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WPCAP ports aligned in series of new climate change actions

The World Ports Climate Action Program (WPCAP) has made significant progress in its effort to combat climate change. A recent online global conference involving the CEO's of eleven aligned ports was concluded with a series of agreements in line with the ambition of the program to make strong improvement in addressing global warming and deliver on the call for clean air through concerted, cooperative actions.

WPCAP was initiated by the Port of Rotterdam Authority and launched in September 2018 at a global climate conference in San Francisco. Other ports that have joined the action oriented network are: Long Beach, Los Angeles, New York/New Jersey, Vancouver, Antwerp, Barcelona, Gothenburg, Hamburg, HAROPA - Port of Le Havre and Yokohama. Initially, a global cross-industry face-to-face conference was planned for June this year. Due to the COVID-19 situation, the set-up had to be changed into an online gathering with only port delegates.

Nevertheless, substantial headway was booked and decisions were made by the CEO's on proposals of five working groups that prepared over the last half year actions on topics as efficiency, power-to-ship, sustainable fuels, cargo handling equipment and policy.

Critical mass

Common thread in their work was the aspiration to form coalitions among ports on specific projects as well as involving shipping lines, terminals and energy providers as alignment across the value chain will have the most impact. Another recurring theme of WPCAP is the desire to take control over its own destiny instead of waiting until other institutions are introducing adjusted rules and regulations. Working together with leading international ports provides moreover a critical mass to realise change successfully.

The WPCAP CEO network adopted five agreements. These are the following:

- In terms of efficiency, observations are that ports, terminals and shipping are facing enormous challenges to reduce emissions whilst there is limited collaboration among them. Speed optimisation and enhanced planning on routing and turn-around time in ports is an important step, but requires that parties are joining efforts and sharing data. It now has been agreed that for this specific topic WPCAP support IMO Global Industry Alliance in a fact-based overview of emission reduction options, whilst taking the initiative to form a new coalition with IMO for developing a joint roadmap on reducing emissions in the ship-port interface.
- Power-to-ship has the clear potential to reduce emissions in the port as ships can switch off their own power generation and make use of, preferably, green energy infrastructure supplied by port organisations. In addition, this reduces noise and has a positive effect on air quality. Power-to-ship however starts to have real impact if numerous ports introduce this arrangement. Hence, not only ports, but also terminals, shipping lines, ship owners, grid owners and energy companies need to work together to facilitate a critical mass. After all, this will stimulate all parties in the network to invest in this equipment. WPCAP CEO's unanimously decided to develop three coalitions involving liquid bulk (tankers), containers and cruise. The working group concerned will come up with concrete proposals in three months and prepares investment plans by early 2021.

- The third agreement is on alternative fuels, another complex area as the fuel of the future in the shipping sector has not been crystallized yet. WPCAP has now agreed to facilitate the launch of pilot projects in 2021 on new sustainable low carbon marine fuels in their ports that will directly benefit deep-sea/ocean-going vessels. Lessons learned on the usage of LNG was highlighted as these could be used for the introduction of new low or zero emission fuels as well.
- Cargo handling equipment has the interest of ports as this topic could contribute to the overall aim of WPCAP, though there is a shortage of information and there are limited commercial products on the market available. The CEO's decided to intensify working relations with terminal operators in their ports in order to introduce equipment demonstration and build a database for information sharing. There also was a strong plea to increase involvement of terminal operators in WPCAP actions.
- The final commitment was made on the topic of policy. Many ports around the world are using policy instruments to stimulate emission reductions in the maritime industry, such as incentives, pricing policies and regulations. WPCAP concluded that increased coordination and further development of those efforts - within the strict limitations of competition law - could strengthen efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability of those instruments. Against that background, CEO's agreed on actions that will improve the impact of policy instruments that ports may choose to use, supporting both decarbonization of sea going vessels and cargo handling equipment.

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Baptiste MAURAND, CEO of HAROPA - Port of Le Havre: *“WPCAP allow us to cooperate more closely in order to tackle climate change and accelerate energy transition in the ports and beyond, this kind of initiative is clearly the way to meet our commitments of greening maritime transports and ports activities. Furthermore is a real pleasure to work with our colleague all over the world on the same goals: paving the way to zero emission port and maritime transport”.*

Jens MEIER, CEO of the Port of Hamburg, summarised the meeting at the end by saying he was pleased that WPCAP has not lost momentum due to the COVID-19 situation. He therefore proposed to increase the number of high level meeting to two per year. *“In order to keep the pressure on”.*

Allard CASTELEIN, CEO of the Port of Rotterdam Authority and who hosted the online conference, thanked all port delegated for their *“broad support, high energy to make a difference and the persistent aim in the port network to tackle important issues ourselves.”*

About HAROPA

HAROPA, the 5th largest port complex in Northern Europe, is a joint venture between the ports of Le Havre, Rouen and Paris. It is connected to every continent owing to a first-rate international shipping offer (linking around 700 ports worldwide). It serves a vast hinterland the centre of which is in the Seine valley and the Paris region forming the biggest French consumer market area. With around 10 Normandy and Paris area partner ports, HAROPA now forms in France a global transport and logistics system, capable of providing a comprehensive end-to-end service. HAROPA handles over 120 million tons of cargo by sea and waterway each year. HAROPA business represents 160,000 jobs.

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