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Coastlink to stage three conferences in 2011

The shortsea container shipping organisation Coastlink Network is to stage three conferences in 2011, providing its members and friends with expanded opportunities for networking and enabling it to cover a wider range of subjects, both technically and geographically.

Starting the ball rolling will be Coastlink Hamburg 2011, which will take place at the Hotel Atlantic Kempinski on 19 & 20 April.

On 15 & 16 June, the second conference will take place in Liverpool. The first day will be on board the Mersey ferry Royal Daffodil, which will transit the Manchester Ship Canal to Salford while the Merseyside Maritime Museum is the preferred venue for the second day.

Coastlink's Autumn Conference will be in Bilbao on 6 & 7 October. The preferred venue for this conference, Bilbao's magnificent maritime museum, has already been reserved for the conference.

Coastlink Hamburg 2011

Since 2004, Coastlink has held conferences in the UK, France, Belgium, Sweden and Estonia but never in Germany. This omission will be corrected with the Hamburg conference where there will be a special focus on not only Hamburg but also other German ports. As part of our multimodal brief, we also expect to review inland waterway activity on the Rhine and Elbe.

Reflecting the wishes of delegates at our Antwerp conference in September 2010, we will also turn the spotlight on the Baltic Sea and Russia during the Hamburg event. Traditionally Hamburg has always been a major hub port for the Baltic trades but 2010 saw a temporary shift of some feeders to Rotterdam while Maersk surprised observers with establishing the Port of Gdansk as its Baltic hub port and extending its Ecubex South America service right through to St Petersburg. We will be asking what will come next for the Baltic trades.

Germany, and Hamburg in particular, has long been the main supplier of shortsea container vessels to both deepsea feeder specialists like Team Lines and Unifeeder and to multimodal door/door operators such as Containerships and Samskip. It therefore seemed a perfect opportunity to use Hamburg to discuss the future supply of shortsea containerships, especially now that the KG partnership system seems dead and buried.

Similarly, and again responding to delegate requests at the Antwerp conference, we will be looking at new design concepts and solutions that will keep shortsea shipping competitive despite forthcoming draconian emission regulations in the North Sea and Baltic.

Coastlink would like to thank Hafen Hamburg Marketing for its assistance in arranging this conference.

Coastlink Liverpool 2011

In association with Peel Ports and the local shipping community, Coastlink will be hosting its first UK conference since 2006 in the port city of Liverpool. The venue for the first day of the conference will be the Mersey ferry Royal Daffodil, which will take delegates from Pier Head to Salford along the Manchester Ship Canal. During the voyage, Peel Ports will detail its plans for bringing shipping back to the city of Manchester via this iconic waterway that once was transited by ocean-going vessels of all nationalities.

Liverpool was of course hit badly by the advent of containerisation, which saw the deepsea trades focus on Southampton and Felixstowe, and by EU countries replacing British Commonwealth nations as the UK's largest trade partners. Coastlink is now seeking local shippers happy to tell our delegates why NW England is still an excellent location for business and why they would welcome more direct calls in Liverpool.

On the second day, we expect to take up residence in the award-winning Merseyside Maritime Museum where the remainder of the programme will include coverage of the trades to Iberia and North Africa and also the development of a growing feeder network accommodating primarily fresh produce from South Africa and South America that is hubbing in French and Benelux ports.

Coastlink Bilbao 2011

Coastlink had planned to hold a conference in Bilbao in 2010 but a variety of circumstances, not least the continued recession and its impact on travel budgets, meant that it had to be postponed. This was highly disappointing for our Spanish and Portuguese friends, so much so that they have rallied round under the umbrella of the Port of Bilbao, Uniport Bilbao - representing the broader maritime community in Bilbao - and Lisbon-headquartered Navex-Empresa de Navegação SA to ensure that a 2011 Coastlink conference will be successful. The UK shipping company MacAndrews & Co, which first started shipping services to/from Iberia in 1770 and opened a network of offices in Spain during the 1860s, is also lending firm support to Coastlink for the Bilbao conference.

Details of the venue and the programme for Bilbao will be announced closer to the event date.

Note to editors

Coastlink is an organisation dedicated to the promotion of shortsea and multimodal shipping. Unlike shortsea shipping bureaux, we have no political/ governmental support and we are reliant on membership subscriptions and profits from conferences to fund our activities. With our conferences, we seek to educate and to provide opportunities for delegates to debate topical subjects but never forget that most delegates value the networking opportunities above all else. Several new shortsea shipping services owe their existence to contacts made at Coastlink conferences.