



Sailing under an ash cloud

From 20 to 22 April, ferry industry professionals gathered onboard the COLOR MAGIC in order to discuss the opportunities and challenges facing the industry. Sadly, the family was not complete: the ash cloud from the Icelandic volcano made air traffic in large parts of Europe come to a grinding halt. BY PHILIPPE HOLTHOF AND KLAS BROGREN

n the days preceding the eighth consecutive Ferry Shipping Conference (FSC), newspapers, radio- and TV channels were dominated by reports about the Icelandic volcano - and the subsequent air traffic chaos. Several FSC delegates found themselves stuck in various countries, many of them trying in vain to attend the conference. There was definitely a will to attend, with several heroic efforts made with the purpose of reaching Color Line's cruise-ferry in time (see separate sidebar). Even so, the organizers regret very much that not all delegates could attend.

The message from those participating was crystal clear: "let's make this conference efficient, cosy and creative and let's have the most fun ever!" With some hundred participants being stranded or not showing up for other reasons, a clear majority of the delegates still participated. These were the ones who knew by experience - or had just learnt - that there are indeed other methods to travel than going by air. At the opening ceremony, Klas Brogren touched on the bad news of the volcano, but also mentioned the positive effects it has had (and will continue to have) on ferry travelling. Several ferry owners could report how bookings had surged, noting that the days of air chaos turned

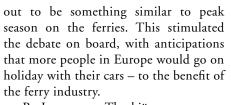


Color Line's Trond Kleivdal officially opened the conference but also took nart in the nanel debate together with Unity Line's Piotr Waszczenko. Also pictured are organizers . Bo-Lennart Thorbjörnsson









Bo-Lennart Thorbjörnsson, organizer of the FSC, summarized his reflections since last year's conference. His conclusions were that freight traffic was considerably down, by 8 to 30 per cent depending on which region one was looking at. Currency fluctuations can result in challenges, but also opportunities. Having in mind the denials at the conference two years ago, about a merger between Norfolkline and DFDS, it was envisaged that more mergers will take place. The passenger volumes are, however, really stable and there will be a surge in the short break market. When also taking newbuilding opportunities into consideration, an industry where half of the operators are showing red figures is becoming quite interesting.

The panel debate with Color Line's Trond Kleivdal and Piotr Waszczenko of Unity Line was rather intense. Mr Kleivdal claimed that he would not be in his current position had his company not performed a market analysis in 2002. This resulted in newbuildings coming on stream in the 2004-2008 period. Reducing the number of ships from ten smaller ships to six bigger ones has lead to a much better capacity utilization. Unity Line, on the other hand, has gone in the opposite direction. The company has increased the number of ferries from three to seven, intensifying the schedule between Poland and Sweden.



The two supremos both recommended alternative marketing tools such as Facebook and/or Twitter.

Oil: stable now, more expensive next year

In the "Recession outlook" session, Nordea's oil expert Thina Margrethe Saltvedt told the audience more about availability and prices of bunker as well as trade development. She anticipated that prices will remain fairly stable throughout 2010, but with some higher prices to be expected in 2011. When investments are down in capital expenditure and the number of airline departures are reduced by ash clouds, the demand for oil also comes down. But, no doubt, transportation demand will continue to grow in the long term. With the GDP per capita and wealth increasing, people will start to demand more transportation - be it for themselves or for goods that

Politicians, be aware of the message!

Carrying more than two billion passengers annually, the worldwide ferry industry can prove that it is almost handling as many passengers as the world's airlines do. And there are reasons to assume that the number of ferry passengers could be much higher. That's because accurate figures are missing. In addition to that, a large number of ferries carry vehicles which, if lined up, would cover a distance equal to 41 times around the globe! "It is essential that our industry can make the most of this message and convey it to politicians all over the world", Klas Brogren said.





Recession outlook with Nordea's Thina Margrethe Saltvedt and Tor Wergeland.

need to be carried.

The "shale gas mania" in the US will affect the prices there. During the Q&A session, there was a discussion regarding LNG versus bunker. The belief that there will eventually be a move towards LNG was voiced.

Wergeland summarized economic outlook when stating that problems in shipping were self-inflicted: too many shipowners ordered too many ships in a kind of collective euphoria. The underlying economical factors were presented, together with an analysis of the short- and long term effects of these. Basically, the economy is growing again, thanks to China. But, in the long term, Mr Wergeland expected that emerging markets will increase. He speculated that IMF voting rights will change in favour of China. His view was that oil will no longer be the main alternative when it comes to transportation, as green house gas emissions will have to be considered. The worldwide GDP has a tendency to increase from 2.9 per cent to 3.5 per cent.

Speaking with one voice

It is essential that the ferry industry speaks with one voice. A paper on the subject had

"If you are not at the table, you are probably on the menu" Johan Roos, Stena Rederi

been prepared by Johan Roos, who represented Stena Rederi. However, due to the air chaos he was stuck in the Bahamas, the presentation instead being given by STX Europe's Håkan Enlund (who is also an Interferry board member). Johan Roos had sent a video with

his own comments and showing the quite nice surroundings that he had out there. The conclusion was that the ferry industry should definitely pay more attention when it comes to IMO related matters. The pictures were accompanied by the message "Why we need to increase our presence in the rule makers' minds". According to Johan Roos, very few shipping organizations are really supporting the short sea segment, including ferries and ro-pax vessels. "If you are not at the table, you are probably on the menu," he summarized while talking about decisions - or pending decisions - regarding sulphur, carbon, sewage and EEDI. As Interferry had just held a board meeting in the Bahamas, Håkan Enlund reported on the outcome and suggested that the organisation will remain THE voice for the ferry industry but that it will seek to channel its messages more efficiently.

Attica's Yiota Krassakopoulou was stuck in Athens, but had kindly forwarded all



Interferry board member Håkan Enlund acting on behalf of Johan Roos who sent a message from the Bahamas.

details for her presentation to Bo-Lennart Thorbjörnsson. Among the topics to be aware of were the lower sulphur emissions, but some nations and organizations like ECSA have started to react with studies. But there are also so many other legislative matters to be concerned about, such as Marco Polo, Motorways of the Seas, Ten-T, VAT onboard, passenger rights and single language communications — as well as manning directives. The conclusion was that, apart from IMO regulations, there are many other legal matters that ferry operators have to study.

Thanks to the combination of data collection and intense lobbying, the UK's Passengers Shipping Association has emerged as a heavyweight in the area of industry information. On behalf of Bill Gibbons, Simon Johnson from P&O Ferries gave a brief presentation of the

Ro-pax or Pax-ro?

Klas Brogren further elaborated on the word "ro-pax", of which there is no official definition. It was exemplified by a plethora of different ships that, for sure, could be categorised in various "grey zones". Interestingly, when delegates were asked to tick the type of vessels presented, a new definition, "pax-ro", was conjured up. Despite the word never being used before, it got many votes (see adjacent

graph). What's more, the test also illustrated that the industry has problems when it comes to definitions of at least some activities carried out by ferry operators. The winner of a ShipPax Database is Singapore Technologies Marine.



| | FERRY | CRUISE- FERRY | RO-RO | RO- PAX | PAX- RO | FAST FERRY |
|-------------------|-------|------------------|-------|------------|------------|---------------|
| ARMORIQUE | 17% | 0% | 0% | 64% | 19% | 0% |
| MOLDEFJORD | 80% | 0% | 4% | 9% | 3% | 4% |
| BO HAI BAO ZHU | 19% | 3% | 4% | 58% | 15% | 1% |
| ELYROS | 21% | 19% | 0% | 34% | 26% | 0% |
| MARTIN I SOLER | 36% | 14% | 1% | 31% | 13% | 5% |
| NORMAN BRIDGE | 6% | 0% | 13% | 76% | 4% | 1% |
| NORMAN ARROW | 3% | 3% | 0% | 4% | 0% | 90% |
| SUPERFAST I | 3% | 1% | 5% | 68% | 4% | 19% |
| COTENTIN | 11% | 0% | 18% | 66% | 5% | 0% |
| QUEEN CORAL PLUS | 28% | 3% | 18% | 45% | 6% | 0% |
| SEAFRANCE MOLIERE | 21% | 1% | 5% | 37% | 14% | 22% |
| EUROFERRY SICILIA | 9% | 0% | 49% | 41% | 0% | 1% |

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FSGs Uwe Otto versus Singapore Technologies' Parmesh Singh: building ferries in Europe or Asia?

association's actions in the UK. The VAT matter was exemplified.

During the Q&A, Karl-Morten Wiklund of DNV was a bit tired of all the blameful words he heard, saying that ferry operators now have to gather their forces and communicate with one voice. "We have every chance to make it right", he said, Interferry's action on the EEDI being given as an example.

Towards the end of the afternoon, the interactive debate concentrated on the new orders for Scandlines and Fjord Line – and whether we have seen the end of the period with dry order books. Flensburger Schiffbau-Gesellschaft and Singapore Technologies debated about whether to build ferries in Europe or Asia, whilst Imperial Shipping's Carl-Otto Dahlberg claimed that there are too many ro-pax vessels fetching falling charter rates. Macholl & Specht's Angelika Nieder pointed out that ferries like Scandlines' newbuildings belong to a different league, as they are purpose-built.

The next question was about the "surprising stability of the passenger market," a description used by Stena Line's Michael McGrath when looking closer at the passenger market. With passengers returning to ferries for the first time in years, there are lots of opportunities. STX Finland claimed there is an increasing interest in refurbishment of ferries to achieve new levels of comfort.

Day two

Bruce Peter sent his regards from Glasgow, with the message that hadn't DFDS Seaways

Klas Brogren acting as a stand-in for Bruce Peter and Carl-Otto Dahlberg commenting the global freight picture.



closed the Newcastle-Gothenburg route a few years ago, he would definitely have made it under the ash clouds to the conference. Klas Brogren acted as a stand-in, giving Peter's presentation. Bruce Peter found that the presentation was quite timely, as two significant anniversaries in the annals of ship design and technology will be celebrated in 2012: the first steamship (1812) and the first ocean-going motorship (1912). He was also on the lookout for more innovative ideas in modern ferry design. "Are we a conservative bunch?", he asked.

Bjarne Wollman from Dinamo Consulting turned things upside down when bringing forward the idea that ferry companies should not focus too much on the younger generation but rather prepare for a tsunami of 50+ people who will be the customers of tomorrow. The 1990-2020 period will see this age group growing by 75 per cent. "This is a huge political problem, but for ferry operators it is a big business opportunity - if you handle it well. These people live longer and healthier than ever. They want to use their money and travel more. Their minds are also younger than their bodies", Mr Wollman said. "The big wave is coming now, so prepare for it immediately. Market your product towards the 50 and 60+ generation. They should be the main target group in image advertising. Make them feel welcome on board", Mr Wollman concluded.

On the subject of age: the average age of cruise passengers continues to fall. A presentation by Mike Louagie showed that Royal Caribbean International's OASIS OF THE SEAS definitely pleases

those who are young at heart. Because of its size, the ship has been divided into seven neighbourhoods. These include Central Park and Boardwalk. But, as Mike Louagie mentioned, it is not only a matter of hardware. The OASIS OF THE SEAS is also a masterpiece when it comes to software and interesting technology such as "find your way" screens and iPhone applications.

Doom and gloom

In the Freight outlook session, the speakers were concerned about the weak freight market and the IMO's sulphur regulations. Carl-Otto Dahlberg of Imperial Shipping in Gothenburg presented the global freight picture and the condition of other shipping segments such as tankers, bulkers and container ships. He said that the container business is eating into the reefer- and ro-ro markets. "Ro-ro ships are constantly losing market share to container vessels", he warned.

TT-Line's Hanns Heinrich Conzen was unable to fly to Oslo, but he was within comfortable driving distance when the vessel berthed in Kiel. He came on board to give quite a comprehensive background of the ferry industry's freight market situation. In almost all European market segments, volumes have decreased sharply (by between 20 and 25 per cent). "A very modest increase has been noted since spring 2010, but the market will need some years to reach the 2008 level again", he said. "With only few, but big, newbuildings under construction, we are facing over-tonnage in a market that is





"Further reducing the sulphur cap to 0.1 per cent is like peeing in the ocean"
Carl-Otto Dahlberg, Imperial Shipping





Bjarne Wollman talking about the untapped 50 and 60+ market. Mike Louagie presenting OASIS OF THE SEAS. TT-Line's Hanns Heinrich Conzen is concerned about the 0.1 per cent sulphur cap.

ferry shipping conference 10



Edvard Thonstad Sandvik explained the Norwegian case.



Simon Johnson introducing the new "Olympic"-Class Dover-Calais superferries.



Ingvald Fardal talked about Fjord Line's newbuildings.

already characterized by a lower utilisation of the cargo decks and idle tonnage", he added.

On the other hand, he does not expect that many orders will be placed in the near future: it is still too expensive to build, and the market simply does not justify new ships. Mr Conzen considers the increasing fuel prices as a real challenge. "The actual price is already five times higher than the average price in the previous decade and the majority expects that it will increase further."

Mr Conzen pointed out that new players such as "fixed links" and train operators are entering the market. "These are subsidized with public money, so we have a situation where there is competition between transport modes rather than between operators. We have to compete on a level playing field in order to avoid a shift from road to sea."

This modal backshift nightmare scenario may also become a reality when, in 2015, the sulphur content in the ECAs (Baltic Sea, North Sea and English Channel) will be reduced to 0.1 per cent. Several studies have reached the conclusion that fuel costs will increase by 80 per cent. "Consequently, the use of Marine Gas Oil will have a negative effect on freight rates and will burden the North European industry with extraordinary transport costs. It will also weaken the North European ro-ro industry as a whole", Mr Conzen said.

He urged the IMO to review the sulphur regulation and suggested that the sulphur content be reduced to 0.5 per cent by 2015, which he would consider acceptable. In 2018 the impact of the ECAs could possibly be included in the global review. Carl-Otto Dahlberg had also put a big question mark behind the IMO's decision. "To put it in perspective, one

should compare the ship's emissions in the ECAs to the three billion tons of coal that China used in 2009. Further reducing the sulphur cap to 0.1 per cent is like peeing in the ocean," Mr Dahlberg remarked.

Concessions and new ships

Guy Platten of Caledonian Maritime Assets Limited (CMAL) had sent his reflections on the "Scottish model", which separates ownership from operation. Owned by the Scottish government, CMAL controls a fleet of 31 ferries and 24 ports on the west coast of Scotland. The ferries provide lifeline services to the islands, CMAL deriving its income from the chartering of the vessels to operators who, in turn, provide the services under contract to the Scottish government. The separation of assets from operation ensures a level playing field for all bidders. It would be difficult for a new operator to source 31 ships, some of them being bespoke to the routes they serve. Another advantage, according to Mr Platten, is that the assets are secured for the long term and can be funded based on the economic life of the ferry rather than on the basis of a six-year public service contract. "We are able to plan for the long term and invest in innovative, more eco friendly ferries. How many operators would be prepared to invest in new tonnage with no certainty that they would win subsequent contracts?", Mr Platten wondered.

On the subject of eco friendly ferries, the company is currently studying a battery powered double-ended ferry with a capacity of 23 cars and 150 passengers. With an ageing Scottish fleet – the average age of the vessels is over 20 years – and harbour infrastructure that is nearing the end of its useful economic life, CMAL estimates that nearly EUR 1 billion needs to be invested over the next 15 years.

Being on board a Norwegian-flagged

ferry, it was also appropriate to have Edvard Thonstad Sandvik from Statens vegvesen (the Norwegian Public Roads Administration) to present the ongoing processes of domestic Norwegian ferry concessions. As from 1 January 2010 the licensing authority for 78 ferry connections was moved from a national level to six counties. The licensing authority and the authorisation to give subsidies for 18 ferry connections, representing 50 per cent of the total costs of all inland ferries in Norway, has been left in the hands of the Public Roads Administration. In 2005 it was decided that all domestic ferry connections should be opened up for competitive tendering before 1 January 2010. Due to different problems, some concessions still remain, Mr Edvard Thonstad Sandvik expecting that all Norwegian ferry licenses will be gained on competitive tendering before 2011. Norway is at the forefront of LNG propulsion and for seven connections LNG propulsion was a condition to obtain the concession. It has proved to be a safe and reliable technology, and by 2013 at least 17 LNG powered ferries will be operating in Norway.

New ships for a new era

The presentation of new ships has been a standing session at the FSC over the years. This year was no exception. After all, the ships represent the blood of our industry, and it is always fascinating to look into new ships and new projects. Simon Johnson of P&O presented the quite refreshing interiors of the new "Olympic"-Class of Dover-Calais ferries.

It was only three years ago that P&O started to create two new ships for one new era, as Mr Johnson described the EUR 360 million newbuilding project. "There has been an input from all departments (including the staff on board), but we also talked to our passengers and freight customers because we wanted to make sure we created what customers want", Simon Johnson explained.

The first impressions count, the ships ▶

"Bigger is more efficient, lighter is more efficient and slower is more sufficient"
Robert Clifford, Incat



will therefore have familiar signals such as airport style signage and high street/airport style retail experience. With the intention to encourage more trips, a lasting impression will be created. One of the many highlights of the ships will be the cruise-style sun decks, featuring a public bar and clear sea views. The ships will definitely set new standards, and the presentation was wound up with a video animation of the new ship.

Incat's Chairman Robert Clifford was stuck in Seoul without the possibility to reach Europe at all, but he had prepared a strong power point presentation that summarised his visions. "Bigger is more efficient, lighter is more efficient and slower is more sufficient," he claimed. In line with that, Incat has now designed new generations of much larger craft than before. These include a 225m wave-piercing catamaran, which operates at lower speeds (down to 25 knots). Thanks to its 62m beam, the 225m wave piercer has a stunning capacity of 500 trucks and 5,000 passengers! Incat has been approached by Asian interests for the 225m type. Smaller versions, with a length of 150m and 130m are also on the cards, and even the double-deck drivethrough principle has been re-invented. The latter type is now ready for production, with a delivery time of 18 months (the 150m version has a delivery time of 24 months). The new Incat generation will also feature a number of details aimed at making them more eco friendly. These include engines that are adapted to low sulphur content fuel, solar panels and wind turbines to capture energy from the wind.

One company that took many by surprise by ordering two cruise ferries recently is Fjord Line. Its CEO, Ingvald Fardal, made a presentation of the new 1,500-pax ships. By doubling the number of ships compared to the current situation, Fjord Line will be able to offer daily departures on the Bergen-Stavanger-Hirtshals-Kristiansand stretch and v.v. as from 2012. Strangely, no other shipyards than Fosen were considered, and the ships will be constructed with dual fuel propulsion possibilities in mind. Following the delivery of the two ships, the Norwegian operator will not only increase its frequency: the quality of the on board experience will also be improved. Even so, Fjord Line does not have the ambition to become a big player. The intention is to remain a niche operator that has focus on the Norwegian west coast.

Having focused on freight in the morning, it was time to elaborate on the

future passenger market in the last session. In a paper prepared by Bill Gibbons of the UK's Passenger Shipping Association, the traditional ingredients of "competition from low coast airlines and fixed links" as well as the "end of duty free" were on the menu. Needless to say, this has eroded passenger numbers on the UK-continent ferries. Looking into his crystal ball, Mr Gibbons believes that future vessels need to appeal to a much wider and diverse range of passengers. "The onboard experience is critical", he claimed.

Short distance ferries should have less industrial and aggressive car decks and why not add 60-minute spas, barber shops and nail & make-up bars to the ship's facilities? A high-street familiarity and professionalism should also be delivered. Night ferries should have more flexible cabins and incorporate more of the ideas and services seen on recent cruise ships. The PSA is no less concerned than anyone else about the 0.1 per cent sulphur content and the possible modal shift from sea to road that this may cause when fuel prices increase by between 80 and 100 per cent. Mr Gibbons hoped that the more efficient ferries will win. He also believed that the coach market is set for a comeback when it comes to long distance travelling. The concept offers a door-to-door experience, something that is much appreciated by an ageing population. On another positive note, Bill Gibbons assumed that the car market will grow by an average of 1.5 per cent per annum from 2011 onwards.

Specifically looking at the Greek market, Bo-Lennart Thorbjörnsson, on behalf of XRTC's George Xiradakis, who was stuck in Athens, outlined the current development there. 2009 figures were not presented, but in the 2004-2008 period, the passenger and freight market decreased slightly. The Greek ferry fleet has been reduced from 119 vessels in the year 2000 to 80 last year - and a further reduction in tonnage is expected. The average age of the Greek fleet is 17.4 years, which is still quite high for a nation where operators have invested heavily in new ships. Clearly, ro-pax ferries are the name of the game in Greece, the number of dedicated ro-ro ships being very limited. Also, the once so popular hydrofoils are of a dying breed. Mr Xiradakis expected that competition will further increase with Grimaldi Group (Napoli) strengthening its position in the Adriatic with new state-of-the art rocruise ferries. Another factor to be taken into account is the entering of the market

by newcomer Adriatic Lines. The Attica Group is increasing its presence in the Aegean Sea and has recently added Chania to its domestic route network. Mr Xiradakis forecasted more "hostile takeovers" and a further rationalization of services.

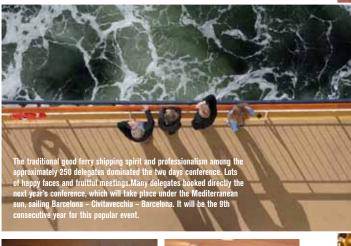
Heading back for Oslo, and with the "official programme" coming to an end, some delegates probably experienced a shorter second night compared to the first one. The next day, all delegates left the COLOR MAGIC with an invitation to join the ninth Ferry Shipping Conference in 2011 on a Grimaldi Lines sailing between Barcelona and Civitavecchia.

They made it!

With most West European airports still being blocked until the very day of the conference, it was obvious that many delegates could not make it. If only there were more ferries...

Even so, there were several non-Scandinavian delegates who went to enormous lengths in order to reach Oslo. One delegate crossed the Irish Sea and the Channel with his car, reaching Oslo in time for the conference. Another delegate also crossed the English Channel, dropped off two stranded German passengers and continued to Copenhagen where he took the DFDS ferry to Oslo... At the end of the week, he had to do the same trip again - although in the opposite direction. Due to most airports in Northern and Western Europe being closed, some non-European delegates found themselves stranded in Italy. They continued all the way north by train! One of the speakers arrived with a night bus from Copenhagen and took a refreshing walk from the bus station to the ferry terminal! Several delegates from Finland took the ferry to Sweden and continued to Oslo by car. The examples clearly illustrate that many delegates think "ferry" and not just "airplane".

Of course, we fully understand that it was not always easy – or even possible – to make a last minute change. Especially since many authorities made people believe that "yes" there would be flights again on Monday (the day before the conference). A hard core of UK delegates sent a picture of them sitting around a table, toasting the conference... Obviously, they had preferred to be on board the COLOR MAGIC. We are in no doubt that they will make it next year!





































OKIT

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We can offer you a

keycard system say Marine and John B





























Finn Falkum Hansen and Ingvald Fardal.



















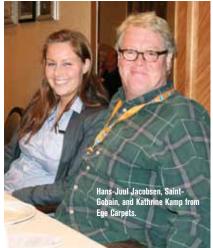












STX Finland, sponsor of the dinner. Berndt Lönnberg, welcomes all the delegates to the dinner.































Jan Willem Visser from Gleistein Ropes, talking about all the different ropes he shows at the

conference's exhibition

stand.















the Oceanic à la Carte.













Elizabeth



Klas



Annika



Göran

Shippax Highly Aggrevated Grand Group Exceptional . Delegates Have a good time without us, say Jimmy Mason, Simon Robinson (Blair Reid), Tim Burnell (Maatsuyker), James Mason Jr, Incat with Leith Thomson, Maggie and Oliver Weiss.

Paul Kypriano. Grimaldi Lines, the host of the **Ferry Shipping** Conference 2011, welcomes everyone to the Grimaldi shin.







Mark Dear and his colleague from Team Electric are invited for dinner



Last but not least, we would like to extend our sincere thanks to the sponsors of the event, including:







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