the bridge window"

**In the nineties, there was some debate as to opening up the pilot sector in the Netherlands to competition. How do you feel about this?**

**Watson:** "As a true American, I should of course be in favour of competition. But in this particular case I must take a different stance and say no to competition in pilotage. Safe navigation is so important, that it simply can't be left to market forces. You can see what economic pressure can do. The shipping industry, I'm sorry to note, nowadays is strictly bottom-line. They only look to return of investment. And how do they seek to optimise this? Well, one way is to try to use technology to eliminate people, because that's a major expense. The ships of today are carrying 14,000 containers with a crew of fifteen. I went to sea aboard a 400-ft ship which had a crew of 42 people."

**Dahn:** "We're very much opposed to competition. One of my main assets as a pilot is my integrity. My main job on board a ship is ensuring that all operations are carried out safely, securely and in accordance with good seamanship - on behalf of the society. If I would have to compete with my colleagues my objectives would not be the same and that is not a good thing. We've seen such developments internationally with really negative effects. The only ones who are making money on competition are the agents."

### "When we train pilots we first tell them to put away their computers"

#### Is language also not an issue nowadays?

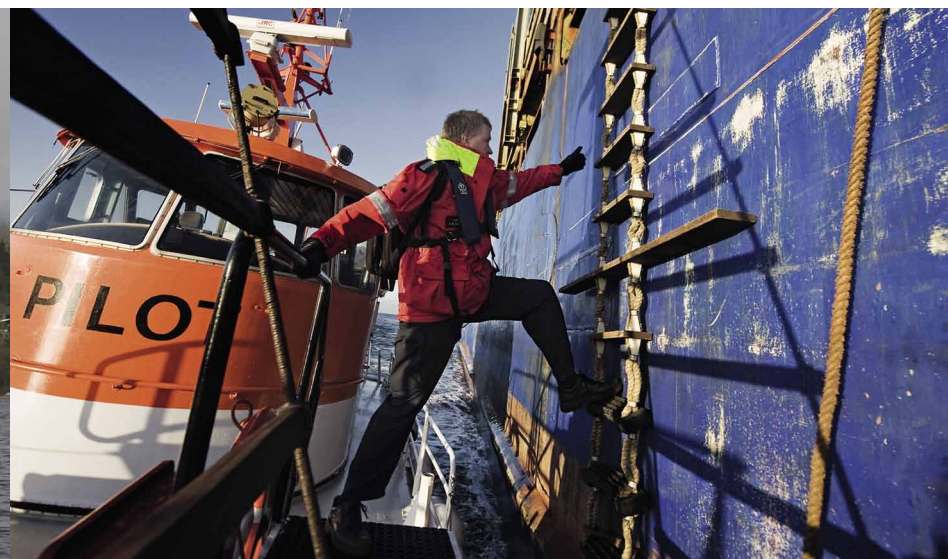
**Dahn:** "Well, it's definitely a challenge. But it is part of being a pilot. Pilots are not only navigators, but also communication experts. Just like a Chinese pilot in Shanghai has the competence to deal with Europeans. A substantial part of my job involves understanding different cultures, communicating with them and understanding differences."

**Watson:** "We use maritime terms on board, not conventional conversation. If you put a pilot on shore he cannot communicate with the crew in the same way as he does when he's on board and can look someone in the eyes. That personal interaction is so important in pilotage."

#### The Dutch pilotage sector was privatised 25 years ago. Do you notice a difference in the way they operate compared to other pilotage organisations?

**Watson:** "Just like all the rest of us, they represent the highest standards of pilotage. We share the same goals: a safe, efficient and reliable pilotage service that protects our nations."

**Dahn:** "The privatisation of the Dutch pilots 25 years ago was a very smart move. The Dutch are leading in Europe. This indubitably has something to do with the fact that they became independent and are effectively running their own business. At the same time they are under strict regulation with transparent economics. I definitely applaud the developments in the Netherlands."



















# Government cutbacks or market forces: The long road to privatisation

**History teaches** us that Nederlands Loodswezen was certainly not the first party to gain autonomy in the eighties. The trend to shed public tasks and downsize the government system was set in the mid eighties in the US and especially the United Kingdom. British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher ‘financed’ substantial reductions in direct taxes through the revenues received by the government from the privatisation of British Gas and British Steel. Back then, the average Dutch person was not able to benefit from the shedding of government tasks to the same extent as his neighbours on the other side of the Channel.

Ultimately, the ultra-liberal policies of Thatcher would cost her and her fellow Britons dearly. They failed to take into account a possible market crash - which happened in October 1987 - with Thatcher's policies giving rise to dissatisfaction with the government and price erosion.

In the early eighties, discussions in the Netherlands mainly revolved around public tasks that should be carried out by the government but could in fact also be performed by the private sector and therefore be autonomised or privatised. Preceding Nederlands Loodswezen on the road to privatisation was the Bureau of Weights and Measures (Dienst van het IJkwezen). The Cabinet of the time already decided in December 1984 to privatise the service, but it would not be until the end of 1988 that the Senate agreed.

In the end, Nederlands Loodswezen was privatised even earlier than IJkwezen. The latter did not become independent until the 1st of May 1989, when the Weights and Measures Act was amended. This change paved the way for the establishment of the Nederlands Meetinstituut NV and its three accompanying operating companies, including IJkwezen BV: in the mid-nineties, this was divided into a testing and certification institute and a supervisory organisation verifying compliance with the Weights and Measures Act and the Betting and Gaming Act.

## Common grounds

Talking to former director ir. Willem de Jong of Lloyd's Register Netherlands, it becomes clear that within the Dienst voor het Stoomwezen they were already ‘independently’ thinking about the delegation of tasks and even privatisation in the seventies. “As a young surveyor, I would already run into the men of Stoomwezen aboard vessels. They inspected

boilers and such. Even then, practice already showed that there were indeed common grounds between their activities and those of classification societies such as Lloyd's Register.”

At the request of Navigator.NL, Lloyd's Register archivist Barbara Jones was able to dig up old publications and speeches on the official privatisation of Stoomwezen. These show that the chief engineer of Dienst voor het Stoomwezen already acknowledged Lloyd's Register as a reliable partner in inspections as early as 1914.

However, Stoomwezen would first function as a government service for 140 years before the historic step towards privatisation. This more or less happened as a result of the desired harmonisation in laws and regulations for pressure vessels in Europe. The relevant European Directive was introduced in 1999. France, Germany and the United Kingdom had already privatised their supervisory governmental authorities prior to this. The name Stoomwezen, including the addition BV (roughly equal to Ltd. in English), was maintained after the acquisition by Lloyd's Register in 1994 until the start of 2000, after the privatisation of the company had been completed.





### Market Expansion

Ir. De Jong says about the lead-up to the incorporation of the former government service that he had always eyed Stoomwezen with great interest. "I was quite keen to incorporate Stoomwezen within our organisation for two reasons. One was to achieve market expansion. Furthermore, Stoomwezen played a role in the Dutch offshore industry and Lloyd's Register was active on the Dutch shelf; we wanted to acquire Stoomwezen to strengthen our position in the energy and petrochemical industry."

"When the consulting firm Booz, Allan & Hamilton was commissioned to examine how Stoomwezen could be privatised in July 1993, I thought 'surely we are not going to pass up the opportunity to acquire the service'. As director of Lloyd's Register in Rotterdam I immediately pursued the matter together with colleagues in London."

De Jong and his colleagues managed to make it to the last two inspection agencies competing for Stoomwezen and to 'beat' the other party. De Jong: "The main point of contention was ultimately not money or the extent to which people would be able to join our organisation. The problem was more related to the role which civil servants' union AbvaKabo also wanted to continue playing after the privatisation. That issue was civilly resolved by the then Minister of Social Affairs De Vries and the Works Council of Stoomwezen, which also played a positive role in the takeover negotiations."

### No monopoly position

De Jong also praises the role of former Stoomwezen director Ed Rombouts who became a good friend over the years. Together, they visited the industrial sector which was sceptical about the acquisition of Stoomwezen. "That party of course wanted to know what our plans would be. Our advantage was that we did not come from a monopoly position; after all, there are more classification societies. At the initiative of the business community and the government, a complaints committee was established. This would review any complaints about the functioning of Stoomwezen BV. I am extremely proud of the fact that in all those years we did not receive a single complaint."

The employees of Stoomwezen of course had to get used to their new employer. "Their main issue was the fact that they know now to carry out the activities they were so familiar with for a commercial organisation, that money was charged for inspections and that 'rejecting' certain installations was also a part of this. On the other hand, a government body also charges for inspections but instead refers to this as 'levying'. In addition, the activities of Stoomwezen were somewhat at odds with those of the Ministry. Like us, they had many technical people so any differences disappeared relatively fast. During a recent reunion, I encountered a man who had worked for Stoomwezen for dozens of years prior to the privatisation. He said he was happy that he had also experienced those last couple of years with us. Reflecting on the entire matter, I can confidently say: 'we did quite a nice job'."











# Then and now: one single goal

The privatisation of the pilots in 1988 was not a given. Together, the current and first presidents of the four regions which were formed at the time reflect on the exiting start-up period and the many developments in the following 25 years.

## Region North

**Allart Draaisma (73) and  
Johan de Joode (59)**

### “Nowadays it’s our own company”

“What a fantastic ship,” says Allart Draaisma, who became the first president of the region North in 1988, when joining the current regional president Johan de Joode aboard a brand new tender for a pilotage assignment. “I am proud of the fact that I was able to contribute to this development more than 25 years ago.” The new office building and other modern facilities also meet Draaisma’s approval. “In the past, the region North often had to do with used equipment.” De Joode: “We devised and initiated all these developments ourselves. After all, it is our own company nowadays.”

### Far from straightforward

In the eighties, the path towards privatisation however was certainly not straightforward in the region North (Harlingen, Eemshaven, Delfzijl). Draaisma: “My colleagues asked me to conduct the negotiations. Two of the main sticking points were the pensions and the future cooperation with the German pilots.” The latter mainly involved the radar pilotage in the area, which was done from the other side of the water, in Germany. Something which the Dutch pilots were keen to control themselves. “We wanted to be completely autonomous. When Minister Kroes visited us in the north by helicopter, she promised she would do her best for this; unsuccessfully, unfortunately.” However, the pilots in the region North finally voted in favour of privatisation. “Despite the fact that there were many reservations, we saw the importance of being part of one national pilotage organisation.”

### Increasingly more efficient

“The north was and is a stronghold for small commercial vessels,” explains De Joode the special position of the pilotage region in relation to the rest of the country. “That does not necessarily make our work easier though. It is often all or nothing here and schedules tend to change quickly and frequently.” In this situation, the trick is to always ensure the availability of enough pilots. Since the privatisation, Loodswezen has become increasingly more efficient in the region North in that respect. De Joode: “Back in 1988 we had 46 pilots with a support staff of about 50; now there are 17 pilots and 24 support staff. With that, some of our pilots in Harlingen can also be deployed in the Eemshaven and vice versa. Furthermore, we discontinued the system of pilotage from a pilot ship off the coast at the end of the nineties. Now, we directly carry out our pilotage duties with tenders from Harlingen and Eemshaven. We have very carefully



fine-tuned our organisation. The pilotage service coordinator on duty for example also sails aboard the tender as a crew member during pilotage operations. On board, he has access to the same computer programmes as in the office. In line with the anticipated further growth of shipping in the Eemshaven, we do however expect that we will have to expand our organisation in the near future.”

### In the blood

Draaisma retired in 1992. “But being a pilot is in the blood. You can’t just say goodbye to that. I appreciate the fact that I was able to help establish a solid company, although in fact I much preferred being on the water than at the conference table. In the run-up to the privatisation, internal meetings certainly also often resulted in heated discussions. It was not always easy to convince colleagues. Despite that, none of my colleagues have ever turned their backs on me. And walking around in Delfzijl nowadays, I still often hear ‘Hey Draaisma, how are you?’”



## Region Amsterdam-IJmond

Jan van den Booren (75) and Willem Bentinck (45)

### “Completely unfamiliar with customers”

“The manner in which they managed to achieve privatisation in 1988 is quite unique. After all, the maritime sector is highly conservative,” says Willem Bentinck. The current president of the region Amsterdam-IJmond is referring to his very first predecessor Jan van der Booren and his colleagues. The now 75-year-old Van den Booren

however at the time had many more factors to consider than just external ones. “We as pilots were civil servants and some of us found it difficult to let go of that status, for example because they were close to retirement. Internally, I really had to fight for support.” Van den Booren’s own personal attitude was quite different. “I was very much in favour of pilots running their own company. I absolutely expected this would offer us a greater degree of job satisfaction.”

### Spider in the maritime web

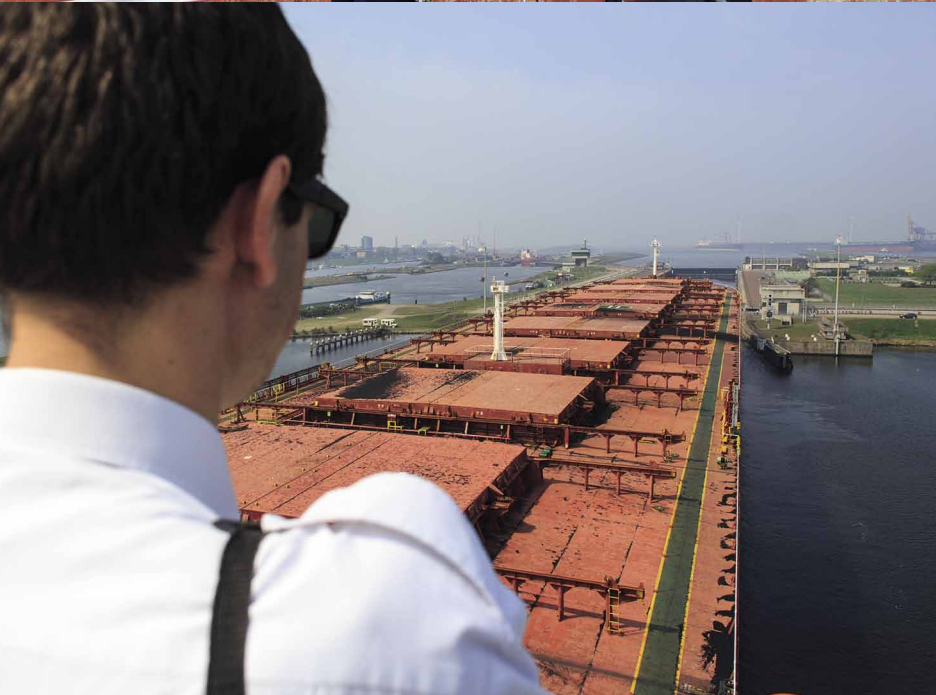
Until 1988, the profile of the civil service pilots was rather low. This of course had to change after the privatisation. Van den Booren: “For many parties in the port, we were rather unknown. Suddenly, we found ourselves in all sorts of meetings though - also with customers. This was not the case prior to 1988 and we were in fact completely unfamiliar with dealing with them. All of a sudden, it became important for us to properly profile ourselves.” In this respect, Bentinck finds that the position of pilots has drastically changed over the last 25 years. “Currently, we are truly a spider in the maritime web. In the past, decisions were often taken without our involvement; nowadays, more and more parties are relying on our nautical expertise.” Another big difference noted by the current regional president relates to the means of communication. “The advent of e-mail and the like has made it far easier to exchange data.” Van den Booren: “We only had the telephone. That simply had to do.”

### Customer first

Following the privatisation, the pilots have fully put the customer first. Van den Booren: “From 1988 on, the days that about ten vessels lay waiting off the coast of IJmuiden after a fierce storm were definitely over. Right from the very start, our aim as an independent organisation has always been to safely pilot each vessel.” Speaking from experience, the former president however notes that some issues were simply not up for discussion. “A cargo handling agent once approached me with a challenging request for piloting a car carrier. After I had carried out the job, I thought it would be a good idea to carefully draw up a guideline for my fellow pilots. That however resulted in fierce discussions!” Bentinck: “Nothing has really changed in 25 years in this respect. Pilots do not like to be told what to do. We are autonomous, independent professionals. A port authority can decide whether to open or close a port. But ultimately, it is the pilot who determines whether a ship can be brought in safely.”

The government’s notion at the end of the last century of opening up the pilotage sector to competition was therefore definitely a faux pas, feels Bentinck. “The consequences could be fatal if a pilot says no due to safety concerns and the customer simply goes to the competition. Having one single pilotage organisation is a pre-requisite for the safety in the port. Moreover, the efficiency of our operations has increased continuously over the years. It is the trailblazing of the generation of Jan van den Booren which has made all this possible.”

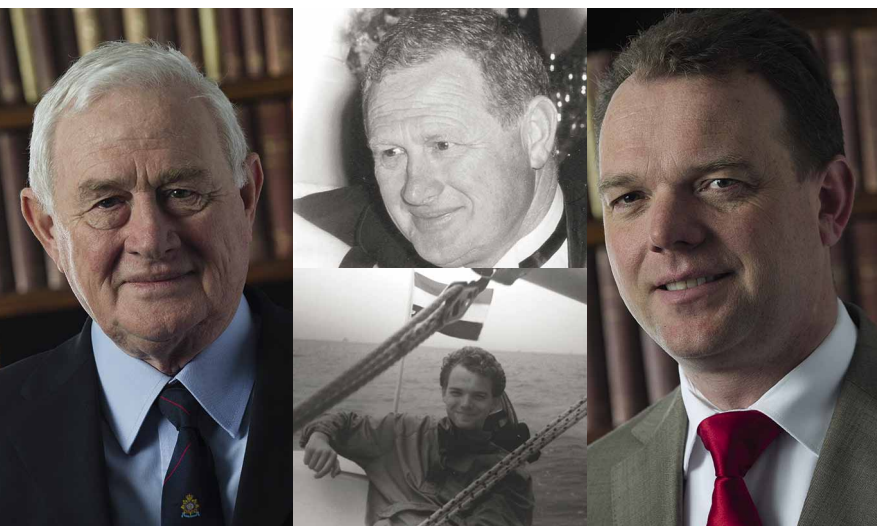












## Region Rotterdam-Rijnmond

**Jan Kloos (73) and Herman Broers (45)**

### “The leap of faith”

“In 1983, the government in The Hague first announced their ideas about privatising us,” recalls Jan Kloos, the first president of the Rotterdam-Rijnmond region. What followed were five dynamic years, filled with consultation with the government but also internally. Kloos: “Within the pilotage sector, there were explicit advocates and opponents. In an internal meeting, we next set ten conditions which would have to be met in order for us to agree to privatisation. And this is ultimately the way it happened.” Not that the yes-vote was a given right from the start. “A majority were on the fence for quite some time. We worked really hard to get all the pilots on board. For five years, I did nothing but attend meetings. Ultimately, we took the leap of faith together in 1988.” What made the process additionally complicated was the fact that the municipal pilots in Rotterdam also had to join in

the privatisation. Until that moment, this municipal pilot organisation had always been truly a world of its own. Kloos: “In the port, certain waters for example resided under the national government whereas others were managed by the municipality. Pilots were definitely not allowed to operate in each other’s areas. Europoort was even more complicated in that respect - was it state or municipal territory? The matter was even brought to court.”

### Well ahead of its time

Ultimately, about 380 pilots made a fresh start in one single, privatised new organisation on the 1st of September 1988. Current regional president Herman Broers: “Nowadays we deploy about 220 pilots to handle the same number of ship calls as back then. It is typical of the further increase in efficiency we have managed to achieve over the last 25 years.” Broers is full of praise about the foundation laid by Kloos and his colleagues. “They were well ahead of their time. Even today, foreign colleagues for example still envy our independent organisation with its own boats, supportive infrastructure, etc.” Kloos adds: “Initially the government wanted to keep the support services necessary for pilotage apart. We however did not agree to this.”

### Threats to quality

Like almost all current regional presidents, Broers still embarks on two pilotage trips each week. “This allows me to stay in touch with the daily operations and moreover occasionally bring along important stakeholders.” As far as he is concerned, the latter will not just take place in good weather in the future. “Being a pilot is a tough job. Not everyone is fully aware of just what it entails. Of course we have all sorts of technical aids nowadays. But also in bad weather you still need to climb up the rope ladder along the hull.” Kloos agrees on this limited perception many people have of the pilot profession. “We also had to counter this in my day. For a while, there for example was the widespread notion that if one could bring in airplanes from behind a radar screen then the same could be done for ships.” “This is an absolute misunderstanding,” adds Broers immediately. “Pilotage will always require human involvement. We solve issues that simply do not show up on a radar screen. Unlike aviation, many different parties have to share the same fairways and waters. Also the level of training of ship crews is certainly always a factor of consideration.”





## Region Scheldemonden

**Henk van Hoepen (75) and  
Fred Kuipers (49)**

### “The minister flew in by helicopter to convince us”

“Seeing how Loodswezen functions nowadays, we have indeed achieved the aims we had in mind with the privatisation,” says Henk van Hoepen, first president of the region Scheldemonden between 1988 and 1992. “Being completely autonomous, independently taking decisions: all this fits pilots like a glove.” Fred Kuipers, the current regional president, fully agrees. “As a group of professionals, all of us together determine the course which we embark upon. That definitely brings a sense of accomplishment. As a pilot, you have to deal with your profession in all its facets. For me as president, that’s even more so the case.”

#### Netherlands - Belgium

Positivity may abound now, but the road to privatisation was definitely far from straightforward in the eighties. “It was absolutely a delicate subject,” remembers Van Hoepen. “As a civil servant, you were of course assured of your job. The biggest fear however was that as an independent organisation, we would never be able to compete with our subsidised Belgian colleagues employed by the government.” The solution to this was the drawing up of a new Scheldt Treaty between the Netherlands and Belgium on the division of pilotage duties. “In July 1988, then-minister Neelie Kroes especially flew to Flushing by helicopter to convince us pilots that the new Scheldt Treaty would be quickly settled. In fact, she did not really make any concrete statements during that meeting, but her charm went a long way.

I tried to seize the opportunity to also address the height of the pension arrangements. ‘Mr. Van Hoepen,’ she said, ‘as agreed you will receive 100 million guilders and that will have to do’.”

Partially thanks to the minister’s visit, all pilots in the region Scheldemonden ultimately voted in favour of privatisation. It would however not be until 1995 that a new Scheldt Treaty would actually be signed; the agreement next did not come into force until 2000. Kuipers: “Belgium is an integral part of our daily lives. That was already the case in 1839 at the time of the first Scheldt Treaty, that is currently still the case and that will definitely remain so in the future. It is inherent to pilotage on a border river. To any extent, the collegiality in the operations is tremendous!”

#### Multivalent pilots

One of the major changes in the Scheldemonden region over the past 25 years has been the elimination of the distinction between sea, river and harbour pilots. Kuipers: “When I was sworn in as a pilot in 1998, that integration had just started. Today, we only have multivalent pilots. This has definitely made us more efficient and responsive.” Another factor of relevance on the complex Scheldt River is certainly also the ongoing scaling-up. Ships of 400 meters and more are on the horizon. Van Hoepen: “In my days, there was already speculation regarding these super ships navigating the Scheldt.” Kuipers adds: “It’s a gradual development which we pilots have grown along with.”

#### Rudder and propeller

“A lot more has changed in 25 years,” concludes Kuipers. “Also in terms of technological devices, for example, and the cooperation with other parties like the Traffic Service and the shipping agents. But at the end of the day, on board of a vessel, the pilot has to do it himself with a rudder and a propeller.”









Dick van der Heiden



René Eichelsheim





Directors Nederlands Loodswezen B.V.:

# Supporting the pilots



It is difficult to capture the true essence of the Loodswezen organisation in one single sentence. In interviews conducted by Navigator.nl with former director Dick van der Heiden and current director René Eichelsheim of the corporatised Nederlands Loodswezen, such descriptions as 'cost-conscious partners of the four corporations' (being the four regions), 'everyone's an expert on boats' and 'men who had fought for equality in the organisation' are mentioned. Both gentlemen agree that being director of Nederlands Loodswezen is one of the best jobs imaginable.

The fact that between 1991 - when Dick van der Heiden left - and 2002 - the year René Eichelsheim was appointed - the directors of the supporting company of the Dutch registered pilots rapidly succeeded one another is quite telling about the atmosphere within the organisation. "It was not until the mid-nineties, when John Kluwen took over, that things became more stable," says Eichelsheim. "He was the first pilot who simultaneously served as managing director and chairman of the Dutch Pilots' Corporation and after that only as managing director. The pilots considered him one of them. This is fitting in an organisation for and by pilots. Pilots are selected on the basis of wilfulness - in the best sense of the word, of course - before they are accepted into the organisation. Those who do not understand the specific culture within Loodswezen will not really make it as manager or director of NLBV."

Consequently, being a 'pilot with leadership skills' is an added value for the man or woman applying for Eichelsheim's position in 2014. Eichelsheim was one himself. He was a board member of the Regional Pilot Corporation and during his pilotage days among other things served as manager Projects and Innovation; he did this in addition to his activities as a pilot, later served as (vice)president of the Region Rotterdam-Rijnmond and followed additional relevant training courses.

"As you can see, I already somewhat prepared myself for the directorship," he notes dryly. "But you can only become director if nominated as such by the Supervisory Board to the shareholders - the pilots." Eichelsheim adds that his experience as a helmsman and pilot definitely helps in this respect. "They have excellent navigational skills."

These skills are useful in a metaphorical sense when making decisions. Eichelsheim says he does not shy away from his responsibilities. "We spent two to three years discussing the subject of fleet renewal. Everyone preferred a different vessel and they are all experts when it comes to boats. So I decided to explore my network for an expert capable of weighing all the relevant considerations for the ultimate decision regarding the fleet. I found one externally and I told him he would have final responsibility. Of course, the board of Loodswezen also had a say in the matter. After all, we are talking about 120 million euros worth of equipment here. The pilots backed this approach. I must say that I am proud of their attitude when it comes to these types of projects."

## Standards and values

Dick van der Heiden - managing director of Nederlands Loodswezen from 1989 to 1991 - remarks that he has learned a lot about standards, values and set expectations in his day. He agrees to the observation made by Eichelsheim that as director, he was very capable of conveying that he knew what was good for the organisation. Van der Heiden clearly recalls that when he started he found a highly qualified organisation which he helped to make lean and mean. "I can back this up," he says, "but at the same time I can assure you that things were not always easy in those days. There was always pressure on the tariffs, to name but one example." Upon his appointment, Van der Heiden was given two tasks: managing partner of the four corporations - "only the case in theory as real life was a completely different story" and head of the Facilitating Company. "This was rooted in the civil service sector and was organised very soundly."





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### Efficiency and entrepreneurship

It was up to Van der Heiden to incorporate these two tasks in a company that had to demonstrate efficiency and entrepreneurship, develop marketing efforts, establish a market-oriented pricing system and pursue an accounting system with annual report. The integration of port, river and sea pilots could be energetically addressed, but in some cases the implementation of changes was sometimes like swimming upstream for Van der Heiden.

"In retrospect, I understand that things happened the way they did. At the time, the situation was different. Customers and pilots had different attitudes towards the rendering of services. In reality, working for Loodswezen was - and still is - fun; especially if you love boats and are familiar with maritime transport. Looking back, I see the emergence of a very fine organisation which strongly focuses on innovation and professionalism."

It would be beneficial if the competition watchdog Netherlands Authority for Consumer & Market (ACM, previously the Netherlands Competition Authority) would show more real understanding of this organisation and more confidence in Loodswezen as a true market-based, cost-effective, innovative and customer-oriented organisation. For the time being, Eichelsheim must conclude that the authority requires disproportionate amounts of time, money and effort on the part of Loodswezen; resources which could have been better invested in the primary process. "Our financial director for example spends vast amounts of time on ACM-matters. We had to hire eight additional people to meet this most intensive supervision of the authority on Dutch institutions. The costs incurred by the interference amount to almost 2 million euros. Within the business community, you also increasingly hear that the over-bureaucratisation in the Netherlands makes entrepreneurship harder rather than easier. Surely this cannot be the intention in these economically challenging times."



