The Posidonia Sea Tourism Forum
International Conference & Exhibition

POSIDONIA NEWS
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LUXURY CRUISE MARKET HOLDS MUCH PROMISE FOR GREEK AND EAST MED HIDDEN GEM DESTINATIONS

PSTF 2023 TO EXAMINE REGION'S GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES FROM LUCRATIVE TOURISM SEGMENT

The appeal of Greece and the East Mediterranean as an ideal region for luxury cruising will be one of the main highlights of the 7th Posidonia Sea Tourism Forum (PSTF), scheduled to take place in Thessaloniki on the 25th and 26th of April, 2023.

Luxury and niche cruise brands that have already confirmed participation for the two-day event to be held at Thessaloniki's landmark five-star hotel Makedonia Palace include **Azamara Cruises, Compagnie du Ponant, Scenic Cruises, Seabourn Cruise Line, Variety Cruises and recently re-launched Crystal Cruises**.

Delegates and exhibitors from around the world will have the chance to attend a panel discussion titled: 'The Appeal of Venturing to Non-Mainstream Destinations: Luxury & Expedition Cruising leading the Way' that will examine the increasing importance of lesser-known destinations for this specific market segment, in conjunction with infrastructure challenges and the role of sustainability and authenticity as desirability factors.

"Our decision to move the Posidonia Sea Tourism Forum away from Athens for the first time in the event's 12-year-long history was in sync with emerging trends in an industry that wishes to constructively address growing criticism for its contribution to over-tourism in many cruise hotspots around the world," said **Theodore Vokos, Managing Director of Posidonia Exhibitions S.A.**

"Thessaloniki was chosen as the host of this year's event to signify the need for more port alternatives and new destinations to dilute impact and optimise cruise traffic management in the East Mediterranean region. Also, Thessaloniki is a natural gateway for emerging Balkan markets, which is another important topic to be addressed during the Forum."

With more than 400 inhabited islands and coastal cities across Italy, Croatia, Greece, Albania and Turkey, the East Mediterranean and Adriatic seas collectively offer one of the highest densities of destination alternatives in the world. There are countless potential new ports-of-call, as well as main and regional homeporting options beyond the well-established marquee destinations.

Diverting some traffic from over-frequented destinations will enrich the itinerary design menu, as well as act as a tool that can protect the natural, cultural and tourism values needed for a sustainable future.

Mark Robinson, Senior Vice President Operations, Scenic Luxury Cruises & Tours, said: "The luxury cruise segment represents 3.7% of the industry's total market share worldwide, with the Mediterranean Sea owning over a third of that with 37.01%. One of the main drivers for the region's appeal is the East Med archipelago which offers unique, famous worldwide destinations and hidden gems which offer ultimate customisation destination services. With our Scenic and Emerald Cruise luxury yachts we have many calls in the region, and we are happy to announce that in 2023 our new ultra-luxury expedition yacht Scenic Eclipse II, due to be launched in April, and our new Emerald Sakara yacht will debut in the East Med Region in July. Scenic Cruises is always looking for new destinations for our luxury cruises, and the East Med has many hidden gems for us to tap into with its rich heritage, friendly locals and not to mention the excellent cuisine and turquoise blue seas".

Some 85 luxury vessels totalling 36,184 berths will be operating cruises this year. This represents an annual capacity of 1,050,000 passengers and the prediction for 2027 is up to 94 ships totalling 44,764 berths and 1,378,000 passengers.

"According to the Allied Market Research Report, Greece's luxury tourism offering is expected to yield an annual revenue of USD 2,7 billion by 2030, registering a CAGR (Compound Annual Growth Rate) of 11.5% from 2021 to 2030. A significant part of this revenue will come from luxury cruise activity and on-shore spending from this segment's high-income passengers," added Vokos.

Luxury cruise passengers seek a wide range of unusual, often specialized and certainly more immersive destination experiences and are prepared to pay a premium to satisfy their expectations. Greece and the East Mediterranean are gifted with a level of destination diversity that can satisfy even the most highly demanding expectations of today's discerning travellers.

Other interesting topics to be discussed during PSTF 2023 will include the long-term prospects for the cruise industry as an important sector of the leisure travel market and the necessity for regions and cruise lines to cooperate on the enhancement of destination offerings, on the upgrading of infrastructures, on the popularization of alternative ports of call and finally, on improvements of cruise traffic management aimed at defusing over-tourism.

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COMMITTED TO GROWTH

The **Port of Thessaloniki** is in a growth mode that will see it welcome over 70 scheduled cruise ship arrivals this year with the season kicking off on February 10, ten weeks before the city plays host to the 2023 Posidonia Sea Tourism Forum (PSTF). With a brand new Cruise Terminal, an additional berthing position with LOA of 320 mt, draft 9.5 mt, new fenders and new bollards of 200 tons traction capacity, the port is today in the position to serve any cruise vessel type from around the world. The port's operator **ThPA S.A** will make its third PSTF outing this April to promote the recent infrastructure upgrades and enhanced services with the aim to expand collaboration with exhibitors and visitors. "At ThPA S.A., we aspire to act as a gateway to growth, delivering added value to the city, the economy and society. Therefore, we look forward to hosting the 2023 PSTF and welcome to our city some of the most influential decision makers of the international cruising and sea tourism sector," said **Athanasios Liagkos, Executive Chairman of the BoD & Managing Director.** He added: "During their stay here, they will have a first-hand experience of Thessaloniki's exciting, highly vibrant and constantly evolving touristic product, which comprises of unfettered air, rail and road accessibility from all parts of Greece and Europe, the rapidly improving state-of-the-art transportation infrastructure, and the strategic location of a city known as a crossroads of culture and culinary excellence steeped in Byzantine history."

CELESTYAL BOOSTS THESSALONIKI ITINERARIES

Having participated at every Posidonia Sea Tourism Forum (PSTF) since the event's inception in 2011, Greek-based cruise company **Celestyal Cruises** looks forward to the upcoming Thessaloniki event due to it being the only cruise line to be calling on Greece's second largest city on a regular basis. This year alone, Celestyal has scheduled a total of 30 calls to Thessaloniki bringing more than 16,000 passengers from around the world to experience the city's rich cultural and gastronomic history. "Celestyal has been a proud sponsor of the Posidonia Sea Tourism Forum for several years, but we are especially excited to be sponsoring Greece's biennial cruising and yachting conference in 2023, as it will take place in Thessaloniki for the first time," said **Chris Theophilides, CEO**. "Thessaloniki is quickly becoming a major port and in recognition of this, we introduced this vibrant port city into our itineraries in the last two years." At this year's event, Celestyal Cruises plans to promote its recently launched new fare structure and new itineraries for 2023 - 2024. The cruise line will also leverage its seventh PSTF presence to represent the cruise industry in the Greek market among other leading companies and share its voice as a Greek based cruise line in the region that is focused on sustainable development. He added: "We look forward to joining our industry colleagues at the event and working in collaboration to further develop Thessaloniki as a growing cruise port as part of Celestyal's commitment to support the growth of cruising and tourism across Greece."

NEW BODY FOR YACHTING PROS DEBUTS AT PSTF

The Posidonia Sea Tourism Forum will be hosting a conference titled 'The public image of the Super Yacht industry and the reality behind the industry' organised by newly established **Hellenic Committee for Professional Yachting (HCPY)** in conjunction with the European Committee for Professional Yachting (ECPY). HCPY represents, among others, the interests of yacht brokers, central agents, yacht owners, insurers, yacht agents, crews, shipyards, suppliers as well as other yachting professionals in Greece. The non-profit association will provoke dialogues between professionals in marine tourism and cooperate with the relevant Ministries, administrations, the government and the European Union who have long been asking for a single united voice from this sector. HCPY will promote the development of the yachting industry, activities and services related to marine tourism, and contribute to the establishment of new legal, technical, administrative, tax and customs standards in Europe. "The daily problems faced by our members and their associates led to the establishment of HCPY which aims at the evolution and development of yachting in Greece to ensure that Greece assumes rightfully its position in international yachting as it has so successfully in shipping. Due to its rich seafaring traditions, Greece can anticipate future trends, develop accordingly as well as help unite and harmonise EU regulations," said **Rosemary Pavlatou, President, HCPY**.

PIRAEUS VISITS THESSALONIKI

Piraeus Port Authority (PPA) S.A. is heading to its seventh Posidonia Sea Tourism Forum (PSTF) participation where it plans to showcase the significant progress that has been made in critical infrastructure projects as a result of a redevelopment programme designed to cement Piraeus' port reputation as one of the Mediterranean's best cruising home ports. "The new enhanced and modernised port infrastructure as well as the high-end, quality services provided, backed with the unique geographic location of Greece's largest harbour have turned the Port of Piraeus into one of the most attractive hub destinations for the cruise industry worldwide," said **Mr. Yu Zeng Gang, Chairman of Piraeus Port Authority S.A.** Currently the port has 9-11 berthing slots for the simultaneous berthing of vessels and can accommodate even the largest cruise ships. PPA's presence at PSTF 2023 aims at engaging and networking with current and potential clients, promoting its operational achievements and business milestones, while benefiting from brand exposure and customer feedback collection.

6,000 CRUISES IN ONE PLATFORM

Travelway and Cruiseway, parts of the same group specialising in shore excursions, turnaround services, land tours, and cruise sales for ocean and river cruising, are setting sail for their sixth participation at Posidonia Sea Tourism Forum, where they plan to promote the launch of a new website that will feature more than 6,000 worldwide cruises operated by major cruise lines and their 2023 Spring and Summer Cruise programmes for the Greek market. **Spyros Hambas, Travelway**, said: "The 2022 cruise season in Greece was considered very successful, despite all the difficulties tourism related service providers around the world faced during the restart of operations following the pandemic. The 2023 Posidonia Sea Tourism Forum in April is the ideal stage to launch, what we hope, will be a very positive cruise season." From her part, **Tatiana Hambas, Cruiseway**, added: "The increased awareness in Greece of the value for money a cruise holiday option offers, has generated a significant number of first-time cruise passengers in 2022. In addition, the large number of cruises departing from Greek ports has given an added impetus to the Greek cruise market. We hope that this growth trend will continue in 2023 and the Posidonia Sea Tourism Forum will further spotlight cruising!"

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

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The Return to Growth: Challenges ahead for Cruise Lines and Destinations

Speakers to be announced

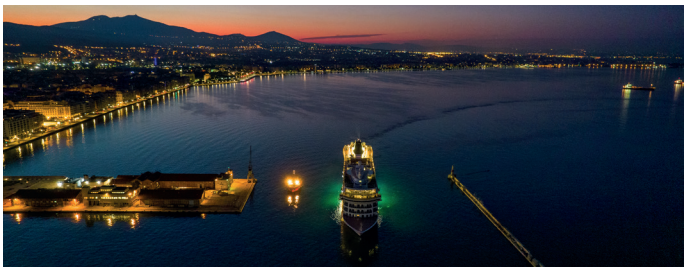
DAY 1

Tuesday 25 April 2023

Session 1

STATE OF THE INDUSTRY: The Crucial Role of the Mediterranean in Post-Pandemic Cruising

- After the traumatic period of the pandemic, how is the cruise restart in the Mediterranean progressing?
- Given that many European destinations experienced very high arrival numbers in the second half of 2022, is it correct to assume cruising will be able to reach 2019's record levels soon?
- The long pause in cruise operations instigated a wide range of damage control maneuvers that called for significant fleet, corporate and financial restructuring. When can we begin to talk about a full recovery for the cruise industry?



Session 2

Growth Challenges for Cruise Lines and Destinations

- As tourism begins to regain its pre-pandemic rhythm, sustainability and overcrowding challenges will also return to the forefront for many popular destinations. How will this impact on future itinerary design and guest satisfaction?
- Is berth allocation enough of a solution to ease pressure on marquee destinations?
- Alternatively, could cruise lines, central & local governments, private sectors and ports cooperate to develop and promote enough destination alternatives to better disperse call traffic and mitigate the impact on marquee ports?
- How can public and private investments be channeled toward port and tourism infrastructure development more effectively? What are the key areas to focus on so as to ensure a given destination's capacity to meet both operational needs and passenger expectations in a satisfactory and sustainable way?

Session 3

CLIA EUROPE Session Pathways to Net Zero

Port Visit

(For Speakers & Delegates | pre-registration required)

DAY 2

Wednesday 26 April 2023

Session 1

Infrastructure Solutions for Ports - Environmental & Sustainability Challenges

- What are the required actions for cruise ports to be able to comply with the EU's "Fit for 55" 2030 deadline for reduced greenhouse gas emissions? What exactly is required in the case of very small transit cruise ports and islands?
- What fixed docking solutions are there to accommodate larger ships in smaller ports and islands without impacting on the destination's aesthetic value and distinct characteristics?
- If only a tender approach is possible, what solutions are there to improve anchorage conditions, safety, comfort and overall passenger experience?
- How can multi-purpose smaller ports adapt to seasonal cruise calls? How effective is the use of moveable infrastructures?

Session 2

The Appeal of Venturing to Non-Mainstream Destinations: Luxury & Expedition Cruising leading the Way

- The smaller sized cruise ships operated by luxury and expedition brands are capable of calling at a much wider range of cruise ports. Does the inclusion of more lesser-known and frequented destinations enhance itinerary appeal and overall guest satisfaction?
- Some of these newer cruise destinations may lack the tourism sophistication and infrastructure of more popular ports, but they can offer genuine travel experiences. Is this a plus or a minus for a luxury brand?
- New trends in cruiser expectations include more active shore experiences, as well as tours that focus on sustainability, environmental sensitivity, deeper immersion into local culture and other special features unique to a given destination. How important is the ability to offer such an array of shore options to niche cruise lines?

Session 3

The Public Image of the Super Yacht Industry and the Reality behind the Industry

Organised by the European Committee for Professional Yachting (ECPY) and the Hellenic Committee for Professional Yachting (HCPY)

Parallel Workshop

CRUISE SALES: How can Travel Agents benefit from increased demand for Cruise Holidays

- In association with CLIA and FedHATTA, the Federation of Hellenic Associations of Tourist & Travel Agencies

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