

Carriage by sea

The west coast of Greenland must be one of the world's largest archipelagos. This morning in August we go to a meeting in Maniitsoq, a town north of the capital of Greenland, Nuuk. The transportation takes place in a Targa tour boat. We are six people on board.

The trip through the archipelago requires local knowledge and it is normal practice for several small boats to travel together to improve the safety. On this trip, we have a small dinghy as a companion. An older man, who is well dressed in waterproofed clothes. He only has a small pane of Plexiglas for protection against the rain and the wind.

The route between Nuuk and Maniitsoq are scantily marked with navigation marks made of wood. Often we lose eye contact with the navigation marks and the speed must be reduced until we again have a sure sign that we have not come outside the normal route. We must constantly watch for small ice floes, wood or small rocks that can cause catastrophic damage to our boat.

Although our boatman is experienced in travelling in these waters, then each trip is different than the previous one. The tide

of four to five metres creates the risk of new rocks and the wave sizes also alters the archipelago landscape that we thought we had just come to know

The weather forecast here along the coast is inaccurate. Actually, our boat is big enough to sail offshore, but a storm out in the Davis Strait remains large swells, and even here in the archipelago, we can feel the effects of the storm.

On this trip, the nature was friendly toward us. We arrived without problems. The trip home was more difficult. The swells from the storm had become more violent, and we were delayed by a collision with something out there in the dark water. Maybe a tree trunk? Maybe a seal? Some electronic equipment broke, and we were delayed. We only arrived after sunset. We had to search with the headlight of the boat for the navigation marks on the last part of the route.

At a time when we crawled along in the darkness, while the heavy swells caused some seasickness, I could not help but ask my colleagues, where the hell this kind of transport was mentioned in my job description for work as a civil servant in The Greenland Home rule.



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