

Press Release · Pressemitteilung

Growing steadily: SMM 2024 expects more visitors and exhibitors

From 3 to 6 September, SMM 2024 will once more be the maritime industry's centre of attention. Organisers expect more visitors and exhibitors than last time; the exhibition halls are nearly fully booked. This year's SMM focuses on decarbonisation of the shipping industry. International exhibitors, including start-ups, will showcase smart and efficient solutions. Other topics high on the agenda include Artificial Intelligence (AI) and recruiting young talent.

Hamburg, 16-04-2024 – Less than five months before the beginning of the trade fair, the industry is showing huge interest in SMM: "We are expecting more than 2,000 international exhibitors from 70 nations to be here from **3 to 6 September 2024**. This means we are almost fully booked," says **Claus Ulrich Selbach**. "We are overwhelmed by the response. We are actually setting-up an additional hall to accommodate all requests," says Business Unit Director Maritime and Technology Fairs & Exhibitions at Hamburg Messe und Congress. "Ticket sales are likewise very strong and we are anticipating an attendance of over 40,000," Selbach adds.

Asia showing strong presence at SMM 2024

This positive development is in part attributable to the fact that more Asian exhibitors and visitors are reporting back after the pandemic. In particular, **China and Korea**, the two leading shipbuilding nations, will have a stronger presence again at SMM 2024. The second key factor is the unique standing of SMM in the marine industry. Those who travel to Hamburg in September will be able to meet international exhibitors, explore state-of-the-art technologies, and attend conferences featuring renowned speakers as well as attractive networking events. "The high quality and the internationality and density of key industry players at SMM are unparalleled world-wide," says Selbach.

Future Fuels Arena and AI CENTER

The main topics at SMM 2024 will address key needs of the industry: In recognition of the rapidly growing importance of smart innovations, SMM will provide a section specifically dedicated to Artificial Intelligence for the first time: At the **AI CENTER**, start-up companies will highlight AI technologies and projects for the maritime industry (Hall B6). "AI fundamentally changes our economy and our business processes – across all industries. It harbours many opportunities for the shipping sector, as well," says **Petra Vorsteher**, Co-Founder and CEO of AI.HAMBURG and initiator of the AI CENTER. Examples include innovative solutions enabling ships to operate more efficiently. But the key to carbon-neutral shipping is alternative fuels. They are an essential



prerequisite for a successful Mission Zero Emission. "Shipowners have been reducing their emissions by as much as 30 per cent through efficiency enhancements. An additional 10 per cent is possible. But the rest must come from alternative fuels," says **Dr Martin Kröger**, Managing Director of the German Shipowners Association (VDR). At the global maritime environmental congress (gmec) experts will discuss the pros and cons of various alternative fuels. Great hopes are being placed on hydrogen. Companies specialising in this clean technology and its derivatives will have a dedicated exhibition area of their own for the first time, the **Future Fuels Arena** (Hall A2).

Cruise industry: Innovator for sustainability

MARINE INTERIORS @SMM (Hall B5) is a fixture at SMM. With a total of 130 exhibiting companies from 20 countries specialising in ship interior design, this special exhibition section will be significantly larger this year. The **Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA)**, an official SMM Partner, will be represented for the first time: On the Cruise & Ferry Stage, the leading organisation of the cruise industry will hold various sessions on sustainable cruises – a subject the cruise sector is placing great emphasis on, as a look at the global orderbook shows: From now until the end of 2026, 41 new cruise ships will be delivered; 27 of them will be equipped with alternative propulsion systems. This includes LNG-ready engines, and many LNG-fuelled ships will also be methanol-ready. "The introduction of these new technologies and the many pilot programmes and trials in place reveal how the cruise industry is an innovator and early adopter of technologies that are helping us sail to a more sustainable future," says CLIA CEO **Kelly Craighead**.

Sustainability & Recruiting

The maritime industry is hoping that its eco-friendly mindset will attract the young talent it urgently needs. To support the sector's recruiting efforts, SMM 2024 will put the spotlight on this topic. For the first time, the **Maritime Career Market** and the **Career Forum** will take place on two days (Hall B2). "Young people are especially concerned about sustainability. At the Maritime Career Market, companies can demonstrate how much the maritime industry has to offer," says SMM Director **Christoph Lücke**. This is where young jobseekers can meet potential employers. They will receive information about jobs on shore and at sea as well as training programmes, career opportunities and job openings in the maritime sector.

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 100 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 the 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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