

Europort 2019 launch led by shipowner summit

Four of the leading owners in Europe's special ship segments will lead what promises to be an intense panel discussion of industry hot topics at Europort 2019 on November 5th, as one of the most significant events in the maritime calendar gets underway at Rotterdam Ahoy.

Part of the Europort opening summit, the shipowner panel discussion provides only the first of the highlights of a conference and exhibition running 5-8 November which is set to cover Special Ships and Smart Solutions via three thematic strands of Smart Business, Smart People and Smart Technology.

The opening panel has attracted some of the leading voices in Europe's special ships business. Antonio Bordils, CEO of Boluda Towage will represent workboats, while Mikki Koskinen, Managing Director of ESL Shipping will speak as a short sea operator. Also on stage will be Pieter Van Oord, CEO of leading dredging and offshore wind contractor, Van Oord, and Annika Hult, Managing Director of ferry operator Stena Line.

Boluda Towage recently acquired the Kotug Smit Towage operation, and Bordils' market perspective is sure to generate considerable interest for this reason alone. However, beyond consolidation, he also believes: "The true benefits of rationalisation for customers will be only leveraged by the increasing use of smart sustainable technologies."

Meanwhile, with environmental issues dominating the agenda for European ferry businesses, Annika Hult will discuss sustainable shipping solutions. In her opinion, "Shipping's winners will be those who embrace alternative fuels and digitalisation, not those who are resistant to change."

Mikki Koskinen is expected to pick up on this theme, highlighting a problem that some short sea shipping companies are still less than fully committed to monitoring and improving environmental performance. Pointing out that independent evaluation is available from non-profit organisations with well-established methodologies, Koskinen suggests: "It is shipping itself which has been choosing not to engage."

The shipowners panel is completed by one of the leading figures within the global dredging industry. Pieter van Oord will stress the importance of making the transition to new energy systems. "Our purpose must be to create a better world for future generations by delivering marine ingenuity," he comments.

Well-known journalist Geert Maarse will host the opening ceremony, which will also feature a keynote speech by the Rotterdam-based artist and visionary, Daan Roosegaarde.

The Europort 2019 opening summit is invitation-only, press can request an invitation from communications@europort.nl

For more information about Europort 2019, please contact:

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