

German discount retailer Lidl has reportedly become the latest major organization to tackle the global supply chain crisis head-on by launching its own shipping line.

The company, part of the Schwarz Group, the fifth-largest retailer in the world, plans to start a shipping line and buy containerships to maintain their flow of goods, according to [Maritime Executive](#).

Lidl, which operates hypermarkets in Europe and in recent years has begun expanding into the United States, filed an application with the European Trademark Office registering the brand name Tailwind Shipping Line.

According to the filing, the company intends to use the new operation for the transportation and delivery of goods, including cargo transportation, cargo ship transport, air cargo transport, import and export cargo handling services.

News that the retailer is in negotiations with shipping companies was first reported in the German trade publication Lebensmittel-Zeitung and later confirmed by the company to a wide range of German media.

"We can confirm that Lidl will use some of its own sea freight capacities in the future. This is another building block for securing our supply chains and the availability of goods in our branches," a spokesman for the company told the German publication Manager Magazin.

Reports indicate that the retailer currently has a volume of 400 to 500 TEU per week, presumably for its operations in Germany or across Europe. There was no indication of how many ships they might be planning to buy or what routes they plan to operate.

Lidl is not the first retailer to expand into shipping recently. Starting in 2021, a broad range of companies including Amazon, Ikea, Home Depot, and Dollar Tree as well as suppliers for Walmart, each reported chartering vessels to move containers from Asia.

Rotterdam container congestion builds

Meanwhile, container congestion has been building in the Dutch port of Rotterdam, [Fortune](#) reports.

The major European hub for fresh produce imports has been indirectly hit by the West's sanctions on Russia, which are snarling thousands of shipping containers. That is according to the port's chief, who gave an interview that provided unique insights into how the beating

heart of Europe's real economy is being disrupted by the measures against Moscow.

The containers at the port need to be carefully inspected to make sure that moving them on won't somehow breach sanctions, according to Port of Rotterdam Chief Executive Officer Allard Castelein.

"You can just imagine the nightmare that emerges," Castelein, said in the interview at his office at the World Port Center, overlooking the Rotterdam skyline.

Even before the invasion, global supply chains in general -- and in the container shipping industry in particular -- had scarcely got over the chaos caused by Covid-19, with vessels being pulled out of place and demand for goods booming when the pandemic made many services unavailable.

Out of the thousands of parcels with each arriving vessel "several tens or hundreds may be destined toward Russia," he said. "You need to isolate them, set them apart, and then do physical inspections of the containers before they can be released."