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Players in the maritime economy in France gather at Euromaritime



The major names in the civil maritime economy gathered recently at Porte de Versailles in Paris, for the Euromaritime trade show. The first event of its kind attracted nearly 180 exhibitors from all over Europe.

Maritime transport, shipbuilding (excluding water sports and military), fishing, but also coastal development and marine renewable energy resources, amongst others, are all activities that make up the maritime economy. *“It is not a very well-known sector and yet it plays a significant part in the French and European economy. Ninety per*

cent of the goods in the world are transported by sea,” points out Philippe Fourrier, chief commissioner of the show.

The French maritime economy comprised some 305,000 jobs in November 2011, and generated turnover of €52 billion. These figures make France one of the world's leading maritime economies. And the civil players in this sector have been brought together in the French maritime cluster, chaired by Francis Vallat. Several political and national events have been held as a result, including the Assises de l'Économie de la Mer conference. But what was missing was an economic showcase with a business dimension. And so the idea of setting up the Euromaritime business show was born, and it was held in Paris at the beginning of February. *“Two aspects of this event make it original: it is the first business show entirely focused on the civil maritime economy and it is the only one to position itself at a European level,”* explains Philippe Fourrier. In fact, 3 to 5% of GDP in Europe comes from industries and services linked to the sea. Maritime GDP in Europe in 2011 was €495 million.

A strong French presence

Almost 180 exhibitors from all over Europe were in attendance at this first trade show, 80% of them French companies; they included big names such as DCNS, EDF En, Alstom and STX, as well as smaller businesses such as ECA EN.

Louis Dreyfus Armateurs was also among the guests. For its owner, Philippe Louis Dreyfus, the show was an opportunity to *“communicate the diversity of our activities more widely and especially our developments in the field of offshore and marine renewable energy resources”*.



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The Alstom Power group was also on hand to talk about marine renewable energy resources at a round table. *“At a time when France is getting ready to embark on development in its turn, Alstom has produced a turbine of the latest generation, Haliade 150, with a rated power of 6 MW, and is now moving into the most promising markets,”* according to Jérôme Péresse, president of this sector at Alstom.

Research and the business world

On the research side, the French Research Institute for Exploitation of the Sea (Ifremer) set out to showcase its full gamut of activities to industrialists. *“We wanted to explain how research could push forward the economy of the sea and enable it to boost its competitiveness,”* points out Pascale Pessey Martineau, director of scientific information at Ifremer.

On its stand at the show, this public body, whose remit is economic and commercial, gave the floor to scientists. They were able to provide professionals with information on Ifremer’s research and development activities, as much in the field of living resources (pearl farming, oyster farming) as in non-living resources (seabed exploration).

“We also have know-how in the area of engineering and in the field of marine services, with an oceanographic fleet dedicated to marine research,” explains the spokesman from Ifremer. *“These technological facilities may be of interest to industrialists, but they may not necessarily be aware that we have them.”* And this is the whole point of the show, in the course of which Ifremer was able to enter into discussions related to public-private partnerships. *“We are in a position to respond to maritime needs all over the world thanks to our small laboratories dispersed all over the country and overseas,”* explained the director.

Nearly 10,000 visitors attended this first Euromaritime show, held under the patronage of European commissioner Maria Damanaki. But they are already getting ready for the next event in 2015. *“The European Commission and the French government have highlighted the need for a maritime strategy and a maritime policy in order to produce sustainable growth and jobs,”* explains Philippe Fourrier. *“It’s not a trend that is about to stop”*.

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