



As 1 January draws near, the nervousness amongst ferry operators is mounting. In spite of this, the sulphur saga for once didn't heat up the debate during the 12th edition of the Ferry Shipping Conference, the definitive get-together for ferry shipping professionals. Instead, top ferry executives really seemed to be concerned about the never-ending plethora of new global maritime and EU rules and regulations that is coming their way.

allink's 2002-built cruise-ferry ROMANTIKA was the venue for this year's Ferry Shipping Conference (FSC), jointly organised by Shippax and BOLT Consulting. Over 330 delegates and representatives from more than 40 ferry operators were registered to participate in the two full days of conference and networking during a



Stockholm-Riga return cruise.

The conference was officially declared open by Tallink's Vice Chairman Andres Hunt. Prior to commencing the debate between top ferry executives, the co-organiser Bo-Lennart Thorbjörnsson reflected on the year since the previous conference. "Despite some encouraging results, there is still considerable red ink flowing, especially in the Med," Mr Thorbjörnsson said. "Improvements are made through cost efficiency and consolidated sailing schedules. On the Channel and the Adriatic, however,



CHALLENGIN INDUSTRY P

TEXT: PHILIPPE HOLTHOF PHOTOS: BRUCE PETER

competition is still fierce."

Because of the difficult economic climate and market uncertainties, ferry orders are drying up and times are extremely tough for shipyards that traditionally build sophisticated ferries. "But there is a spark of hope with the LNG powered newbuilds that were announced by the French SNCM and Brittany Ferries, respectively," he added.

Preparation to meet the 0.1 percent sulphur limit is in full swing with the installations of scrubbers and a few ships being earmarked for retrofitting to LNG propulsion. "But there is a mixed picture regarding how to handle the situation," Mr Thorbjörnsson remarked, "as many operators remain undecided and have a wait and see attitude which could possibly result in new contracts for shipyards and suppliers of green technologies."

Looking into the future, he believed that the sulphur directive would probably result in more partnerships, alliances and mergers. "Despite the current encouraging freight carryings in Western and Northern Europe, the big question remains on the predicted modal backshift. Will the European logistics road map effectively change with trucks being channelled through short routes at the expense of the longer crossings?"

FERRY EXECUTIVES PANEL DEBATE During earlier editions of the FSC, there were still faint hopes that the 0.1



G TIMES AHEAD AS THE REPARES FOR 2015 AND BEYOND



"We should use the sulphur directive to our advantage and bring out the green message to the customer."

Peter Roose, Tallink's Group Sales & Marketing

percent sulphur limit in SECAs would be reviewed or postponed. These hopes have been dashed for the last couple of years now and the question is what strategy ferry operators will adopt after 1 January. "We should use the sulphur directive to our advantage and bring out the green message to the customer," Peter Roose, Tallink's Group Sales & Marketing Director, commented, adding, "the customer should pay for it." All the panellists agreed that passenger and freight rates would soar in SECAs. "We have no other choice as operating costs will increase dramatically," Viking Line's newly appointed Executive Vice President and Deputy CEO, Andreas Remmer, explained. "We have done our utmost to be prepared and Viking Line is here to stay; but will this be the case for everybody?" Grimaldi Group's Paul Kyprianou couldn't agree more and believed that only financially healthy players would survive. "What's more, despite the recovery in the market, the consolidation process will continue," he affirmed.

Because of the nature of the services and the duty free status thanks to the Åland stopover, both Viking Line and Tallink Silja Line find themselves in a much more comfortable position than



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"We suffer fierce competition from low cost Pierre Mattei, Corsica Sardinia Elba Ferries' General Manager.



most of the other SECA operators and, as Mr Remmer pointed out, "It's all about giving passengers an experience that will make them wanting to return." Tallink Silja Line shared this view and the Estonian cruise-ferry giant has embarked on an ambitious refurbishment programme that includes new shopping and onboard concepts. Despite the increased bunker costs because of the 0.1 percent sulphur cap, it will probably be business as usual for both Viking Line and Tallink Silja Line. Operators in the Med, for their part, have other fish to fry., explained that his company offered a simple A to B transport model in which price was the main driver. "We suffer fierce competition from low cost airlines," Mr Mattei continued. "We have to work on better pricing, but this is difficult with bunkers already representing 40 percent of our operating costs. And how to face a 0.5 percent sulphur cap, which will likely be imposed in the Med in 2020? The situation will only get worse."

Low cost airlines are a thorn in the side of many a ferry operator, especially in the Med and Paul Kyprianou from the Grimaldi Group wondered if today's ferries would also be the right tools for tomorrow, as passengers had turned their backs on the ferries. "In the Adriatic the passenger market has halved because of the low cost airlines serving more and more destinations and islands from regional airports," he said. "Will the passenger market be further eroded and should we keep large passenger capacity especially in the Med? As passenger numbers may further dwindle and freight will increase on certain routes, we'll have to find the right balance between ro and pax."

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No doubt, there is overcapacity in Greek (international) waters. At-

tica Group's Spiros Paschalis urged the elimination of distortions and levelling of the playing field. "Some operations entail government support," Mr Paschalis elucidated. "In principle there is nothing wrong with it, but the government aid should not distort competition. EU-driven funding like Marco Polo came under scrutiny because of concerns about distortion of competition. Take a look at some of the EIB's funding choices and one will notice a recurring theme where certain recipients are favoured and others not." Mr Paschalis also wondered how to become bankable. "Our sector has become 'unbankable'," he continued. "Lower turnovers, budget constraints, more than doubled fuel prices together with the dire situation of banks themselves, have led to a serious disturbance of cash flow and loan facilities." He then revealed that the Attica Group was working on an LNG concept and supply chain, but admitted that there was still a long way to go.

The industry decision makers voiced their concerns on the increased regulatory burden from the EU and the IMO. "Because of this, we risk that certain ferry services will eventually become uncompetitive and unviable," Mr Kyprianou warned. "Especially in the Med, the road will become a big competitor."

The Ballast Water Management (BWM) Convention is just one of the upcoming regulations that seemed to enjoy little or no sympathy among the industry heavyweights. "Since our ferries are operating in the same area all the time, this will hit us in an unfair way," Mr Remmer said. "There should be room for exemptions. It's another additional cost and although it's unfair we will comply if no form of exemption is granted."

During the Q&A session, one of the





delegates asked if shipowners would challenge the SECA regulations and risk the fines just to test the system. Andreas Remmer laconically answered: "It would be like peeing in your pants; first it's warm and comfortable, but it quickly gets cold and uncomfortable." In conclusion, the panellists underlined that cheating was not an option.

CALL FOR A STRONGER INTERFERRY

Before wrapping up the panel debate, Paul Kyprianou wondered if the assembled European ferry industry had a vision and if it was aware of its role in European transportation. He therefore called for a stronger Interferry Europe. "The big players took the first step and joined forces to launch Interferry Europe," he underlined. "Other operators should follow suit. Through a stronger Interferry Europe we can show Brussels what benefits we create as an industry."

Interferry was well-represented at the FSC and its Executive Director of EU and IMO Affairs, Johan Roos, reported on the latest developments from the legislators and regulators. As he explained, sulphur was no longer number one on the agenda; not because it is not still the most important issue, but because Interferry and its members have exhausted all opportunities. "But we keep on fighting as the Commission is obliged to act in case of a modal backshift and route closures," he commented, "but the big problem is that they don't know what to do should this happen." Mr Roos expressed his worries about the EU's and IMO's approaches towards passenger safety, as the ro-pax concept could be in jeopardy. "Pushed by the US and the EU, the IMO plans to implement what it calls a 'moderate increase' of subdivision, which will primarily result in adding extra steel









and potentially barriers on new ships to subdivide the free surface of the ro-ro deck," he warned. "This will undoubtedly result in a loss of cargo capacity and the whole ro-pax concept could be rendered unfeasible." In addition to newbuildings, the existing fleets will also be targeted and, according to Mr Roos, it is really irresponsible that the EU's accident database is based on global numbers that mainly deal with maneuvering incidents rather than actual collisions or groundings. "I never hear about major

collisions in EU waters," he added.

Mr Roos also touched upon CO2 monitoring, reporting and verification, and NOx requirements. As far as LNG propulsion was concerned, he remarked that LNG ships had been commissioned before the rules were published. The IGF Code is progressing but still not finalised and Norway requests prohibitive tank size limitations.

The BWM Convention was another hot topic and Mr Roos wondered why equipment worth \$250,000 should be

installed on a ferry that shuttled between, e.g., Helsingør and Helsingborg. He told the delegates that Interferry was working hard to obtain exemptions.

After three years of hard work at Interferry Europe, Johan Roos is more than happy that the industry is speaking with one voice at last. But he asked for more hands on deck and concluded: "Bad regulations are usually the result of governments being wrongly or insufficiently informed."

Before Johan Roos joined Interferry,























he had been Stena's Director of Sustainability. This role has been taken over by Claes Berglund who gave an eveopening presentation about sustainable development for the industry. "There is an increased pressure from stakeholders for more information and reporting," Mr Berglund pointed out, "and we have an obligation to our shareholders and stakeholders to secure a sustainable development of the business as this is the only way to make money in the long run." In the view of Stena, sustainability is based on three pillars: environmental, social and financial responsibilities. "Companies are becoming more and more integrated into society and have to take care of all the different stakeholders, be it the general public, employees, authorities, customers, and NGOs, etc. We used to be able to do our thing under the radar, but this is no longer possible as transparency and shared value are becoming more important."

BOLT THINK TANK

A panel of industry experts participated in the new BOLT think tank session. Panellists with an operator's, shipbuilder's and designer's background, respectively, were asked how the industry would look in 2025.

Brittany Ferries' Christophe Mathieu believed that we had to make the destinations more attractive. "Although the ship shouldn't be regarded as the destination, we have to capitalise on the experience at and around the sea," he commented. He also predicted a growth on the passenger side but wondered how the cars of tomorrow would look. "Shall we equip our ships with plugs to recharge electric cars? What about the Google driverless car? Will people use more public transport and plan their holidays differently? Maybe we should enter into partnerships with car renting companies, as fewer people will own cars."

"Increased fuel cost and new emis-

sion rules," Johan Snellman of STX Finland said, "will result in more efficient ships and operations." As the ferry fleet was getting older, he predicted an upsurge in the newbuilding market but wondered if there would be any 'ferry yard' left following several years of quasi-inactivity.

On the designer's side, there was Vertti Kivi from dSign Vertti Kivi & Co. Kivi has garnered much attention with the innovative and daring interior design of the VIKING GRACE. According to him, the VIKING GRACE has become the talk of the town. Kivi, who predicted that more people would be travelling by 2025, also promoted his Space Alive concept that changed the mood of a space and which was ideal to get more out of typically fairly small spaces on ferries. He then blamed the ferry sector for its conservatism and claimed that people were prepared to pay if you offered them an experience. Simon Johnson, who set up YS Comms Ltd. after quitting P&O Ferries as Passenger Services Director, agreed that it was important to improve the customer experience and underlined the importance of retail. "Get to know your customer and challenge ship designers and builders," he advised. "Follow high street trends and use best in industry practice. Become tech savvy and integrate technology into the customer experience. If you keep doing what you've done before, 2025 will look exactly the same."

Anders Refsgaard, DFDS' Vice President, gave an interesting insight into how the freight market might look in ten years from now. "Environmental restrictions will change transport flows," he forecast, "as trucks are becoming more and more fuel efficient, it will make no more sense to sail parallel with motorways." Refsgaard believed that larger vessels and larger but fewer hubs were the way forward. "In the short sea sector," he said, summarising the shape

of things to come, "ro-ro ships will also get increased competition from the container sector, so the future lies in bigger hubs and shorter routes without head-to-head competition from land routes. On those longer routes that will stay, we'll see the introduction of larger tonnage with a 4,000-plus lanemetre capacity and, in some cases, even a capacity of up to 8,000 lanemetres."

SIMILAR CHALLENGES IN CANADA

Serge Buy, CEO of the Canadian Ferry Operators Association (CFOA) - the organisation representing ferry operators across Canada, elaborated on a survey that had been carried out by his association. He also talked about the role ferry operators played in Canadian economy. It appears to be an industry to be reckoned with as CFOA members carry 45 million passengers and over 17.5 million vehicles per annum, with nearly 180 ferries on over 110 routes. As Mr Buy explained, the challenges were very similar to those in Europe and included increased cost, regulatory burden and infrastructure requirements.

Earlier in the afternoon, Jens Rohleder of KfW IPEX-Bank talked about the industry's challenges from a banker's perspective. "There are financing opportunities," Mr Rohleder confirmed, "especially for sustainable investments." Besides full new eco vessels, there are also financing possibilities for fleetwide retrofit packages. He added that money was cheap and plentiful but focuses were on companies with sustainable business models that were able to cope with the challenges.

The last session of the first day proved to be very entertaining when Dr. Bruce Peter of the Glasgow School of Art went to great lengths to explain how we could benefit from history and heritage. Heritage can be used as a tool to communicate brand values and empathy among stakeholders and observ-



"Ferry connections - not in the least from Tallink and Stena Line - are important." Anrijs Matiss, Latvia's Minister of Transport and Communications.

ers. Companies could also use heritage to achieve cultural and commercial advantage. He also briefly touched upon today's LNG supply problems and reminded the audience that this was nothing new as the first motor ships also had a limited range due to unavailability of fuel in many ports.

GREEN AND CLEAN FERRIES

The first session of the second day focused on newbuildings with green technology. Per Edvin Tande of Bergen Group Fosen (Noryards) portrayed the LNG powered night and day ferry STAVANGERFJORD, the theme ship in the recently published Shippax Guide 14.

A zero emission ferry with supercapacitor technology - an industry first - was presented by Alain Buck of STX France. Built by the yard's Lorient facility and commissioned in September 2013, the catamaran AR VAG TREDAN is a passenger-only shuttle-ferry that makes a 7-minute crossing at a 10-knot speed. As Buck explained, supercapacitors were best suited for short trips with multiple stops or high frequency



crossings. The AR VAG TREDAN has a 5-minute turnaround with 4 minutes being required for charging. Besides the zero NOx, SOx and CO2 emissions, the supercapacitor technology has many other advantages, including a long lifecycle (believed to be more than 15 years without the need for replacement), reduced maintenance as well as low noise and vibrations. Built on the experience gained from the AR VAG TREDAN, STX France has developed a series of shuttle ferries with fully electric or hybrid propulsion.

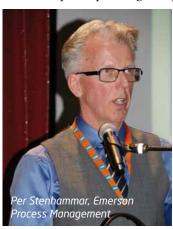
PRESENT AND FUTURE TRAFFIC AND LOGISTICS FLOWS

Roman Poersch, MD and owner of Wilhelm Borchert GmbH, highlighted the importance of maritime transport in Europe. "Sea transport is the Union's sustainable backbone," Mr Poersch said. "More than 90 percent of extra-Union commodity trade is seaborne whereas 40 percent of intra-European transport relies on efficient sea services. Sea transport is the most productive, safe and environmentally friendly mode of

transport." Direct employment of sea transport is about two percent of the total EU-27 transport sector. It generates a turnover of circa €101 billion per annum, about eight percent of the total EU-27 transport sector. As per his calculations, approximately 10,000 ships are regularly engaged in intra-European short sea shipping. But the short sea shipping market structure is diverse and whereas every second ship spends over 50 percent of operational time in future SECAs, about 70 percent of European trailer moves are within SECAs using about 600 ships. The company also simulated eight future SECA ro-ro traffic scenarios. This modeling suggested a reduction in ro-ro operation of about 10 percent in normal GDP growth situation when SECA comes into force.

PORT STRATEGY

One of the sessions dealt with ports and port infrastructure. Björn Boström from the port of Ystad called for a close partnership with the port users to meet future challenges. "This should be based on trust and confidentiality," he















added. Mr Boström also explained that the times to invest on speculation were over. "Due to environmental constraints, port expansion has become a very long process."

TTS Port Equipment's Håkan Jönsson underlined the large potential of keeping turnarounds short to reduce fuel consumption as well as SOx, NOx and CO2 emissions. "Port layouts should be simple and straightforward with easy access also to marshalling areas," Mr Jönsson said. "Similarly, vehicle deck layouts should be well thought out to further shorten turnaround times. This means longer journeys at lower speeds which is to the benefit of fuel consumption and emissions."

On the basis of some case studies. ADELTE's Martin Westphal talked about the latest development of passenger boarding bridges and stressed the uniqueness of each terminal.

Erik Ringmaa from the port of Tallinn introduced the Tallinn-Helsinki twin-port project, which envisaged an alternative north-south seaway aimed at getting heavy and hazardous traffic out of the congested city centres. This freight traffic will be diverted through the ports of Muuga and Vuosaari, respectively, but Mr Ringmaa pointed out that this would not mean the end of the current operations out of the city centres as it was meant to be a pure freight ro-ro affair.

Whilst ROMANTIKA was berthed in Riga, the FSC welcomed Anrijs Matīss, Latvia's Minister of Transport and Communications. His speech was all about the country's international transport strategy at sea and over land. "Ferry connections - not in the least from Tallink and Stena Line - are important," he underlined, "but with only one million passengers it is only a marginal business compared to the ferry movements in Tallinn." The Minister hailed his country's excellent location with an annual port throughput of 70 million tonnes. "Since our country lacks decent road and rail connections with the rest of Europe, ports are very important and provide a gateway to the rest of Europe and the world."

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS FOR THE **INDUSTRY**

Two series of speed speech sessions were aimed at trying to find possible solutions for the industry. The patented Seaware dynamic pricing system for ferries and cruise lines was presented by Victor Velton, President of Versonix. The 'multiple energy solutions' presentation by Jan-Erik Räsänen was subject to a poll in the stand of ABB. The voters chose to learn more about benefits and technologies for energy storage systems on board ferries.

Marine measurement solutions including fuel efficiency solutions, certified bunker solutions and emission monitoring systems were presented by Per Stenhammar of Emerson.

Carl Dahlberg of Green Tech Marine provided an in-depth presentation on cost-effective exhaust gas cleaning. Green Tech Marine is a manufacturer of compact wet scrubbers and 53 of its scrubbers have been delivered or are in the process of delivery. The company, now part of Yara, has mainly been active in the cruise industry but has also entered the ferry market. At the end of this year it will deliver seven open loop system scrubbers (four main engines and three auxiliaries) to an undisclosed

ferry operator. LIBERTY OF THE SEAS was the company's pilot project with the first full scale single engine installation while the ship was in service. As the scrubber also acts as a silencer, it replaced the silencers, which meant a saving of space and weight.

Promas, an integrated propeller and rudder system for increased propulsive and maneuvering performance, was praised by Andreas Malmkvist of Rolls-Royce. The system has been installed on the STAVANGERFJORD and model tests have shown that 6.3 percent less power is required to drive the ship forward.

Ferry efficiency in harsh times was the theme of a presentation by Wärtsilä's Wilco van der Linden. He touched upon LNG, amongst others. "It's a safe fuel," he said, "but we cannot afford an accident because it will turn against us." For this reason, he underlined the importance of training as it would make or break the success of LNG ships.

Cavotec's Erik Chilò talked about automated mooring and fast recharging of batteries whereas Mårten Storbacka of WE Tech emphasized the tangible savings with variable speed shaft generators.

The conference was closed by Maritime Communications Partner's Ole-Kristian Sivertsen. He asserted that passenger revenue and onboard experience could benefit from telecom and better still, smartphones.

After words of farewell by Bo-Lennart Thorbjörnsson, P&O Ferries' Chris Laming invited all delegates to next year's conference, to be held on board PRIDE OF ROTTERDAM between 21 and 23 April.

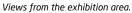
Save the date! ■





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Tommaso Scolaro, Enrico Scolaro Shipbrokers, Ann-Sofie Forss, Stena Roro and Olof Berndtsson, Pacific Basin Shipping.





































lan Rabbidge and Chris Laming P&O, having lunch with MTN's representatives, lan Maxson-Davies, lan Watson and Brent Horwitz.



The annual Award ceremony for new concepts, creativity and innovation.

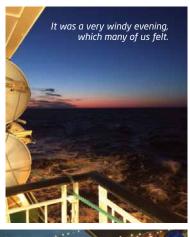












































































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