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Corporate Communications

PRESS RELEASE

"MethaShip" - new fuel with potential

The MethaShip research project investigated whether methanol can be used as a fuel for passenger ships. The results have now been presented by the project consortium, consisting of the Flensburger Schiffbau-Gesellschaft, Lloyd's Register, MEYER WERFT and the associated partners Caterpillar, Helm AG and MAN Diesel & Turbo.

Papenburg/Hamburg, 29 May 2018 – Yesterday the MethaShip project consortium presented its results in Hamburg. The research project had been conducted under the auspices of the Research and Development Department at the MEYER WERFT in Papenburg, Germany. The project leader is Daniel Sahnen. The direct partners are the Flensburger Schiffbau-Gesellschaft and Lloyd's Register.

MethaShip is a national research project funded by the BMWi (Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy). It has brought together several partners from the fields of shipbuilding, classification, engine manufacturing and methanol production to investigate the potential of methanol as a fuel for cruise ships and RoRo passenger ferries. The project began in September 2014 and lasted 45 months.

The whole shipping sector is facing major challenges with ever stricter emission regulations for ships, paired with a growing environmental awareness in ship owners and passengers alike. The fuels and technologies used on ships must be capable of reducing emissions such as particulate matter, nitrogen oxide and sulphur. Furthermore, in the long term the fuel will have to come from renewable sources in order to meet the climate protection targets. This is the challenge tackled by the partners in the MethaShip project. The final meeting in Hamburg was attended by about 90 representatives and experts from politics, the maritime industry, associations and research institutions.

One central result of the project is that synthetic methanol in particular is a fuel with a future which offers the potential for implementing an ambitious maritime climate protection strategy. A few technical and financial details still need to be clarified until methanol can be used continuously in shipping. However, in the medium term a breakthrough could be possible with methanol as a fuel for all ships if success is achieved in implementing statutory framework conditions for the holistic evaluation of CO₂ emissions.

Methanol

(also known as methyl alcohol) is the simplest representative in the category of alcohols. It is therefore a short-chain hydrocarbon. It is a clear, water-soluble, biodegradable fluid. In contrast to other alternative fuels, methanol offers the crucial advantage of being very easy to handle, because it is fluid at room temperature, compared to LNG with its storage temperature of -162°C. The associated better storage and transport properties are the main reason for the growing interest in using methanol as a fuel for shipping.