

## **Interferry conference set to highlight ferry industry as post-Covid leader**

Findings from a survey suggesting that ferries are poised to lead post-pandemic travel demand will underline an upbeat agenda when global trade association Interferry stages its 45<sup>th</sup> annual conference in October.

Taking place in Santander, Spain, the latest edition of the ferry community's longest-established conference is themed The Future is Ferries – marking it as a showcase for positive solutions and prospects in response to Covid, climate change and other major challenges.

The survey results will feature in a presentation by London-based transport and logistics specialist L.E.K. Consulting, which is researching the European ferry market's recovery prospects following the Covid crisis.

The company has been advising operators on planning for an upturn in passenger and freight business, including pricing strategies and likely traffic volumes. Its passenger research during the pandemic has tested changing attitudes to rival travel modes, notably flying. The feedback indicates that both the traditional and more recent Covid-safe attractions of ferry travel leave the industry in pole position to benefit from future demand.

The pandemic forced Interferry to cancel last year's conference scheduled for Hobart, Australia. The long-planned 2021 event is going ahead after an initial decision in May - based on detailed analysis of existing and forecast anti-Covid measures - and continuous monitoring of the situation since delegate registration opened in June.

CEO Mike Corrigan comments: "Registrations to date are similar to previous years. With the traditional surge to register still to come in the final month before the conference, there is clearly a lot of pent-up demand from industry professionals to reconnect face-to-face, share current experiences and explore future strategies."

As the centrepiece of a five-day networking event, the Speakers Program on October 4-5 will also feature input on step-change innovation, IT security and safety initiatives, as well as several sessions devoted to environmental issues – including sustainable newbuilds, the drive towards ship and shore zero emissions and the latest regulatory developments.

The regulatory update will focus largely on agreed and proposed requirements for reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Through its consultative status at the International Maritime Organization, Interferry has secured sector-specific technical solutions under the Energy Efficiency Existing Ship Index – due in force from January 2023 – and has also helped to devise a fair operational efficiency dataset for the parallel Carbon Intensity Indicator.

In addition, the regulatory review will examine a string of unilateral proposals from the European Union. The measures include Fuel EU Maritime - which sets limits on the GHG content in maritime fuel and requires passenger vessels to use berth-side power supply – and the integration of shipping into an Emissions Trading Scheme.

Interferry's 2021 event is being hosted by Brittany Ferries, which has served Santander since 1978 within a route network covering France, northern Spain, the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

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