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Message in bottle gets Russian reply 24 years on

A Russian boy has answered a message in a bottle from a German child nearly a quarter of a century after it was dropped from a ship into the Baltic.

Daniil Korotkikh, 13, spotted the beer bottle glittering on a beach in Russia's Kaliningrad region, and found a letter inside from Frank Uesbeck, 5.

"If you find this letter, please write back to me, and I will write back to you," the letter said.

Since Daniil made contact, he and Frank, now 29, have chatted online.

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The message in the bottle

"My name is Frank, and I'm five years old. My dad and I are travelling on a ship to Denmark. If you find this letter, please write back to me, and I will write back to you."

The German gave his surprise correspondent a new address to write to and promised to write back when he received his letter, the Associated Press news agency reports.

"He'll definitely get another letter from me," said Frank.

"It's really a wonderful story and who knows? Perhaps one day we will actually be able to arrange a meeting in person."

'Hidden under the sand'

Daniil found the bottle while out walking near the village of Morskoye on the Curonian Spit, a 100-km (60-mile) stretch of sand shared between Russia and Lithuania.

"I saw that bottle and it looked interesting," he said.

"It looked like a German beer bottle with a ceramic plug, and there was a message inside."

His father, who knows schoolboy German, translated the letter, carefully wrapped in cellophane and sealed with a medical bandage.

The message was dated 1987 and included an address in the German town of Coesfeld, where Frank's parents still live.



"At first I didn't believe it," Frank told AP about getting Daniil's response. In fact, he barely remembered the trip on which he had cast the bottle from a ship while travelling to Denmark. His father had actually written the then five-year-old's letter. Daniil said he did not believe that the bottle had actually spent 24 years in the sea because it "would not have survived in the water all that time".

He believes it had become hidden under the sand where he found it.



Daniil Korotkikh's father translated the letter for his son