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leading international
maritime trade fair
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Press Release · Pressemitteilung

SMM 2024: Technologies for the future of shipping

From 3 to 6 September, the Who's Who of the maritime industry meets at SMM 2024. Apart from current geopolitical challenges, the agenda of the global flagship fair in Hamburg will focus on the decarbonisation of ships, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and the recruitment of young talent. With these topics, SMM spells out key priorities for the future of the shipping sector.

Hamburg, 05-06-2024 – Aiming for carbon neutrality by 2050, driving digital change, coping with volatile global supply chains and a shaky geopolitical situation: These are challenging times for the maritime industry. “The sector can only tackle these difficulties by working together closely,” said **Claus Ulrich Selbach**, Business Unit Director – Maritime and Technology Fairs at Hamburg Messe und Congress during the press conference at Posidonia in Athens. “At SMM we offer shipowners, suppliers and shipyards an optimal platform for their joint efforts to develop feasible technology solutions that address the pressing challenges of our time. The enormous interest from exhibitors and visitors alike tells us that there is a tremendous need for communication.”

Dual-use technologies as innovation drivers

Amid numerous international conflicts, the importance of military operational readiness has moved into focus. Many countries are modernising their fleets. At SMM, navies and coast guards can find the right cooperation partners and benefit from innovations carried over from civilian shipping. Exhibitors such as NVL Group, MTU or Kongsberg supply state-of-the-art solutions that can be used in both segments.

The green transition: a major international effort

The industry's current drive to decarbonise is a race against time. The core challenge is to provide sufficient amounts of alternative fuels – such as green hydrogen, methanol or ammonia – while creating the required distribution infrastructure. Companies specialising in these clean technologies and their derivatives will be assigned an exhibition area of their own in Hall A2, called the Future Fuel Area. Against this background, **Hauke Schlegel**, Managing Director VDMA Marine Equipment and Systems, stresses that SMM is an important interface between European technology leaders and major Asian shipyards: “International cooperation is essential; it enables shipowners around the world to tackle huge technological challenges in fleet renewal and maintenance in a manner that is tailored to their needs, timely and economically feasible.” This year there is especially strong interest from China, Korea and Japan, the three leading shipbuilding nations: Every tenth exhibitor is based in Asia.

Greece with strong presence

Other nations are represented in growing numbers again. For example, Greece, the world's foremost shipowning country, is doubling its participation: the Greek national pavilion will cover nearly 800 square metres (compared with 400 square metres in 2028). One of the 35 organisations showcasing their products at the pavilion is the association of Hellenic Marine Equipment Manufacturers & Exporters (HEMEXPO): "As an association, our goal is to continue to ensure that leading Greek marine equipment manufacturers build lasting international and local partnerships, and that the collective strength and innovation of our suppliers is at the forefront of owner and yard thinking", said HEMEXPO President **Eleni Polychronopoulou**.

A must-have: AI

All in all, SMM is expecting more than 2,000 exhibitors and 40,000 participants from 120 countries. In the opinion of SMM organiser Selbach, the main reason behind the unbroken popularity of the leading international maritime trade fair is clear: "Companies know that exhibiting here gives them exceptional visibility; and they appreciate the fact that as organisers of this fair we are good at anticipating new trends. This year's event proves it once again: Seeing the rapidly growing importance of smart innovations, SMM is providing a section specifically dedicated to Artificial Intelligence for the first time." At the AI CENTER, start-up companies will highlight AI-based technologies and projects for the maritime industry (Hall B6).

Spotlight on young talents

The maritime industry believes its innovation-focused, green mindset will attract the young talents it urgently needs. To support the sector's recruiting efforts, SMM 2024 is putting the spotlight on this topic. For the first time, the Maritime Career Market will take place on two days (5-6 September, Hall B2). The career platform combines training and job offers with rewarding networking events. In addition, young talents will be able to gain some practical insights into the maritime professional world at the Career Forum on 6 September. "This SMM job initiative is an important contribution to securing the future of the maritime industry," says Selbach.

About SMM

The leading international maritime trade fair takes place in Hamburg from 3 to 6 September 2024. More than 2,000 exhibiting companies and around 40,000 visitors from over 120 countries are expected to attend. Covering the entire value chain of the maritime industry on 90,000 m² in twelve exhibition halls, SMM is the world's foremost platform for innovation and the latest technologies in the maritime sector that brings together business leaders from around the world. Themed "SMM – driving the maritime transition", the 31st SMM will focus on the maritime energy transition and digital transformation. An attractive conference programme and a wide range of networking opportunities



will supplement the exhibition. For the first time, the conferences will take place on open stages inside the exhibition halls – free of charge, and accessible to all fair visitors.

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