





















# FINALLY ASSEMBLED: IN A CHANGED WORLD FOR THE **GLOBAL FERRY INDUSTRY**

TEXT & PHOTOS SØREN LUND HVIID

The joy of reunion was evident on the faces of many of the 350 delegates for the 18th edition of the Shippax Ferry Conference, which was held on board DFDS' PEARL SEAWAYS 31 August to 2 September 2021. Although the typical participants in the conference are busy people with many annual travel days, the event on DFDS' Oslo ferry was for most the first major get-together since March 2020. In this regard the pandemic set its own global agenda, which made last year's Shippax Ferry Conference impossible, and which also left an imprint on the agenda at this year's conference.





Philippe Holthof



Jörgen Pettersson

The Danish late summer weather turned out for the best when the delegates during the morning boarded PEARL SEAWAYS in Copenhagen's North Harbour. 'Pearl' is a long-serving cruise ferry with an origin as Viking Line's ATHENA. Many of the present ferry professionals probably know

this well, which is why it was also noticed that DFDS maintains the more than 30-year-old cruise ferry in immaculate condition.

The conference agenda was expertly managed from the stage in the Columbus Club by lead moderator Philippe Holthof and co-moderator Jörgen Pettersson, publisher of Ålands Sjöfart. The entire two-day program on stage was streamed live to PEARL SEAWAYS' auditorium on deck 11, so there were several venues on board from which delegates could follow the conference.

The main sponsors at this year's conference were Telenor Maritime and Liknoss Group. Therefore, Sales Director & Head of Ferry Market Roger Vimme and Head of Research & Development Knut Fjellheim from Telenor Maritime and CEO Michael Mavropoulos from Liknoss Group were the first on stage. Both companies create in their own way parts of the infrastructure on which the digitalisation of the ferry industry is based; within connectivity and internetbased booking systems respectively.

# A HIGH-PROFILE KEYNOTE

This year's keynote speaker perhaps established a tradition. At the previous conference in 2019, Jan Eliasson, former Foreign Minister of Sweden, and Deputy Secretary of the UN, set the stage by giving an overview of the world economy. Here, two years later during the 18th Shippax Ferry Conference, the status of the world economic situation was again considered but by Anders Borg, former Minister of Finance in Sweden, who also has a degree in economics.

Many assumptions for the world economy have changed since 2019,



Roger Vimme and Knut Fjellheim, Telenor Maritime



Michael Mavropoulos, Liknoss Group







Ingemar Gustavsson, ACTEMIUM

when no one yet could predict what would happen globally in the first months of 2020. Therefore, the headline for Anders Borg's keynote presentation was "The Future of Shipping after Covid".

Initially, we must be aware that Covid is not over yet - we must learn to live with the virus. Thus, also the shipping industry, and not least the ferry industry, which transports many people on ships, must be ready for change.

#### **NOT THAT GLOOMY**

However, it was far from a gloomy picture that Anders Borg drew; We can look forward to the strongest economic growth of the past three to four decades. Consumers have built up huge savings and the affluent middle class feels a great deal of job security, so they are also ready to spend money on travel products when travel restrictions ease.

But there are also potential threats to the world economy. They can, for example, come from the

stock market or from short-term populist political currents, warned Anders Borg.

Before lunch in the 7 Seas restaurant, sponsored by Actemium, Ingemar Gustavsson, Director at Actemium, introduced the company, which has a leading position in shore power in Scandinavia. In fact, PEARL SEAWAYS premiered its shore power connection in Copenhagen on the first day of the conference.









Florent Maes, CldN



Eric Lewenhaupt, Stena Line

# THE COVID-19 EFFECT

The afternoon's program under the headline "Setting the Scene: 2020-21 Ro/Pax & Ro/Ro industry Performance" began with an in-depth analysis by Philippe Holthof.

To that extent, Covid-19 has set the stage. There is a direct connection between the distribution of freight and passengers by the individual ferry and shortsea ro/ ro operators and their financial performances since 2020. Shipping companies such as DFDS, Finnlines and Grimaldi Lines get through the pandemic best, as most of their turnover comes from freight traffic, a segment that has increased in several markets during the crisis, while the passenger business of the major international operators has been disastrous due to travel restrictions. However, the decrease in the turnover of the individual shipping companies is very different. The ones hardest hit are those with the largest cruise ferry capacity and smallest lanemeter capacity. In general, local ferry operators, in whatever continent, have proven to be the most resilient during the pandemic.

# **SELFLESS FERRY EMPLOYEES**

The analysis was followed up on stage at the Columbus Club by the conference's first panel discussion. The 2021 conference host, Torben Carlsen, CEO of DFDS, and Florent Maes, CEO of CldN, Eric Lewenhaupt, Head of Sustainability at Stena Line, Matteo Della Valle, Passenger Sales and Marketing Staff Director at GNV, Brian

Thorsted Hansen, CEO of Fjord Line, and Marcus Risberg, CEO of Destination Gotland were the expert panellists.

Torben Carlsen described a new more freight-oriented concept at DFDS as a result of Covid-19. He also talked about an exceptionally dedicated and selfless work effort from the employees through the crisis, when many of the employees with direct personal contacts, in the first phases of the pandemic, did not really know whether they ran a personal risk by continuing to work.

Eric Lewenhaupt highlighted the importance of a strong organizational culture in such a crisis. Marcus Risberg added that, in this connection, internal communication is a central part of crisis management in a shipping company.



Matteo Della Valle, GNV



Brian Thorsted Hansen, Fjord Line



Marcus Risberg, Destination Gotland



Jesper Aagesen, DFDS and Christer Schoug, BoCS Consulting

Brian Thorsted Hansen pointed out that the crisis has taught us that things will happen that cannot be controlled immediately – and it will definitely happen again at some point.

# **LIVELY AND FESTIVE**

PEARL SEAWAYS departed two hours later than usual because of the conference. The departure in the beautiful late summer weather could be enjoyed from the outdoor decks. However, many chose to meet in the exhibition area in Blue Riband for the afternoon coffee, which was sponsored by Stena RoRo.

Throughout all the conference coffee breaks, the large area with 40 exhibitors was a lively and festive gathering place. The mood was clearly marked by the fact that the Shippax Ferry Conference 2021 broke the ice after more than 18 months of absence of networking and socialization between industry colleagues across national borders.

The late afternoon program on the first day began with a focus on new ferries. DFDS' Head of Sustainable Fleet Projects, Jesper Aagesen, talked about the latest major newbuilding program at the more than 150-year-old shipping company. DFDS has over time built many new ships, but the latest wave of new buildings, comprising eight ro/ro ships and three ro/pax ferries, has been characterized by the fact that they have been built in China.

# **CURRENT RECORD-FERRY**

Christer Schoug, owner of BoCS



Esa Takkinen, NAPA



Marcus Högblom, ABB Marine & Ports

Consulting, talked about the world's newest ro/pax ferry. Wasaline's AURORA BOTNIA which was delivered from Rauma Marine Constructions in Finland a few weeks before the conference. With a range of energy-optimizing and emission-reducing technologies, the 800-passenger and 1,500-lanemeter 1A Super ice-classed ferry currently arguably holds the title of the world's most environmentally friendly. The technological development in the green area is - fortunately – fast moving forward, so no one expects Wasaline's new ferry to be unusual in the future.

Jesper Aagesen and Christer Schoug subsequently participated in a panel discussion, where they elaborated on aspects of their respective newbuilding projects.

# DIGITIZATION AND ELECTRIFICATION

Two of the conference's sponsors, NAPA and ABB Marine & Ports, then provided an exciting insight into their products and current projects. Esa Takkinen, Sales Manager at NAPA, introduced the company's electronic logbook, which takes on the historical phenomenon in every way; to keep a handwritten logbook of the ship's operation day by day, into the modern digital age.

Marcus Högblom, Vice President of Global Sales at ABB Marine & Ports, gave a highly up-to-date insight into how central electric propulsion, which is a specialty at ABB, is being applied in modern and future generations of ferries and shortsea vessels. Electric powertrains simply provide the flexibility required when new fuels such as batteries and e-fuels are to be integrated into hybrid digitized ship machinery in the future.

A key focal point for any Shippax Ferry Conference is the awarding of this year's Shippax Awards. This year, the Shippax Awards were to be presented for both 2020 and 2021, as last year's conference had to be cancelled due to the pandemic. Read more about this year's Awards in Shippax Info's September issue.

# **RECEIVED WITH PRIDE**

Philippe Holthof said in his introduction to the award ceremony that he has often received photos of previous years' Shippax Awards, hanging on the bulkhead of ferries around the world, photographed by Shippax's correspondents. Something that testifies that the awards





are received with pride and shown to the public on board the ferries.

This year's festive presentation of the Shippax Awards took place on stage at the Columbus Club, led by Elizabeth Mandersson, Owner and CEO of Shippax.

The awards ceremony was the culmination of the conference program on day one. The day was far from over, however, but now changed direction from the professional to the more festive. The evening began with Happy Hour in the exhibition area, sponsored by ABB Marine & Ports.

# **NIGHTLIFE AND EARLY RISERS**

Pre-dinner drinks were enjoyed in PEARL SEAWAYS' atrium, sponsored by Brax Shipping, who thus ensured that the atmosphere was just right before dinner in the 7 Seas restaurant, sponsored by Telenor Maritime and LIKNOSS Group. The late nightlife aboard the Danish-flagged PEARL SEAWAYS was still subject to certain Covid-19 restrictions, but everyone could enjoy a Night Cap, sponsored by DNV, before bedtime.

Early risers could experience the sailing through the Oslo Fjord the following morning. The beautiful

weather also extended to southern Norway, so Norway's capital showed its best face when PEARL SEAWAYS docked at. 09:15. Breakfast at 7 Seas, sponsored by Sefine Shipyard, was then completed so the program for the second day of the conference could begin on stage at the Columbus Club.

#### **MORE NEW FERRIES**

The first program item on day 2 was entitled 'Inspiration for the Ferry & Ro/ro Industry'. Electrification is playing an increasingly central role in the ferry industry; either direct electrification with battery opera-





Kjetil Dent Tranberg, Corvus Energy



Stein Ruben Larsen, Norwegian Electric Systems (NES)



Dario Bocchetti, Grimaldi Group

tion, typically on the shortest crossings - or hybrid electric drivelines on the larger ferries.

Kjetil Dent Tranberg, Vice President Sales at Corvus Energy, gave an insight into electrification from the battery manufacturer's perspective. Stein Ruben Larsen, SVP Sales at Norwegian Electric Systems (NES) gave insight from a systems integrator's perspective. The theme of new ferries was also on the agenda on the second day, this time with presentations of four very different newbuilding projects: Dario Bocchetti, Energy Saving Manager at Grimaldi Group, presented three specific projects at Grimaldi where energy optimization has played a role. First, he described the lengthening of two large ro/pax ferries on the Mediterranean which also included retrofit of large battery packs. Then he moved on to address the company's new generation of mega ro/ro ships, 12 in total, where high capacity and battery/solar cell hybrid operation make the ships greener. Finally, he gave an in-depth insight into the company's two new Baltic ro-cruise ferries ordered for Finnlines.



Anders Ørgård, OSK-Ship Tech



Brian Thorsted Hansen, Fjord Line

# AN A-TO-Z PROJECT

Anders Ørgård, CCO and partner in OSK-Ship Tech, gave an exciting insight into a unique A-to-Z project, carried out for Algérie Ferries. It is thus OSK-Ship Tech and their Chinese joint venture Sino Dane that have carried out all parts of the large newly built night ferry BADJI MOKHTAR III - a vessel designed specifically for a Muslim culture.

Brian Thorsted Hansen, CEO of Fjord Line, talked about the company's new Austal-built fast ferry FJORD FSTR. The fast ferry has replaced an older and significantly smaller fast ferry on the route between Hirtshals and Kristiansand. Thus, the new ferry opens for a much larger cargo capacity on the route than before.

Passenger capacity has also been significantly increased so that the route can be further developed once the current travel restrictions have been lifted.

# **FOUR UPDATES**

Fires on ro/ro and ro/pax ships were next on the agenda. Martin Carlsson, Project Manager Fire Safety at Stena Teknik, together with Grit Ladage, European RDI Project Manager at the German Center of Maritime Technologies, presented the latest results from the LASH FIRE project. After this, Adam Bengtsson, Founder and Co-owner of North Sea Handling, presented his company, specialising in access equipment and energy



Martin Carlsson, Stena Teknik



Grit Ladage, the Center of Maritime Technologies



Adam Bengtsson, North Sea Handling

efficiency solutions for the ferry industry, which has experienced significant growth in the last five years.

Next, Daan Herbes, Vertical Market Manager at Carrier Building Solutions Group, took the stage. He provided an insight into Carrier's smart and integrated Abound multi-system management platform. Carrier is one of the leading companies in the production and development of HVAC, refrigeration, fire security and automation. The last program item before the coffee break was Ulf Siwe, Communications Officer of Sea Traffic at the Swedish Maritime Administration. The focus was on STM, Sea Traffic Management, an Interreg project in which the Swedish maritime authorities participate. The goal is to create international standards for information sharing.

Many chose to enjoy the coffee break, sponsored by Stena RoRo, out on the deck with one of the best views of Oslo.

# RETROFITS AND CONVERSIONS

Now the focus towards lunch was on retrofits and conversions. Guillermo Alomar, Fleet Director at Baleària, spoke about the company's extensive experience with the LNG retrofit of as many as six ro/pax ferries. Baleària, which also recently introduced the world's first dual-fuel LNG-powered fast ferry, is thus the ferry company in the

world with the largest experience in LNG retrofit.

Roberto Prever, CEO of NAOS Ship and Boat Design, gave an insight into the phenomenon of 'Decarbonization through Jumboization'. Specifically, he took as his starting point Stena RoRo's lengthening of two Visentini-built ro/pax ferries. It is NAOS Ship and Boat Design that delivers designs to Cantiere Navale Visentini.

Ivan Larsen, CCO at Fayard, spoke about the extensive rebuilding and upgrading of Smyril Line's North Atlantic ferry NORRÖNA, which was completed by Fayard. The project was to be completed in 72 days at a fixed price. The lunch was sponsored by Rauma Marine



Daan Herbes, Carrier Building Solutions Group



Ulf Siwe, the Swedish Maritime Administration



Guillermo Alomar, Baleària



Roberto Prever, NAOS Ship and Boat Design



Ivan Larsen, Fayard



Morten Holm, Eknes



Robin Mérus, Evac





Andrew Williamson, Portsmouth International Port

Constructions. Many subsequently chose to network in the exhibition area or take a trip on deck to see the departure from Oslo back to Frederikshavn and Copenhagen.

# SOMEONE MENTIONED BREXIT

The afternoon program started 45 minutes after departure from Oslo. The first item was two company presentations; First, Morten Holm, Director Global Sales & Marketing at Eknes, gave an insight into fixed-mounted chairs and reclining seats for ships, where the focus is on the environment and sustainability.

He was succeeded by Robin Mérus, Head of Passenger Vessels and Europe Regional Sales at Evac. As he himself began by saying, Evac is probably best known by many industry professionals for vacuum

toilets, but today the company has a broad portfolio of waste management and handling systems for ships.

The next session began with a thoughtful remark from the stage. It came in connection with the first presentation under the theme "Ports: challenges and opportunities", where Andrew Williamson, Passenger Operations Manager at Portsmouth International Port, looked at the port's opportunities and challenges after Brexit.

It was noted that this was only the second time that the word "Brexit" was mentioned during the Shippax Ferry Conference 2021, even though the conference was now coming to an end. Perhaps this was very telling of how much Covid-19 has changed the world



Nina Liljeqvist, Port of Helsinki

since the conference in 2019, when Brexit was a hot topic and on top of many ferry professional's agendas.

# **NEW FORWARD PORT**

The port theme also received input from the Port of Helsinki, where Nina Liljeqvist, Marketing Manager, was able to report on a complex of three ports around the Finnish capital. All have a sharp focus on the green transition, but currently also must note significant declines in passenger numbers with a complete absence of cruise ships and a greatly reduced number of passengers on the ferries.

Johan Wallén, CCO at Ports of Stockholm, presented the new forward port towards the Baltic



Andreas Malmkvist, Kongsberg

Sea, Stockholm Norvik Port - a huge port project that not only creates extra and necessary capacity for ferry traffic on the southern flank of Stockholm by relieving Nynäshamn, but which also gives Ports of Stockholm completely new opportunities in other freight segments.

For the last time, coffee was now served by Stena RoRo in the exhibition area at the front end of the ship.

Immediately thereafter, two more corporate presentations were given from the stage. The first was from Andreas Malmkvist, General Manager of Shaftline Propulsion Systems at Kongsberg. He talked about the optimization potentials that are often present on ships with conventional powertrains - but also about alternative propeller arrangements that can improve the energy efficiency of a newbuilding.

He was followed by Killian Hoffman, Business Development Manager at Tesvolt. Killian presented the company's systems for integrating batteries on ships. Currently, the German company is up to having participated in 2,500 projects, when the land-based industry is also included.

# THE ZERO EMISSION TRACK

Continuing in the green track, there were now a handful of industry professionals on stage for a session under the headline "The race to zero emission". First Stefano De Marco, General Sales Manager at Wärtsilä represented a large global maritime technology company with a wide range of products. Therefore, his focus was not on a specific product, but on the tracks and approaches Wärtsilä has to the green transition in the maritime industry.

Christer Bruzelius was next. He is Senior Partner & Project Owner at Gotland Tech Development, which is part of Rederi AB Gotland. In the last few years, that company has introduced a new generation of ferries that can sail on both LNG and LBG, but Rederi AB Gotland is already in the process of developing an upcoming zero carbon ferry. At the same time, consideration is being given to a partial electrification of the two newest ferries.

Tobias Haack, CEO of HADAG and Alstertouristik, presented a new hydrogen-powered genera-



Killian Hoffman, Tesvolt



Stefano De Marco, Wärtsilä



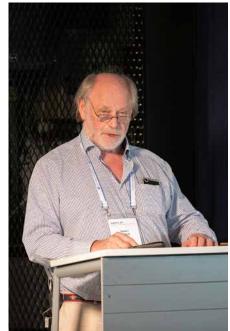
Christer Bruzelius, Gotland Tech Development



Tobias Haack, HADAG

tion of harbour buses for public commuter transport in Hamburg. HADAG has previously introduced a hydrogen-powered passenger vessel, but at that time it turned out to be too early in relation to the supply of hydrogen.

Robert Clifford, Founder and Chairman of Incat, came all the way from Australia. He presented the Australian shipyard's bid for a future full-electric catamaran fast ferry, which if charged with renewable energy can sail cargo and passengers CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral. He stressed that the green fransition does not threaten fast ferries, pointing out that they already have an advantage



Robert Clifford, Incat

as they do not have to lug around a lot of heavy steel.

#### **BRAND CULTURE AND FAREWELL**

The last program item focused on how brand culture connects with guests from an interior designer's perspective. The panel discussion was launched with a video presentation by Bruce Peter, Professor of Design History at the Glasgow School of Art.

One of Bruce's points that led to debate in the panel was that there is an untapped branding potential in many shipping companies, e.g. at a shipping company like DFDS, which is one of the oldest in the

world and thus has a rich history to draw on. He also observed that in a Covid context, ferries have the potential great advantage of abundant fresh air.

The panel consisted of Camilla Caroline Horn, Interior Architect and Owner at CCH Design, Cecilia Kinnison, Interior Architect and Owner at Kinnison Design and finally Alan Stewart, Director of SMC Design.

The program at the Shippax Ferry Conference 2021 was formally concluded on stage with a farewell from the entire Shippax team, before - as the very last point - Ats Joorits, CEO of Tallink Silja, welcomed to next year's Shippax Ferry Conference, which he hosts aboard SILJA SERENADE in 5-7 April 2022.

Happy Hour on the last night was sponsored by Carus and followed by pre-dinner drinks, sponsored by RINA. It was DFDS who gave the gala dinner in the 7 Seas restaurant, before the very last scheduled item, a Night Cap, sponsored by Hydro.

The next morning it turned out that the lovely late summer weather was still adorning the Danish capital, when PEARL SEAWAYS slowly slipped into the berth at DFDS 'ferry terminal, which was the outset about 40 hours earlier.



Camilla Caroline Horn, CCH Design



Cecilia Kinnison, Kinnison Design



Alan Stewart, SMC Design



















































































































































# Thank you for this conference! See you next year!

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

