

20TH “NAVIGATOR – THE SHIPPING DECISION MAKERS ONLINE WEEK & FORUM”

In the context of the **celebration of the 30th anniversary of NAVIGATOR SHIPPING CONSULTANTS** (a robust network of Towing companies and Shipping agencies worldwide), **20th Navigator – The Shipping Decision Makers Forum** was organized with great success.

From Monday 12th to Friday 16th April 2021, five (5) “closed” discussions took place during **NAVIGATOR – THE SHIPPING DECISION MAKERS ONLINE WEEK**, among 300 executives representing 200 Greek Ship owning & Ship Management Companies participated and the members of NAVIGATOR FORUM ADVISORY BOARD. The results of NAVIGATOR ONLINE WEEK were presented to the International Shipping Community during the forum by the respective moderators on Monday 19th April 2021.

The President of NAVIGATOR, Capt. Dimitris Bezantakos, referred to the course of Bezantakos family which counts almost half a century in Shipping Industry and to the establishment and core values of NAVIGATOR SHIPPING CONSULTANTS. He highlighted human element as the basic pillar of the Greek Shipping Miracle underlining that technology should be humans’ tool, not the opposite.

CEO of NAVIGATOR, **Danae Bezantakou**, stressed once again the importance of synergies and dialogue which also enhances the NAVIGATOR - THE SHIPPING DECISION MAKERS FORUM.

The Minister of Shipping and Insular Policy, **Ioannis Plakiotakis** stressed the need for a realistic approach on emissions’ reduction produced by the shipping industry, the modernization of maritime education and also referred to the ongoing efforts of the Ministry regarding repatriation of crews that are of top concern.

The **outcome** of the “closed” discussions of the week 12-16 April 2021, among the executives-representatives of Ship-owning Companies and Ship management Companies, and the members of NAVIGATOR FORUM ADVISORY BOARD, was presented by:

Helena Athoussaki, Head of ESG, Sustainability & Climate Change – MOTOR OIL GROUP (**#Decarbonisation**) referred to the concerns raised related the decisions Shipowners need to take in order to comply with the regulations. She also mentioned the challenges the second - hand market faces and highlighted the great need of **strategy, transparency and dialogue** among stake holders and Organizations responsible for achieving the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals**.

Seraphim Kapros, Director of MBA in Shipping – University of Aegean (**#SupplyChain**) pointed out the need of “smart” and alternative solutions for the uninterrupted operation of the supply chain and underlined the increased specialization in shipping companies in regards to the evaluation and monitoring of the supply chain.

The term “smart shipping” does not only concern vessels but also offices, reminded us **Panos Theodossopoulos**, Chief Digital Officer – OCEANKING (**#smartshipping**). COVID-19, new regulatory requirements and the increasing number of vertical technology solutions acted as catalysts “promoting” digitalization. On the other hand, lack of trained on-board crew and shore office personnel as well as the Cyber-risk and lack of standardization are considered barriers.

Dorothea Ioannou, Deputy Chief Operating Officer – The AMERICAN P & I CLUB (#Human Element) stated that **most accidents and claims** are caused due to **human error**. She also stressed the importance of **seafarers' mental health, as the profession ranks second in the world in the number of suicides**. New generations will probably be the first who will have to deal with increased levels of technology and onboard autonomy. Therefore, the interaction with complicated and highly advanced systems, as well as situational **awareness, critical thinking, effective communication**, will be some of the skills that will be required to survive the imminent changes in maritime industry said **Katerina Skourtanioti, Managing Director- VENLYS Maritime Specialization Services (#Human Element)**.

Costas Constantinou, Managing Partner/Global Maritime Leader – MOORE GREECE (#Commercial & Finance) mentioned the uncertainties as to the availability of capital and more specifically on the criteria to be used by lending banks and other capital providers to rate potential borrowers. Also he referred to the concern of the strict lending rules that Europe will impose on its banks that will not be applicable to Asian banks and therefore competition will not be fair. If financing leaves Europe, then this (together with the fact that cargoes, shipbuilding, crewing and management are already there) will speed up the process of transferring the global center of shipping from the Atlantic to the Pacific which will put European shipping at risk.

Danae Bezantakou, CEO, Navigator Shipping Consultants and **Gina Panayiotou**, CVO, Oceans Arena and Concept Founder, It's ALL about shipping, welcomed **Guy Platten**, Secretary General - International Chamber of Shipping, **Margi Van Gogh**, Head of Supply Chain & Transport - World Economic Forum and **Elaine Smith Genser**, Engagement & Partnership Development - United Nations Joint SDG Fund, in an interesting discussion on how international organisations are leading the way to positive change within the shipping sector.

According to **Margi Van Gogh**, the 3 key areas for the supply chain are: contribution to social development, environmental and economic impact and sustainability. She also spoke about the role of **LNG as a transitional fuel**, the creation of **hubs for crew changes** and the **crucial vaccination of seafarers**.

Elaine Smith Genser, Responsible for Engagement and Partnerships Development - United Nations Joint SDG Fund, said that decarbonization is not only a challenge but also an opportunity and spoke about the emphasis that the new generation of investors places on environmental protection. Finally, she pointed out that Asian countries are one step ahead of Europe in terms of decarbonization measures.

Guy Platten, Secretary General of **International Shipping Chamber**, focused on seafarers' vaccinations that they affect the supply chain, crew changes that were and are of great concern and stressed the failure of governments to meet the requirements. He also named decarbonization of shipping as the "**fourth revolution of propulsion**", after sails, steam and oil, and added that through **synergies and dialogue**, many problems were solved during the pandemic.

FORUM was completed with the presentations of representatives of **strategic ports of NAVIGATOR's network of Towing Companies & Agencies worldwide**. Taking into consideration the absence of physical meetings, they took the opportunity to inform the shipping community about issues related to port developments, crew changes, renewal of the tug fleet worldwide, their Companies' future strategies, etc. .:

Jeff Horst, Vice President of Sales & Marketing - **FOSS MARITIME (Harbor Towing & Marine Transportation services) (U.S. West Coast - Hawaii)**, Julian Oggel, Managing Director - Novatug & Counsel - **MULTRASHIP TOWAGE & SALVAGE (Belgium & The Netherlands)**, Diana Villarreal, Commercial Manager–**COLTUGS TOWAGE & SALVAGE/ ULTRATUG (Chile, Peru, Equador, Colombia)**, Hugh Buchanan, Operations Director- **AGENCIA MARITIMA NABSA S.A (Argentina)** Elisio Dourado, Towage Commercial Director - **WILSON SONS (Brazil)**, Sushil Mulchandani, Chief Executive Officer - **JM BAXI & CO. (India)**, Jose Echeverria Goldoni, General Manager - **ILG LOGISTICS (Panama)**, Meera Kumar, Head of **DIABOS Business Unit (DA's processing System)**.

Speakers stressed that in order to avoid accidents such as that of EVER GIVEN, it is very important to take the necessary measures, inspect all ships before crossing the canal, and escort tugs for larger ships. Regarding the crew changes, they also mentioned sailors' fatigue, which is of great importance both for their mental health and for the safe and effective operation of the vessels.

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