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Maiden voyage on the Moselle **Crane builder Brunnhuber rehearses for emergencies**

Illuminated by the setting sun, the yellow portal crane is silhouetted clearly against the inky sky. Erection by a ship's crane has taken only three days, by water. The electricians need another two days for adjustments and commissioning. Now the completed crane stands there, ready for operation, looking over the slowly flowing Moselle. Only Hartmut Bargmann, who ordered the crane on behalf of the Water and Shipping Authority in Koblenz, is not really happy. The crane is to be dismantled again the next day. That's what the plan says.

„To be honest: I hope that we won't have any emergencies that we need to use the crane for“, says the mechanical engineer. Hartmut Bargmann works for the Water and Shipping Authority in Koblenz and is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the technical systems of the locks. A second lock chamber has been in construction in Bruttig-Fankel, 50 km upriver from Koblenz, since 2007. It is to be commissioned in 2012. „The crane is emergency equipment“, Hartmut Bargmann explains. „It is only intended to be used for maintenance work on the aft gate of the old lock, for example if a ship is damaged, collides with the aft lock gate and puts it out of action. Up to now we have sent for a mobile crane for this work. However now that the new lock chamber has been built with a central jetty we can no longer get to the aft of the old lock with a mobile crane.“

As major maintenance work on the lock gates is only scheduled every few years and shipping accidents in the lock are rare, the crane is to be stored in a depot 15 km downriver.

A portal crane with 50 tonnes load capacity, able to be completely dismantled, transported and erected by ship and which can also be set up and ready for use within 48 hours even after it has been stored for several months – this was a challenge even for Brunnhuber's engineers. „Generally we build bigger cranes“, says Reiner Frick, Brunnhuber's sales engineer. The Augsburg company is a specialist for off-standard cranes, frequently with three-figure safe working loads, and with power stations a priority. „But this crane was

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quite challenging“, Frick has no difficulty in admitting. „The greatest challenge in this project was the available ship’s crane, which can only lift 6 tonnes. None of the crane components was allowed to exceed this weight, and even now during erection the ship’s crane was at its limit.“ However the test erection was completed without any problems, completely by water and without using any extra elevating work platforms - just as Brunnhuber’s purpose-planned erection concept envisaged.

The 50 tonne hoist was supplied by STAHL CraneSystems from Künzelsau. „The AS 7 wire rope hoist with its compact dimensions and robust construction was ideally suited for the lock crane“, Reiner Frick explains. Thanks to all electrical connections being plug-in, connecting up the electrics too was a mere formality – apart from detailed photo-documented erection instructions, this is an important detail for enabling the crane to be recommissioned fast in an emergency.

The crane is equipped with a number of off-standard features for outdoor use: protective roof for the hoist, off-standard lighting and stainless steel panel boxes. Space heaters will prevent damage from cold or damp during the long storage periods. Crabs and undercarriages with frequency inverters ensure particularly smooth starting and braking - if it should ever need to be used. „Really, the crane is much too good to be left in storage. As all the locks on the Moselle have a standard width of 12.80 m, theoretically we can use the crane on other locks too“, is Hartmut Bargmann’s opinion, and he is already thinking of 2012, when the lock in Trier will begin. And perhaps the crane will stay erected in Bruttig-Fankel for a while until it is needed elsewhere. Who knows?

Photo material:



The fully erected portal crane at the aft lock gate. Maintenance work is carried out on the lock gate while the crane is being erected.

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Reiner Frick, Brunnhuber's sales engineer, and Thomas Kraus, STAHL CraneSystems' Support Center Manager, during commissioning.



The AS 7 wire rope hoist from STAHL CraneSystems is protected by a roof. The crab is easily accessible from a maintenance bridge.