



**4th Annual Capital Link
German Maritime Forum**
Wednesday, November 6, 2024
Radisson Blu Hotel – Hamburg, Germany

In Partnership With

DNV

With The Support Of
 German Shipowners' Association
 Verband Hamburger und Bremer Schiffsmakler e.V.

PRESS RELEASE

“4th Annual Capital Link German Maritime Forum”

Wednesday, November 6, 2024

Radisson Blu Hotel, Hamburg, Germany

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Tuesday, December 3, 2024

The **4th Annual Capital Link German Maritime Forum** took place on **Wednesday, November 6, 2024**, at the **Radisson Blu Hotel** in **Hamburg, Germany**. The event was organized **in partnership** with **DNV** and **with the support** of the **German Shipowners' Association (VDR)** and the **Hamburg and Bremen Shipbrokers' Association**.

The Forum took place **during the week of the Annual Eisbeinessen event**, a significant gathering that attracts maritime leaders from around the globe. It showcased a diverse lineup of German and international industry leaders, including shipowners and financiers, who shared their expertise and insights. The discussions spanned a wide range of topics, focusing on both issues pertinent to the German Maritime Community and pressing global industry concerns.

A major highlight of the Forum was the **2024 Capital Link German Shipping Leadership Award** presented to **Reederei F. Laeisz** for Celebrating the Milestone of 200 Years in Business and to **Mr. Nikolaus Schues**, President & Chairperson of the Board of **BIMCO** & CEO of **Reederei F. Laeisz**, for his Outstanding Contribution to German & Global Shipping, as well as Mr. Schues's 1x1 discussion with **Mr. Knut Orbeck-Nilssen**, CEO of **DNV Maritime**.

[AGENDA](#)

WELCOME REMARKS

Mr. Knut Ørbeck-Nilssen, CEO – **DNV Maritime**
Mr. Nicolas Bornozis, President – **Capital Link, Inc.**

[THE GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAIN, GEOPOLITICS & THE WORLD ECONOMY](#)

Moderator: Mr. Rasmus Stute, Vice President, Area Manager Germany – **DNV Maritime**

Panelists:

- **Dr. Johann Killinger**, Managing Partner – **Buss Group**
- **Dr. Gaby Bornheim**, President – **German Shipowners' Association (VDR)**
- **Dr. Sadan Kaptanoglu**, CEO – **Kaptanoglu Shipping**; President – **BIMCO (2019 - 2021)**
- **Mr. Christian Rychly**, COO – **MPC Container Ships**

Dr. Gaby Bornheim, President – **German Shipowners' Association (VDR)**, stated: "The international shipping industry carries approximately 90% of global trade, forming the backbone of the world economy. With over 60,000 merchant ships and more than a million seafarers from across the globe, we transport 11 billion tons of cargo annually—an

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impressive figure that underscores shipping's essential role in economic stability. As we look to the future, our focus must be on safeguarding the security of our vessels, crews, and trade routes. We must work tirelessly to ensure the safe passage of ships through potentially dangerous waters, supporting the decarbonization of maritime transport without hindering global trade. At the same time, fostering innovation to enhance efficiency and protect our environment is crucial. Equally important is prioritizing the welfare and growth of our seafarers, equipping them to meet the evolving challenges of our industry. The strength of our maritime sector and the global economy rests on our shared commitment to these principles."

On the question if disruptions are good or bad for shipping **Mr. Christian Rychly**, COO – **MPC Container Ships**, stated that they are both and change shipping to a degree that it is much more inefficient. The current situation in the middle east added so many miles that all the assumptions on supply / demand were wrong and short-term cash flow certainly improved, which is good. But the increased distances and higher speeds also negatively impact carbon emissions and the longer the shipping route, there is obviously more opportunity for disruption. As another example Christian referred the Ukraine war which triggered the creation of the so called "dark fleet", creating compliance, governance and safety issues, certainly bad for shipping. Overall, the industry has become more complex and more interesting.

Looking ahead he mentioned that everyone knows that global supply chains must be more resilient and broader based. But the industry also learned that digitalization can be a game-changer. Crews are better connected with broadband internet connections and MPCC is using AI to improve safety on board and manage access to the ships. In addition, he expects that we are moving back into an era where we are going to see a lot more focus on short sea trades and besides tariffs, the supply chain disruptions are certainly also a factor contributing to more production being co-located to consumption and actually reducing disruption risk to a certain degree.

TECHNOLOGY - DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION, AUTOMATION & AI

Fleet maintenance, emissions data and reporting, navigation safety, connectivity & crew welfare

Moderator: Mr. Fiorenzo Spadoni, North Europe Marine Senior Director – **RINA**

Panelists:

- **Mr. Fabian Fussek**, Co-Founder & CEO – **Kaiko Systems**
- **Mr. Pankaj Sharma**, Managing Director – **OneLink**
- **Mr. Dor Raviv**, Co-Founder & CTO – **Orca AI**
- **Ms. Friederike Hesse**, Co-Founder & Managing Director – **zero44**

Mr. Fiorenzo Spadoni, North Europe Marine Senior Director – **RINA** stated: "In my role at North Europe Marine I'm witnessing the transformative power of digital innovation in the maritime industry, and I strongly believe that there is no future for any industry that doesn't embrace this transformation. I can also tell you that Classification Society are changing their skin on this aspect and on any part of the business they are doing. We are an example of this transformation at the end of the day. For this reason, I'm very happy to have the opportunity to learn even more during this panel about digitalization. Today we have an excellent lineup of panelists who are at the forefront of digital transformation and digital technology."

Mr. Fabian Fussek, Co-Founder & CEO – **Kaiko Systems** stated: "While advanced technologies like AI hold immense promise, the maritime industry must first focus on getting the basics right. Standardizing and structuring data is critical for unlocking the potential of AI. We think it is a very positive development that shipping now sees the opportunity to use really advanced technology and to use it at scale and transform the business. But in order to do that, first getting the foundation and the basics right is still a long way to go."

Mr. Pankaj Sharma, Managing Director – **OneLink** stated: "how these outdated systems, built during an era of minimal connectivity, now hinder integration with modern technologies. He stated that transitioning to new systems is expensive and fraught with challenges due to disparate data structures and complex migration processes. Thus, the transformation can prove to be time-consuming considering that every change that has been made this far has had the objective of doing the bare minimum to be kept up to date.

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Mr. Dor Raviv, Co-Founder & CTO – **Orca AI** stated: "The journey to widespread adoption still faces hurdles, including regulatory delays, user education, and concerns about data privacy. The maritime sector lags in modernization compared to everyday technologies like smartphones, creating a technological disconnect for younger crews who expect advanced tools in their professional environments. Addressing this gap requires not only advanced AI systems but also intuitive designs that are easy to adopt and integrate into existing workflows."

Ms. Friederike Hesse, Co-Founder & Managing Director – **zero44** stated: "By systematically analyzing historical data and adapting plans based on emerging patterns, companies can reduce their carbon footprints while optimizing operational costs. At the same time, the industry shows some hesitancy to rely on AI-driven analytics due to a lack of trust and the perceived loss of control over critical data. Transparency in how calculations are made and fostering trust in AI outputs are part of the solution in overcoming this resistance. By making AI processes more transparent, shipping companies can confidently rely on data-driven insights for critical decisions, such as fuel optimization and fleet management."

ASSET PRESERVATION & FLEET RENEWAL

Moderator: Mr. Colin Rawlins, Senior Representative for Germany – **Lloyd's Register**

Panelists:

- **Mr. Georgios E. Poularas**, CEO – **ENESEL S.A**
- **Mr. Holger Jablonski**, Business Development Manager – **Intership Navigation Co. Ltd.**
- **Mr. Piyush K. Sharma**, Group Director Corporate Strategy – **NSB Group**
- **Mr. Clemens Toepfer**, Managing Director – **Toepfer Transport GmbH**

NAVIGATING THE NEW ENERGY LANDSCAPE - A REALITY CHECK ON MARINE FUELS & THE ENERGY TRANSITION

Moderator: Mr. Ezekiel Davis, Vice President, Regional Business Development, Europe – **ABS**

Panelists:

- **Mr. Jasper Heikens**, CCO – **ECOLOG**
- **Ms. Linda Kongerslev**, Director - Global Engagement & Sustainability – **Oldendorff Carriers**
- **Mr. Oeyvind Lindeman**, CCO – **Navigator Gas (NYSE: NVGS)**
- **Mr. Rasmus Bach Nielsen**, Global Head of Fuel Decarbonization – **Trafigura**

CAPITAL LINK GERMAN SHIPPING LEADERSHIP AWARD

Presented To:

Reederei F. Laeisz

For Celebrating the Milestone of 200 Years in Business

&

Honoring:

Mr. Nikolaus H. Schües

President & Chairperson of the Board – **BIMCO**; CEO – **Reederei F. Laeisz**

For his Outstanding Contribution to German & Global Shipping

1X1 KEYNOTE DISCUSSION WITH:

Mr. Knut Ørbeck-Nilssen, CEO – **DNV Maritime**

Mr. Nikolaus H. Schües, President & Chairperson of the Board – **BIMCO**; CEO – **Reederei F. Laeisz**, stated: "I'm humbled, and I feel very proud and happy. It all began on the 24th of March in 1824 when Ferdinand Laeisz with 23 years registered as a merchant in the city of Hamburg, started selling hats. He sold his hats really successfully and didn't always get paid with money. He got paid with colonial goods such as cacao, cotton, coffee, sugar, rum and then he

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imported them back. Soon he learned that he could make much better money by importing goods than only selling his hats. So, he stopped that and became a trader. Later on, after being a successful trader for a couple of years, he thought it would be cheaper to transport the goods himself. And that's how the company evolved over time.”

THE EVOLVING LANDSCAPE OF SHIP FINANCE

Moderator: Dr. Christian Finner LL.M., Partner & Head of Germany – **Watson Farley & Williams**

Panelists:

- **Mr. Martijn van Tuijl**, Managing Director, Maritime Finance – **First Citizens Bank**
- **Mr. Sören Bibow**, Chief Financial Officer – **Harren Group; SAL Heavy Lift**
- **Mr. Maximilian Otto**, Director – **IG Capital**
- **Mr. Moritz Fuhrmann**, Co-CEO & CFO – **MPC Container Ships ASA**
- **Mr. Iraklis Tsigotis**, Director Origination – **Neptune Maritime Leasing Ltd.**

Dr. Christian Finner LL.M., Partner & Head of Germany – **Watson Farley & Williams**, stated: ““The evolving landscape of ship financing reflects significant changes driven by technological advancements, regulatory shifts and growing environmental concerns. Globally, the shipping industry is shifting towards more sustainable practices, prompting financiers to consider greener technologies and approaches, such as financing for eco-friendly vessels and retrofitting existing ships.

In the global context, ship financing is increasingly influenced by the need for greater transparency and compliance with international regulations, such as the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) greenhouse gas emissions reduction and other targets. Financial institutions are beginning to adopt stricter environmental assessments and sustainability criteria in their financing decisions, often aligning them with initiatives like the Green Finance Strategy.

In Germany, one of the largest maritime nations, these trends are especially relevant. The German ship financing market has historically been a key place for lending, globally, into the shipping industry, and on the other hand relied on certain sources of funding that are no longer available.

Germany is now at the forefront of adopting innovative financing solutions, such as green bonds and alternative financing models that support the transition.”

BALTIC INDICES FOR SHIPPING INVESTORS

Presented by: Mr. Mark Ma, Associate Director, EMEA – **Baltic Exchange**

Mr. Mark Ma, Associate Director, EMEA – **Baltic Exchange**, stated: “Since 2000s, the volatility in the global freight market increased significantly. 90% of traded goods are carried by sea, it is essential for the market participants to manage the freight and asset value risks in shipping. Baltic Exchange’s history traced back to 1744, which became a membership based organization to uphold business integrity, and bring transparency into the opaque shipping market. Baltic Exchange started to publish freight indices since 1985 and is authorized by EU and UK Financial Conduct Authority as a regulated benchmark administrator. Baltic data are used widely in contract settlement and are essential for shipping investors to make business decisions.”

SHIPPING - THE INVESTOR PERSPECTIVE

Moderator: Dr. Carolin Schmeding, Partner – **Ehlermann Rindfleisch Gadow**

Panelists:

- **Mr. Christian Synetos**, Investment Professional, Global Energy & Power Infrastructure Fund – **BlackRock**
- **Mr. Nils Aden**, Managing Director – **Harren Group**
- **Mr. Constantin Baack**, Co-CEO – **MPC Capital AG**

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- **Mr. John Wessel**, Managing Director – **Oldendorff Overseas Investments**

Mr. Nils Aden, Managing Director – **Harren Group**, stated: “Ship Management is not a commodity. Harren Group, headquartered in Germany, is a distinguished ship owner, manager, and commercial operator. Operating a fleet of over 70 vessels specializing in heavy lift, multi-purpose (MPP), and dry bulk tonnage, the company also has extensive experience in managing tankers, container ships, and private cruise vessels for both its own and third-party clients. Leveraging its in-house engineering and design expertise, Harren Group recently launched the first in a series of highly specialized dual fuel heavy lift vessels.

With 23 global offices, Harren Group maintains a strong local presence, ensuring close collaboration with its international clients across all major time zones, supported by 2,000 dedicated employees both ashore and at sea.

Harren Group’s approach to ship management is holistic, integrating its deep expertise in vessel ownership, commercial operations and customer relations, along with its longstanding history in third-party ship management, all to deliver superior actual value to its clients.

Most recently, Harren Group expanded its crew management operations, enhancing its global footprint beyond existing offices in Lima, Bremen, Riga, and Istanbul, with the establishment of a significant presence in Manila.

The combination of a deep expertise in maritime paired with an extremely dedicated, talented team ensures the consistent delivery of tailored, high-quality results to customers.”

WHAT'S NEXT - NAVIGATING THROUGH INDUSTRY TRANSFORMATION - THE INTERNATIONAL SHIPOWNER'S PERSPECTIVE

Moderator: Mr. Sergey Gribanov, Area Business Development Manager, Germany – **DNV Maritime**

Panelists:

- **Mr. Helge Bartels**, Chief Operating Officer – **Bernhard Schulte GmbH**
- **Mr. John Su**, President & CEO – **Erasmus Shipinvest Group**
- **Mr. Jens-Michael Arndt**, Managing Partner – **H.Vogemann**
- **Mr. Bud Darr**, EVP, Maritime Policy and Government Affairs – **MSC Group**

Mr. Helge Bartels, Chief Operating Officer – **Bernhard Schulte GmbH**, stated: “Bernhard Schulte very much welcomed this great chance to discuss and network and we very much enjoyed the lively exchange of ideas and opinions during the Maritime Forum.

The topic: “Navigating through industry transformation – the shipowners’ perspective” was a very interesting headline and naturally Bernhard Schulte manages these as an internationally strong group of companies. Essential for us is close cooperation: With our esteemed customers, crew colleagues and business partners across the worldwide maritime network. In close communication with all stakeholders, we are striving to continuously improve our performance, our services and developing our company culture, working for the common benefit of all of us.

Central for our success is our staff, our employees. As a strategic element we strive to utilize digitalization and increase automation. Ever more regulations with ambitious goals, but without a common framework, is counterproductive. Let’s take container shipping as example: There, some – if not THE – standard caused a tremendous step in efficiency founding a global success. And while everyone in shipping speaks English, we are lacking such in data collection and reporting. Surely IMO could rule on that, helping for good and simply by definition.

In summary we agreed that shipping is for long term, a marathon, with related processes and day-to-day work, where cooperation is of the essence. We are working as a highly committed community, 24/7, tirelessly and the common good. Connecting people, cultures and countries, for our joint benefits.”

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