

2. Articles & In Depth Analysis

Flying the Flag of Malta- A Success Story

In the 2008/9 Annual Report, which was published late last year, the European Shipowners' Association reported about the Malta Flag. This report confirmed the strength and growth of the Malta Flag as a flag of confidence, reminding the reader about the potential for even further growth that exists in the Maltese Maritime Sector. The following is an extract of what was stated in this Report:

"At the end of 2008, the number of vessels registered under the Malta Merchant Shipping Act stood at 5,019 with a GT of over 33 million. This tonnage represents a net increase of 19% over the previous year. During the six months ending June, 2009, the number of registered vessels further increased to 5,154 totaling 34.9 million GT.

Of the 5,154 registered vessels, 2,404 are pleasure yachts and 790 are fishing vessels, leaving a total of 1,960 ships with a GT of over 34.8 million which are mainly engaged in the international carriage of dry and liquid bulk cargoes. This tonnage places Malta as the second largest flag state in Europe and among the leading ship registers in the world.

The continuing steady growth in the size of the Malta register confirms the confidence that European and other international shipowners continue to have in the Maltese flag.

The economic activity generated by the ship registration business and the maritime cluster that has developed around it make a significant contribution to the growth of the European shipping industry and of the European and Maltese economy.

An important factor which has generated the confidence and respect that the Malta Register now enjoys is the policy of the Maltese maritime authorities to focus on safety and quality shipping backed by a strengthened ship inspectorate regime operating

internationally. This emphasis on quality shipping has earned

Malta a classification in the White List of the Paris MOU.

The Malta Maritime Authority is also a founder member of the Mediterranean MOU on port state control and currently holds its chairmanship.

At an international level, Malta, being a leading flag state, is actively engaged in the work of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) of which it is an elected Council Member and in the maritime labour issues which fall within the jurisdiction of the International Labour Organization (ILO).

Malta has adopted and implements all the major maritime conventions, the latest being the 2001 International Convention on the Control of Harmful Antifouling Systems on Ships and work is continuing on the adoption of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006.

At EU level, Malta, in the pursuit of its policy to protect and promote the shipping industry and all maritime related activities, was actively engaged in the discussions on major issues impacting on maritime transportation, particularly the formulation of the Integrated Future Maritime Policy for the EU, the Third Maritime Safety Package, ship recycling and air emissions issues. In the analysis and position formulation phases of the discussions with the competent bodies of the European Union, the Maltese maritime authorities consult closely with the Malta International Shipping Council which is the national association representing owners of vessels under the Maltese flag and which is also a full member of ECSA.

Other maritime sectors in Malta which continued to enjoy growth during 2008 were the cruise liner business in the Valletta Grand Harbour, container transshipment at the Malta Freeport Terminals and yachting."