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## Press Release · Pressemitteilung

### Maritime Industry Focuses on Efficiency, Innovation and Resilience

#### Industry leaders see technology, competitiveness and collaboration as key drivers of maritime transformation

**Hamburg, 17 June 2026** – Geopolitical uncertainty, decarbonisation, digitalisation and new energy efficiency requirements are fundamentally reshaping the maritime industry. At today's joint **press conference for SMM 2026, MS&D Conference & Expo and ALL ABOUT PORTS**, leading representatives from industry, shipping the port sector and maritime organisations discussed the key challenges and opportunities facing the future of the industry. Participants agreed that the maritime transition can only succeed through closer collaboration across the sector. "The most exciting developments are currently emerging not within individual sectors, but at the intersections between them. It is there that we can see how the maritime industry is changing – and where it is heading. With SMM, MS&D Conference & Expo and ALL ABOUT PORTS, we are creating the framework in Hamburg to discuss these developments from different perspectives," said **Claus Ulrich Selbach**, Vice President Exhibitions Maritime & Energy at Hamburg Messe und Congress.

While **SMM** puts the key future challenges facing the maritime industry centre stage, the **MS&D Conference & Expo** focuses on current issues in maritime security and defence. **ALL ABOUT PORTS** complements this portfolio by highlighting the role of ports as future hubs for energy, infrastructure and logistics. Ports are also increasingly at the centre of discussions about resilience, energy supply, data infrastructure and security. "Ports are no longer just places where ships load and unload cargo. They are becoming central hubs for energy, infrastructure, logistics and increasingly also for data and security. As strategic nodes where economic competitiveness, energy security, digital infrastructure and defence readiness intersect, ports must become more resilient, more connected and more innovative than ever before," said **Jens Meier**, CEO of Hamburg Port Authority (HPA) and patron of ALL ABOUT PORTS. Topics on the ALL ABOUT PORTS agenda include the role of ports in the energy transition, the protection of critical infrastructure, the digitalisation and automation of port operations, as well as strategies for resilient supply chains and sustainable port development.

#### Maritime transformation becomes an industrial challenge

The demands on shipping continue to grow. Emissions must be reduced, processes digitalised and vessels operated more efficiently. The technologies required to achieve this are being developed by shipyards and maritime suppliers.

"Geopolitics are reshaping the maritime industry. New markets, new technologies - for the industry these are exciting times! Our technological edge here in Germany and Europe gives us huge opportunities for strong growth here and elsewhere. SMM is the place to watch it happen and be part of it," said **Dr Reinhard Lüken**, Chief Executive Officer of the German Shipbuilding and Ocean Industries Association (VSM). According to Lüken, shipbuilding is now one of the most technology-intensive industries worldwide. Alternative propulsion systems, digital ship operations, automation, artificial intelligence and cyber resilience are becoming essential requirements for modern vessels. At the same time, competitiveness, technological sovereignty and innovation capacity are becoming increasingly important for Europe.

### **Energy efficiency and digitalisation shape the future**

Energy efficiency is no longer merely a sustainability issue; it has become a key competitive factor. Digital applications, automation and data-driven processes help operators run vessels and fleets more efficiently while reducing operating costs. At the same time, the technologies required for maritime transformation are becoming increasingly complex and interconnected. To accelerate the development of new solutions and bring them into practical application more quickly, international collaboration across the entire maritime value chain is becoming increasingly important.

"The maritime industry is entering a period of profound technological change. Energy efficiency, digitalisation and automation are fundamentally transforming shipping and shipbuilding. At the same time, pressure is mounting to bring sustainable and high-performance solutions to market more quickly. The technologies required are too complex and the challenges too great for individual companies or regions to tackle alone. Progress depends on international collaboration, the exchange of expertise and the joint development of new solutions," said **Hauke Schlegel**, Managing Director of VDMA Marine Equipment and Systems. According to Schlegel, the maritime supply industry plays a key role in this transformation. As the link between technology development, system integration and industrial implementation, it helps bring innovation into practical application. Platforms such as SMM foster international exchange and create the conditions needed to accelerate the transition from technological development to market-ready solutions.

From the perspective of international classification societies, geopolitical developments, regulation and technological innovation are also reshaping the framework for investment and fleet strategies.

"SMM comes at a very interesting time for the industry. We have seen first-hand the huge impact geopolitics can have on shipping - both on the commercial side and on the global regulatory order. On the regulatory front, this looks more like a speed bump than a brick wall, but it emphasises the importance of building flexibility into the decisions being made today. SMM is where the industry comes together to work through exactly these questions - and that makes Hamburg in September more important than ever," said **Rasmus Stute**, Vice President and Area Manager Germany at DNV Maritime. According to Stute, shipowners today must navigate more regulatory requirements

than ever before. At the same time, energy efficiency, digitalisation, artificial intelligence and new technologies are becoming increasingly important. Classification societies play a vital role in ensuring that innovation can be implemented safely while helping companies navigate an increasingly complex environment.

### **Resilience becomes a competitive factor for global supply chains**

For shipowners, a key question is how to ensure reliable supply chains under increasingly challenging geopolitical conditions. Recent geopolitical crises and disruptions to major trade routes have demonstrated how closely security, economic performance and supply chain reliability are interconnected.

“From a shipowner’s perspective, innovation only creates value when it works in everyday operations. The technologies we need must improve efficiency, strengthen safety and support commercially sustainable decarbonisation. They should also make life and work on board easier for seafarers, who ultimately operate these systems every day. At the same time, recent geopolitical developments have shown that resilience has become a key competitive factor for global supply chains. This makes collaboration across the maritime industry more important than ever,” said **Silke Lehmköster**, Managing Director Fleet at Hapag-Lloyd AG.

### **The topics are converging**

The discussions at the press conference showed how closely the key challenges facing the maritime industry are now interconnected – from energy efficiency and digitalisation to maritime security and the role of ports as hubs for energy, infrastructure and logistics.

### **Press accreditation**

Media representatives can register her:

For SMM 2026: [Press Shop](#).

For ALL ABOUT PORTS: [Press Shop](#).

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### **About SMM**

**SMM – the world’s leading maritime industry event** – will take place from 1 to 4 September 2026 in Hamburg. Under the guiding theme “Driving the Maritime Transition”, it brings together international stakeholders from across the maritime industry to discuss key future topics and actively shape the development of the sector. More than 2,200 exhibiting companies from around 60 countries and approximately 50,000 participants from up to 120 nations are expected. Spanning around 90,000 m<sup>2</sup> across twelve exhibition halls, SMM showcases the entire value chain of the industry. The focus is on energy efficiency as a key lever of the maritime transition, complemented

by maritime security and defence, artificial intelligence, decarbonisation, and digital technologies. SMM serves as a central platform for innovation, international exchange and business development. A comprehensive conference programme accompanies the exhibition, including TradeWinds Shipowners Forum, Maritime Future Summit, gmec – Global Maritime Environmental Congress, MS&D – International Conference & Expo for Maritime Security & Defence and Offshore Dialogue. Running alongside SMM, ALL ABOUT PORTS will launch as a new platform for integrated port solutions. The international conference and accompanying exhibition focus on port infrastructure, terminal technology and port logistics, bringing together port operators, technology providers and investors.

**Further information:** [SMM – Driving the Maritime Transition | 1–4 September 2026](#)

### **Supporters of SMM 2026**

Main sponsor: DNV

Supporters: VDR, VSM, VDMA, GMT, VDS, CLIA, and VDI

Conference partners: gmec: Seatrade Maritime News; MS&D: German Maritime Institute (DMI) & Mittler Report Verlag; Offshore Dialogue: Society for Maritime Technology (GMT); Maritime Future Summit: HANSA – International Maritime Journal; TradeWinds Shipowners Forum: TradeWinds

### **About ALL ABOUT PORTS**

ALL ABOUT PORTS is an international conference with an accompanying exhibition dedicated to the future of the port industry. The inaugural event will take place on 2–3 September 2026 at the CCH – Congress Center Hamburg and will be held in parallel with SMM – the world's leading maritime industry event. It positions itself as a new platform for integrated port solutions. The focus is on port infrastructure, terminal technology and port logistics, as well as key topics such as digitalisation, automation, sustainability and security. ALL ABOUT PORTS brings together international stakeholders from the port and logistics industry and fosters exchange on innovation and future-ready port locations.

**Further information:** [www.allaboutports.de](http://www.allaboutports.de)

### **Digital Press Kit**

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