



## ATHENS NEEDS TO DIVERSIFY KEY ATTRACTIONS PORTFOLIO

The Athens Development & Destination Management Agency “This is Athens” is participating at PSTF 2021 to raise visibility and awareness for the destination strategy and competitive advantages of Athens, to take advantage of the forum’s digitalised networking opportunities, to promote the city of Athens as a key international cruise product and highlight existing challenges. **Evangelos Vlachos, CEO**, says that Athens needs to diversify its product to help disperse the high concentration of cruise visitors from the areas around major attractions to more points of interest. “The cruise industry is an important source of revenue for the local economy in the City of Athens. During the course of the pandemic, we have experienced a significant decrease of visitor numbers in the city, impacting all sectors of tourism and the general economy. The 2021 Posidonia Sea Tourism Forum is an excellent opportunity to talk about the challenges and opportunities as we increase the frequency of cruise arrivals to Athens.”

The Agency’s efforts focus on tourism product diversification, especially the creation of new sustainable and accessible tourism products. The aim is to share knowledge about Athens and promote urban experiences through “This is Athens”, the official multimedia visitors guide to the City of Athens that is available to cruise visitors online at [thisisathens.org](http://thisisathens.org). Visitors can discover places of interest, learn about what’s fresh and new, and make effective use of their time in port. Development of these resources has continued during the Covid-19 pandemic, including the creation of two new podcast series, new articles and photographic material, and itinerary suggestions for shopping, eating, and even jogging in the centre of the city.



## TURKISH PORT IN COST CUTTING, EFFICIENCY-BOOSTING MODE

The Turkish port of Canakkale has attached much importance in implementing measures against the pandemic. With a series of arrangements in the critical areas of medical treatment and ambulance services, quarantine of close contacts, isolation of asymptomatic/pre-symptomatic guests, an increase in testing capacity for SARS-CoV-2 in cooperation with local laboratories, training of its personnel and immediate reporting to the next port of call of any possible cases, Canakkale has left no stone unturned to ensure the safety of passengers, crews and the population of the local community. The Port will participate in this year’s Posidonia Sea Tourism Forum as it tries to emerge from the crisis and reach out to international stakeholders with renewed optimism for the future. The management of the port is developing corporate strategies to meet new market trends and challenges as well as to preserve and add value to the business. In this context, it is investing in expipe bunkering for cruise ships, creating one more competitive advantage. It is also designing and implementing on-board operational procedures focused on cost controlling, inventory management and replenishment, ensuring corporate governance and compliance. “These cost cutting, value enhancing measures are important at times of reduced revenues,” said **Evren Beceren, Commercial Director**, who will represent the port at this year’s Posidonia Sea Tourism Forum.

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## ALBA SPONSORS PSTF 2021

**Alba Graduate Business School, The American College of Greece** is one of the sponsors of this year's Posidonia Sea Tourism Forum, due to its strong maritime focus which includes three postgraduate programmes in shipping. Alba also offers tailor-made executive development shipping courses and mini MBAs, for leading shipping companies and organisations. **Spyros Vougiouis, Director Shipping** said: "We are proud to announce our participation and support for the 6th Posidonia Sea Tourism Forum through our Alba Shipping programmes. The first school that offered an MBA in Shipping and an MSc in Shipping Management programs in Greece, Alba, has been a pioneer business school that has elevated shipping education to international standards. We will be pleased to e-meet forum's guests and discuss about our business unusual learning culture and philosophy." Tourism is also an area of Alba's focus with one postgraduate programme currently on offer. **Dr. Evangelia Baralou, Academic Director MSc in Tourism Management**, said: "Alba is especially happy to participate with its MSc in Tourism, an ever-relevant programme, which prepares tomorrow's leaders to navigate the challenges of our times. Tourism has been especially hit by the ongoing pandemic and is a constantly evolving and still rewarding industry for Greece and those willing to discover it."

## KEFALONIA STAYS UPBEAT, EYES MORE CRUISE VISITORS

The pandemic has caused significant delays in the planned infrastructure re-development of the Argostoli port, the gateway to Kefalonia's cruise product, according to **Theofilos Michalatos, Mayor of the Municipality of Argostoli and President of the Municipal Port Fund of Kefalonia and Ithaca**. "We are upgrading our port infrastructure so that we can have the possibility to serve more cruise ships in the best possible way," he said ahead of PSTF 2021. The cruise industry has been a main contributor of tourism-generated revenues for this Ionian Sea island during the last decade, but the pandemic has caused serious problems to the tourism industry and of course this has affected the cruise sector. At PSTF, **Argostoli Municipality** wants to promote its tourism attractions in front of an audience of cruise industry stakeholders. "Kefalonia and especially Argostoli, the capital and the main cruise port of the island, has been established in the last decade as one of the top cruise ports in Greece. Our island has the natural beauty, the variety of cultural, geological attractions and the perfect geographic position to become one of the top cruise destinations in Mediterranean Sea," said Michalatos.



## RESTART MEANS RETHINKING

Cruising will bounce back in the coming years to levels seen before the pandemic according to **Travelway CEO, Spyros Hambas**. "We are in continuous contact with our cruise clients as well as the local authorities to ensure that all the health protocols are in place for the safety of the passengers and crew of ships visiting Greece," he said. "It goes without saying that the pandemic seriously affected us as all companies in this sector, but thanks to the soft restart in 2020 we got the opportunity to assess some of our procedures for shore excursions as well as to come to agreements with our partners on health and safety procedures." According to Hambas, Travelway sees the need to create a wide range of sustainable shore programmes, as well as the need to "discover" new ports of call and destinations.



## RAISING AWARENESS TO PROTECT OUR OCEANS

The organisers of PSTF 2021 have teamed up with the **Hellenic Marine Environment Protection Association (HELMPEPA)**, as part of a long-standing partnership fuelled by a shared commitment towards safeguarding the seas from pollution. Safety at sea, environment protection, training trends, ESGs synergies and sustainability concepts are just a few of the topics that visitors can explore and discuss with HELMEPA's representatives. Moreover, sea tourism professionals and other stakeholders will have the opportunity to find out details about a three-year project carried out in Greece and Cyprus and supported by Lloyd's Register Foundation, designed to enhance understanding of new and enduring challenges in maritime safety culture in East Med. Delegates can also explore the possibility of becoming Safety Ambassadors of the "Stay Safe at Sea" awareness campaign, integrating the action in their CSR strategy.

Tuesday 25 May 2021, 10:00 - 17:00 EET | 09:00 - 16:00 CET

10:05 EET | 09:05 CET

**Opening Statement: Ioannis Plakiotakis,  
Minister of Maritime Affairs and Insular Policy**

10:10 EET | 09:10 CET

**Keynote Speech: Pierfrancesco Vago, CLIA Global  
Chairman/ Executive Chairman, MSC Cruises**

10:15 - 11:15 EET | 09:15 - 10:15 CET

## SESSION 1

### The Restart of Cruising in Europe and the Mediterranean

Cruise operators are still facing uncertainty as to when their operations can recommence at a viable level to sustain them as businesses. How does the industry envision the restart and how will post pandemic cruising differ from the pre-COVID19 reality? What are the main concerns in the interim and how are cruise operators dealing with them?

- Wybcke Meier, CEO, **TUI Cruises**
- Gianni Onorato, CEO, **MSC Cruises**
- Michael Thamm, Group CEO, **Costa Group and Carnival Asia**
- Chris Theophilides, CEO, **Celestyal Cruises**
- Moderator: Grant Holmes, Global Sector Head - Cruise Industry, **INCHCAPE Shipping Services**

11:45 - 12:45 EET | 10:45 - 11:45 CET

## SESSION 2

### Impact on Shore excursions & Destination management with new Health Protocols

It is not enough to have a well managed system of health protocols onboard, cruising -especially in Europe- is very shore intensive. It is obvious that some coordination must be struck between users (cruise lines) and destination states in this regard. What's the outlook for shore excursions in 2021? Will cruise passengers be limited to specific sights and experiences during their shore visit or will they be able to explore the destination? How will this impact revenue for the destination?

- Kevin Bubolz, Managing Director Europe, **Norwegian Cruise Line**
- Laura Cimaglia, Vice President, **MedCruise**
- Adam Sharp, Director, International Destination Development, **Royal Caribbean Group**
- Evangelos Vlachos, CEO, **Athens Development & Destination Management Agency**
- Moderator: Grant Holmes, Global Sector Head - Cruise Industry, **INCHCAPE Shipping Services**

13:00 - 13:45 EET | 12:00 - 12:45 CET

### DISCUSSION "The Outlook for the 2021 season for Cruising in Greece"

Expectations for the 2021 season will be in the spotlight during this interesting discussion, which **will be held in the Greek language.**

- Maria Deligianni, National Director, Eastern Mediterranean, **CLIA**
- Dimitris Fragakis, Secretary General, **Greek National Tourism Organisation**
- Capt. George Koumpenas, President, **Union of Cruise Ship Owners & Associated Members**
- Andreas Stylianopoulos, Member BoD, **Greek Tourism Confederation (SETE)**
- Moderator: Ilias G. Bissias, Managing Editor, **Naftika Chronika**

14:30 - 15:30 EET | 13:30 - 14:30 CET

## SESSION 3

### The "Green Deal" and the Environmental Challenges Ahead

Along with the pandemic, cruising and the destinations that serve it are facing several environmental challenges. It is a fact that cruise lines have made serious investments in new technology to develop greener cruise ships, but is that enough? What other environmental directions is the industry taking and how is it dealing with older equipment in their fleets?

- Captain Manolis Alevropoulos, VP, **Celebrity Cruises** Marine Operations/ Celebrity Cruises Fleet Captain/ Port Development & Marine Infrastructure Expert
- Bud Darr, Executive Vice President, Maritime Policy and Government Affairs, **MSC Group**
- Ukko Metsola, Director General, Europe, **Cruise Lines International Association**
- Minas Papadakis, CEO, **Port of Heraklion**
- Moderator: Dr. George Pateras, President, **Hellenic Chamber of Shipping**

16:00 - 17:00 EET | 15:00 - 16:00 CET

## SESSION 4

### Impact of COVID-19 on Ports

Before the pandemic, many ports in the East Med had already announced impressive investment plans and launched the upgrade of their cruise facilities. What is the current status of those investment plans one year after COVID-19 first impacted the cruise industry?

- Aris Batsoulis, President, **MedCruise**
- Michel Nestour, Vice President, Global Port & Destination Development - **EUROMED, Carnival Corporation & Plc**
- Captain Weng Lin, Deputy CEO, **Piraeus Port Authority S.A.**
- Zohar Rom, Head of Cruises, Tourism, Marketing Communication & PR, **Haifa Port**
- Moderator: Alexander Napp, Managing Partner, **PWL Port Services GmbH & Co. KG**

