



POSIDONIA SEA TOURISM FORUM 2017 PROBES GROWTH PROSPECTS



SEEKING NEW VISIONARY STRATEGIES FOR CRUISING AND YACHTING IN THE EAST MED

While the global cruise industry's outlook remains strong in 2017, local geopolitical tensions have impacted the East Med's performance as a sea tourism region. Industry stakeholders will come together at the 4th Posidonia Sea Tourism Forum this spring in Athens in an effort to reinvent Cruising in the East Mediterranean, so that the region can benefit from the present boom of the cruise industry.

Current demand for East Med cruises is in stark contrast to the positive Cruise Lines International Association's (CLIA) projections that estimate 25.3m cruisers in 2017, a 4.5% increase over the previous year. At the same time global capacity will increase with the addition of 26 new ocean, river and specialty vessels. Long-term estimates indicate the industry will add a further 97 new ships in less than ten years with an investment of nearly US\$53billion.

Posidonia Exhibitions, the organisers of this two-day event, believe that the carefully selected issues to be addressed during the conference could lead to solutions that would facilitate the region's recovery to the benefit of both cruise operators and local economies.

"Stakeholders of the East Med's and Black Sea's interdependent destinations must work together to reinvent the region's combined offering," said **Posidonia Exhibitions' Executive Director, Theodore Vokos**.

"In order to convince operators to redeploy more of their assets to the region and add new itineraries, we must develop a long-term vision based on mutually beneficial strategies. Strategies designed to create a cohesive, consistent and alluring product that will spur demand for the region and create new homeport destinations," he added.

This is exactly what representatives of the world's leading cruise lines will discuss at the biennial international conference and exhibition, taking place on **May 23-24 at Megaron Athens International Conference Centre**. Expert speakers and the region's stakeholders will address the challenges and debate possible strategies and solutions.

Focusing precisely on such solutions is the **Berth Allocation Workshop** that will deal with this important requirement high on CLIA's agenda. This is a must-attend workshop for port operators, as they will be able to learn how to design an optimal system that will suit their specific realities, thus improving their efficiency, profitability and demand for their port.

Destinations and ports not currently on major cruise line itineraries will also benefit from this forum, as their representatives can meet with cruise executives responsible for itinerary planning and gain from their vast experience with the world's marquee and emerging destinations. Cruise lines are always on the lookout for new destinations, such as the recent inclusion of Samos in Celestyal Cruises' itineraries showcases.

The recent completion of two high profile privatisations, COSCO's takeover of the Port of Piraeus and Fraport's of 14 regional airports, have altered the strategic importance of Greece as a cruise destination and gateway to the Central and East Mediterranean. Both companies have committed to infrastructure and services upgrades that will ultimately benefit cruise prospects in the region. In addition, thanks to Fraport's commitment to increase connectivity with key European tourism markets, certain peripheral ports will become possible homeporting options.

"Coupled with a parallel privatisation programme for strategic ports and marinas which is in advanced planning stages, it seems more than certain that the overall sea tourism product of Greece across cruising and yachting stands to reap significant long-term benefits if the right actions are taken," added Vokos.

But the Posidonia Sea Tourism Forum will be an enlarged event this year, thanks to its enhanced workshop and seminar programme.

As cruise sales are a rising segment of the business and offer high commission rates, a **special workshop on how to generate new business** is designed to draw the attention of travel agents. CLIA Europe will be involved in this project, as it will also participate at the Posidonia Forum to present its CLIA membership programme aiming to boost its membership in Greece. CLIA membership can offer many benefits to travel agents, as well as to suppliers and service providers.

The projected renaissance of Greece's sea tourism has also reignited the interest of the young generation in yachting, cruising and passenger shipping. **YES to Sea Tourism Forum** will address the opportunities available in these sectors and the skills needed to be successful in them. This will be achieved through an open dialogue between the forum delegates and the industry executives who will be on the Panel.

"YES aims to serve as a platform of open dialogue between young promising executives and the decision makers from our industries, connecting employers with prospective employees and giving them the opportunity to network, interact and create relationships that may prove highly rewarding," said **Danae Bezantakou, YES Forum founder**.

A main feature of the Posidonia Sea Tourism Forum will again be the enlarged exhibition space. The Exhibition will provide the ideal marketing platform for ports & destinations, hotels & resorts, airports, tourist service providers, technical support companies, sector publishers, new technologies, yacht managers & brokers, yacht interiors specialists and marinas to promote their business proposition and identify potential partners.

MESSAGE FROM MEDCRUISE



"Is the allure of cruising in the East Med being challenged by the sirens of China and South East Asia deployment?" The theme of the 4th Posidonia Sea Tourism Forum could not be more timing for the MedCruise family.

Cruise ports around the Med have been commendable in upgrading their infrastructures and practices standing ready to offer the best services to cruise calls and memorable experiences to their guests. At the same time cruise lines continue developing their deployment strategies, while trying to better understand what fits them best around the globe. Asia increasingly affects appearing in the strategies of cruise lines, both as a deployment region and a source market.

For MedCruise ports this is a challenge and an opportunity. We need to work together with cruise lines, destinations and other stakeholders, to identify the best ways to further create opportunities for people to cruise to the magic of the Med and its adjoining seas. We also have to work together to turn Asia into the source market of the future. We have to find together how best to communicate that once you decide to cruise, you should not forget to visit the Med.

The Posidonia Sea Tourism Forum has been a forum of great importance for the global cruise sector since its first edition. A two-day truly international industry event with focused dialogue, and one goal: to enhance cruising in the East Med and Black Sea region.

Its forthcoming 4th edition, to be held in Athens, Greece on 23 and 24 May 2017, provides an excellent opportunity for stimulating and breakthrough discussions. The MedCruise family, the biggest port community of the world, will be there to meet you and shape our cruise future together.



Thanos Pallis
Secretary General

EAST MED IS HEAVEN FOR CELESTYAL

In a further reaffirmation of its unwavering commitment to the East Med, **Celestyal Cruises**, a specialist in destination-centric cruising in the region, home-porting in Greece, has confirmed its bronze sponsorship status at Posidonia Sea Tourism Forum 2017. Celestyal is committed to expanding the Greek cruise market, to developing meticulously-crafted itineraries, to the economic development of the Eastern Mediterranean and to the preservation of its environment. In 2016 Celestyal Cruises hosted 117,000 passengers and made 660,000 visits to various Greek destinations, receiving the "Best Value for Money Cruise Line" award for the year from Cruise Critic UK.



POSIDONIA PROMOTES PIONEERING PROGRAMME

Eleven teams of young aspiring entrepreneurs participating in a business and sustainability education programme will present at the PSTF's **Bluegrowth Workshop** their updated business plans pertaining to the blue economy. These startups, specialising in shipping, sea tourism, fisheries, and the marine ecosystem, participate in an incubation programme, which enables them to create scalable businesses and eventually enter the market as change-agents towards a sustainable business model. The workshop, organised by **Aphoria**, a business incubation programme for startup companies operating in Greece, is open to all PSTF delegates and visitors.



PIRAEUS PORT AS THE CENTRE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN CRUISE EXPERIENCE PROMOTED AT PSTF 2017

As a silver sponsor of this year's Posidonia Sea Tourism Forum, the **Piraeus Port Authority PPA** will be promoting its Cruise Terminals as the **Centre of the Mediterranean Cruise Experience**. The port facilities are suitable to serve every ship size, the modern equipped Passenger Terminals and the high quality provided services, make Piraeus one of the most attractive cruise ports in the Mediterranean. The improvements in the current infrastructure, including the new Saint Nikolaos Cruise Pier, will allow PPA to increase its annual cruise passenger capacity and to accommodate more new generation cruise vessels, offering great travel experience. The further upgrade of the infrastructure and the services planned by PPA are designed to establish Piraeus as one of the top cruise European destinations.



VINTAGE VEHICLES AND WINE SERVED AT HELLENIC MOTOR MUSEUM

First time Posidonia Sea Tourism Forum participant and bronze sponsor the Hellenic Motor Museum is making an impressive debut at the leading Eastern Mediterranean cruising and yachting event as hosts of the prestigious Speakers' Dinner. Greece's first-of-its-kind museum can be found in the heart of Athens, in the uniquely designed building of the Capitol complex. Covering an area of 5,000 sqm across three levels, the museum houses automotive history spanning from the late 1800's to the end of the last century. Those hungry for rare and unique vintage vehicles can whet their appetites by simply gazing at classic and luxury brands such as AVION VOISIN, ADLER, PACKARD, FACEL VEGA, DELAGE, ISO, BENTLEY, ROLLS ROYCE, BUGATTI, ASTON MARTIN, BRISTOL, LAMBORGHINI, FERRARI, MASERATI and other historical models. The Hellenic Motor Museum presents an ideal shore excursion option for cruise passengers as it is ideally located a short drive away from Piraeus port.



AKTINA TRAVEL JOINS POSIDONIA FORUM AS BRONZE SPONSOR

Aktina Travel, the leading travel organisation in Greece, participates at this year's PSTF to further promote its services to the sea tourism and maritime industries. Aktina Travel is particularly active in the cruise market, proposing and designing individual or group incentive cruise trips to major corporate clients, but also sells cruises to the Greek market. Aktina specialises in transportation and accommodation of both crews and technical teams responsible for the maintenance and repairs in the general maritime and cruise fields. Aktina also operates the original Athens city sightseeing tour, on a hop on hop off basis, bringing international cruise travelers in contact with Greek culture.

