

# The new owner of the Oslo-Frederikshavn-Copenhagen route invests heavily in the ships

**Today Gotlandsbolaget takes over the route Oslo-Frederikshavn-Copenhagen from DFDS. Now, the company is making extensive investments in upgrading the passenger experience, with a focus on the cabins. Last year, the route had 700.000 passengers. The aim is to increase this number the coming years.**

In June, Gotlandsbolaget and DFDS announced that the Danish shipping company is selling the route between Oslo and Copenhagen to Gotlandsbolaget for approximately 400 MDKK. The transaction includes the cruise ferries Crown Seaways (1994) and Pearl Seaways (1989) and the more than 800 employees working in the business, which is now changing hands.

*"Today is a big day for Gotlandsbolaget. We are proud to steer the next chapter in this route's journey. The route between Oslo and Copenhagen is an attractive combination of passenger shipping and cruises, and we see great potential in developing it. As a company, we have a clear strategy to expand in passenger shipping, why we last year stepped into cruises with the purchase of Birka Gotland, now followed by this acquisition,"* says Håkan Johansson, CEO of Gotlandsbolaget.

To ensure a smooth transition for all passengers and in line with the agreement between Gotlandsbolaget and DFDS, the route will be gradually developed and operating more independently of DFDS during the coming year.

*"We are proud to have served generations of families on this historic route and to have established the legacy that we are now passing on. Selling the route was a difficult decision, but with this we ensure that the route will develop further, while we strengthen our focus on DFDS' core business within freight, passenger transport and logistics. I would like to extend our gratitude to our dedicated colleagues and loyal passengers who have been part of the journey. We look forward to supporting Gotlandsbolaget in ensuring a smooth transition and continued success for the route,"* says Torben Carlsen, CEO of DFDS.

Håkan Johansson continues *"I want to thank DFDS for the good cooperation during the months that have passed since we signed the agreement to acquire the route. The commitment and professionalism they have shown is reassuring, as we will continue to work a lot together in the coming year to step by step take over all systems and operations of the route. I also would like to extend a warm welcome to our new colleagues."*

## **Extensive investment will improve the experience onboard**

The Oslo-Frederikshavn-Copenhagen route had 700,000 passengers in 2023, and the ambition is to increase the number further in the coming years. An important part of this effort is extensive investment in upgrading the ships, where the main focus will be on the cabins, while other areas onboard will also be reviewed.

*"We will now work to develop the experience, and I am very happy that we can initiate with such an extensive renovation of the ships that we have decided on," says Kim Heiberg, Executive Vice President (EVP) - Head of Copenhagen-Oslo Route..*

Kim Heiberg has been Route Director for the route for the past 7 years under DFDS and is now accompanying the new owner.

*"It is a fantastic opportunity and great responsibility to be involved in further developing such a well-established route as the one between Oslo and Copenhagen," he states.*

### **Transforming step by step and a new name**

For the passengers, there will not be many notable changes the coming months, as the transformation will take place step by step. For example, bookings will take place on the DFDS booking page also during 2025.

The route will initially be marketed under the DFDS brand, but a new name and brand is under development. In charge of the development is a familiar face in the management of the route; Kevin Helsinghof returns to the route as Vice President (VP) - Head of Sales & Marketing, after holding other positions for a few years

*"It is a unique opportunity to develop a new name and brand of such a historic product, and we are fortunate to have Kevin coming back to us. We look forward to launching the new name and brand during next year," concludes Kim Heiberg.*

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### **About Gotlandsbolaget**

*With the Swedish island Gotland as our base, Gotlandsbolaget runs passenger and freight services and cruises, covering the ports of Visby, Nynäshamn, Oskarshamn, Oslo, Fredrikshavn, Copenhagen, Stockholm and Mariehamn. We invest in the shipping of the future and new technology, as well as develop sustainable destinations and places to visit. In Gotland, we own several hotels and properties. Gotlandsbolaget was founded in 1865 and is Sweden's oldest passenger shipping company. The Group today has approximately 1 500 employees, is headquartered in Visby on the island of Gotland and listed on Nasdaq First North, Sweden.*

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**Attachments**

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