

WISTA - Press (28.09.2010)

WISTA Conference 2010 opens its doors with All-Star Maritime Line-Up

Shipping Industry Lends Huge Support to Major Industry Event

On September 29, 2010 one of the top maritime events of the year will get underway. The WISTA 2010 three-day International Conference will open in Athens, offering to the maritime world a highly informative and networking event such as rarely experienced to date.

The gathering, attracting delegates, speakers and sponsors from many of the 30 nations represented in the Women's International Shipping and Trading Association, is organised by WISTA Hellas, numerically one of the largest national associations within WISTA. WISTA's close relationship with the key Greek shipping industry (Greek owned tonnage held second place internationally at the start of 2010, with 2,974 vessels amounting to 173.5m dwt, representing nearly 15% of total world deadweight, according to the Union of Greek Shipowners), has brought huge backing in sponsorship, the presence of top executive speakers, and promotional support both domestically and courtesy of the shipping world at large.

Anna-Maria Monogioudi, President of WISTA Hellas, said: "Our speakers, sponsors, supporters and delegates have not had to be unduly persuaded: they are all giving their time, services and resources willingly. We owe each of them an immense debt of gratitude, and plan to repay their support with a first class Conference, discussion sessions, social events, networking and a varied excursions programme which will allow them to see that WISTA is now a premier gateway to excellence, knowledge and hands-on educational advancement for 2010 and the years ahead."

She added: "Everyone in the shipping business is aware that the rich fabric of this worldwide industry is largely unknown to the general public. It is part of our task to put this right, to take a magnifying glass to the achievements of its seafarers, shore executives, service sectors, ports, shipbuilding, legal and insurance expertise, technological and public relations specialities and much more, and educate the new generations in how the multitude of goods in our supermarkets and the structures of our civil engineering projects come to be in the right place at the right time because of this industry."

The theme of the Conference is Achieving Sustainability – Paving the Way to Shipping Excellence, and it will examine topics of the moment including the extent to which rules and regulations can achieve sustainability, seafarer/industry relations, improving safety at sea, finance in the days of global economic turmoil, women on the board, corporate social responsibility, the ILO Maritime Labour Convention, safeguarding the environment, and the social profile of the shipping industry.

In his keynote speech entitled Celebrating the year of the Seafarer, the Secretary-General of the IMO, His Excellency Efthimios Mitropoulos, will set out what needs to be done to improve the quality of life at sea and remedy the critical shortages of qualified officers and crew, amid image problems caused by factors such as piracy.

The conference venue is the Divani Apollon Palace & Spa, in Vouliagmeni on the Athenian Riviera, a location enabling delegates to concentrate on meeting and mingling with their opposite numbers from around the globe.

The impressive line-up of international names includes: Elisabeth Grieg of the Grieg Group who will be flying over for just one day to speak about rules and regulations; Hiroshi Shibako and Yoriko Ishida from Japan, Caroline Lee from Singapore, Jasamin Fichte from the UAE, Orestis Schinas of Hamburg School of Business Administration, John Tsatsas, president of the London Maritime Arbitrators Association, Suzanne Williams – renowned hostage negotiator, Michael Dicks of Barclays Wealth, and Dr. Aleka Mandraka-Sheppard of LSLC from the UK; Karin Orsel, president of WISTA Netherlands with a large delegation; and Jeanne Grasso, president of WISTA USA with a delegation of over 30 executives from the United States.

Speakers from the Greek shipping community include: George Gratsos of the Hellenic Chamber of Shipping, Apostolos Poulouvassilis of Lloyd's Register, Emmanuel Vordonis of Thenamaris, Michael Bodoroglou of Paragon Shipping, George Gourdomichalis of G.Bros Maritime and president of the Piraeus Marine Club, Alexander Papachristidis-Bove of Hellespont, Dorothea Ioannou of the American Club and an impressive contingent from the University of the Aegean covering both Seafarer and Environmental issues. Moderators include: Anthi Miliou, Vasilis Chakos, Dr. Helen A. Thanopoulou, Marie Kelly and Nigel Lowry.

Sponsors include: Hellenic Hull Management, Navios Maritime Holdings, Carbon Positive, ClassNK, The Marshall Islands Registry, Lloyd's Register, Optimarin AS; GAC, G.Bros, OSG, ABS, Thenamaris, Paragon Shipping, Seanergy, Barclays Wealth, Norton Rose, The American Club, Athenian Sea Carriers, JG Roussos Shipping, Blank Rome LLP, George Moundreas & Company, Eastern Mediterranean Maritime, Springfield Shipping, Transmar, Tsavlis Salvage Group, Prime Petroleum Services, Future Care Inc, Orion Insurance Brokers, I am (a) Present and Louis Hellenic Cruises which donated a 4-day cruise to be won at a prize draw during the Conference.

The WISTA 2010 Conference has also received support from The Hellenic Chamber of Shipping, the Hellenic Shipbrokers Association, Helmepe, ISF and ICS, the Institute of Chartered Shipbrokers – Greek branch, Piraeus Marine Club, the Association of Banking & Shipping Finance Executives of Hellenic Shipping, FEMAS, ELINT, the Piraeus Association for Maritime Arbitration and the Hellenic Technical Consultants Association.

In line with WISTA's objective for furthering education, the Conference is also supported by the University of Piraeus, University of the Aegean, Alba Graduate Business School, BCA and the New York College.

WISTA Hellas has been a beacon on the international scene for two decades, and if anyone ever doubted its potential, they need only cast a glimpse at the above impressive list of supporters from far and near, which reads like a significant extract from a Who's Who of industry companies and personalities. Details are at www.wistaconference.org

Preparations for the 2010 International Conference began three years ago, as soon as Greece was selected as the venue, under the guidance of Ms Maria Christina Ktistaki, then President of WISTA Hellas, and her fellow Board members.

Since undertaking the Presidency in 2008 it has fallen to the current President, Ms Monogioudi, to rally domestic and international resources to produce what promises to be one of the most high profile International Conferences of WISTA.

Ms Monogioudi, who is a Director of Piraeus-based Aegean Protective Coatings, says that she accepted the post of President of WISTA Hellas largely because she was inspired by the great work carried out by the previous Boards of WISTA Hellas, and because during the Copenhagen Conference in September 2007 she met wonderful, creative, dynamic and committed individuals and came to understand the true meaning of WISTA.

Greece is delighted that one of the leading members, Vera Chalkidis, a Director of Athenian Sea Carriers, was chosen last year as WISTA International President. Mrs Chalkidis has been a member of the local maritime community since the mid-1970s. Mrs Chalkidis said her mission was to give a lead in finding ways of adding further value to the Association, with its 1,300 members, as WISTA continues to grow.

For further information and Conference agenda, please see www.wistaconference.org