



Self-driving cargo ship

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EMISSIONS-FREE, SELF-DRIVING CARGO SHIP TO LAUNCH IN 2018

 WORK & LIFESTYLE

YARA's fully electric and autonomous cargo ship will provide more efficient and environmentally friendly shipping.

With transportation development focused on [self-driving trucks](#) and [delivery drones](#), it is easy to lose site of the similar need for advances in autonomous sea-based transportation. Now, Norwegian fertilizer company [YARA](#) and Norwegian technology company [Kongsberg](#) have begun to fill in that gap by partnering to develop and build the world's first autonomous and zero emissions cargo ship, the YARA Birkeland. YARA plans to use the ship to transport fertilizer products from the company's Porsgrunn production plant to international ports in Brevik and Larvik for onward shipping – eliminating 40,000 diesel truck journeys each year. “With this new autonomous battery-driven container vessel we move transport from road to sea and thereby reduce noise and dust emissions, improve the safety of local roads, and reduce NOx and CO2 emissions,” explained Svein Tore Holsether, president and CEO of YARA.

The all-electric ship, named after YARA's founder, the scientist Kristian Birkeland, is planned to begin operation in the second half of 2018, initially as a manned vessel, moving to remote operation in 2019 and expected to be capable of fully autonomous operations from 2020. The entire shipping process will eventually be autonomous, including loading and unloading, which will be done automatically using electric cranes and equipment, and the open top container vessel will even be equipped with an automatic mooring system. According to Geir Håøy, President and CEO of Kongsberg, the YARA Birkeland will set the benchmark for the use and development of innovative maritime technology, leading to a growth in more efficient and environmentally friendly shipping.

Could this be the beginning of a new industry of autonomous and carbon emission-free ocean shipping?

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