

FLAGSHIP

NEWS FROM THE LIBERIAN REGISTRY

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Liberia sets all-time ship and tonnage records

The Liberian Registry celebrated the end of 2007 having achieved a major milestone in its history when its vessel count reached 2,665 and its aggregate gross tonnage peaked at 82,165,902. This comfortably surpasses the previous record of 2,617 ships and 81.5m gt, which was achieved in the period between 1975 and 1979.

Scott Bergeron, Chief Operating Officer of LISCR, says, "The Liberian Registry is approaching its sixty-year anniversary larger and stronger than at any point in its history. This major achievement is testament to the faith which owners and operators have in our commitment to safety and commercial excellence, the rapid responsive approach to customer service by our dedicated professional staff, and our use of technology to do the job better, faster and more accurately."

The Liberian Registry is one of the world's largest and most active

shipping registers, with a long-established track record of combining the highest standards for vessels and crews with the highest standards of responsive service to owners. Scott Bergeron says "The fact that the registry now has more ships and more tonnage on its books than at any time in its history, under any management, is testimony to the professionalism of the Liberian maritime programme.

"The growth we have experienced is across all markets. Liberia, for example, is the fastest-growing fleet in Greece and Germany, and has increased its Japanese-owned fleet by eighteen per cent in the past year.

"Numbers are not everything. But, in today's shipping industry, there is more pressure than ever before on owners and operators to comply with both the letter and the spirit of the law. Responsible operators must be seen to be contracting with like-minded, quality service providers. This has been a key factor in the Liberian

Registry's growth. An increasing number of shipowners have recognised Liberia's regulatory enforcement proficiency. The resulting operational efficiencies are simply unavailable from bureaucracy-laden flag states.

"The proof is in our worldwide performance. Flag state effectiveness is now closely monitored as part of a much tighter international shipping regulatory regime designed to improve safety, to protect the environment, and to save lives. You do not have to look too deeply into port state control figures, for example, to identify under-performing flags, or to realise that, in many instances, quality open registers outperform traditional national flags.

"The days of outdated thinking about open registries are over. Independent analytical reports such as the Round Table of international shipping association's Guidelines on Flag State Performance accurately judge registers on their performance. The emphasis is now on quality, safety, efficiency, environmental awareness and treatment of seafarers.

"The Liberian Registry is proud to have broken new records, and is confident that it will reach new highs, given the commitment it already has from key markets and in the newbuilding sector. And it is delighted that its continued growth goes alongside its consistent appearance as one of the world's best-performing flags as judged by recognised industry criteria."



Pictured is the 5,041 teu-capacity, Liberian-flag panamax containership "Maersk Drummond", which was built in 2006 by Hyundai Heavy Industries, South Korea

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Working towards a paperless world

Today's ship registry industry is a sophisticated, global business. Modern ship registries embrace new ideas and new technology in order to provide the highest levels of service, response and expertise demanded by today's shipowners and operators. And the Liberian Registry, as ever, is providing the global lead in this respect.

Headquartered in the US, the Liberian Registry operates full service centres of excellence in Japan, Germany, Greece and the UK. The regional offices are full time full service offices staffed by local professionals with a wealth of global marine industry expertise and experience in disciplines ranging from naval architecture, through ship finance, to marine operations.

Our offices and personnel are linked through LISCR's proprietary software, facilitating transparency in transactions, around the clock coverage, and – crucially – immediate response and follow-up. The registry is backed by a global support network, which includes

over 300 trained inspectors and auditors, providing expertise where and when owners need it.

The Registry's worldwide network is connected by – and has immediate access to – a range of sophisticated resources, the most recent of which is the LISCR Information System (LIS), an innovative, secure and efficient software product which plays a key role in achieving full integration of our regional offices with the register's headquarters in Virginia and the main registration office in New York.

All of our offices work in concert with the main vessel registration and mortgage recording centre in New York, and have direct access to the global database held in Virginia and New York. The fully trained staff are qualified to assist clients around the world with vessel registration, mortgage recording, corporate filing, seafarers' welfare, and any other issues that may arise. Additionally, there are designated ISPS/ISM and

documentation and certification specialists in selected offices.

The future of ship registration is faster and more responsive service globally. LISCR provides that promise of the future today.

LISCR continues to build auditor network

LIBERIA is rightly proud of the leading role it has taken in the international shipping industry in respect of ISM and ISPS audits. The Liberian Registry was the first to offer harmonised audits covering ISM and ISPS, with important cost and time savings for owners and operators, while maintaining the highest safety standards.

The key to Liberia's ability to offer such services is the global network of specially trained inspectors which it has developed, and which it continues to expand. Today, Liberia has more than 120 ISM/ISPS auditors around the world, providing truly international, real-time coverage for shipowners and operators.

The registry is holding a two-week training course in February at the Maritime Institute of Technology and Graduate Studies in Virginia. Upon completion of the course, over thirty new auditors will be added to the ranks of our exclusive professional global workforce. Moreover, during the two-week programme, the auditors will undergo a basic marine accident investigation course which includes working with port state control.

In order to pass the course, each auditor will have to complete a rigorous period of training, including a personal assessment, two written exams, and completion of a written accident report developed from the facts of an actual marine accident.

The Registry's trained and certified audit staff perform harmonised audits, combining ISPS, ISM SSAS and Annual Safety Inspections in a single visit, thereby saving owners and operators time and money. For more information, contact: audit@liscr.com

USCG cites Liberia's SEA system as certification model



Captain David Stalfort, Commander of the United States Coast Guard (USCG) National Maritime Centre, recently visited the Registry's headquarters in Virginia with his senior staffers in what the USCG billed as "a brief on the industry's best management practices for the processing of seafarers' documents". The visit included presentations on process controls, personnel training, and LISCR's web-based SEA system.

Following the visit, Stalfort wrote a note of thanks to the Registry "for a

most informative and collaborative visit of your 'State of the Art' centralised mariner's credential evaluation and production facility." Stalfort cited SEA as the model that the Coast Guard will use in developing its own programme, stating, "SEA system's full utilisation of the internet is at the forefront of global maritime credentialing." The Registry actively promotes the leveraging and sharing of technology to better serve the global maritime community.



Liberian crew commended for rescue operation

The master and crew of the Liberian-registered container vessel *San Clemente* have been commended by the Deputy Commissioner of Maritime Affairs, Republic of Liberia, for their professionalism in rescuing all nine fishermen - Cambodian and Laotian nationals - from a sinking fishing boat in the Gulf of Thailand in October last year.

On October 17, 2007, while the *San Clemente* was under way from Laem Chabang, Thailand to Ho-Chi-Minh-City, Saigon, the vessel's third mate reported to the master that he had sighted a fishing boat, at a distance of 3 to 4 nautical miles, which appeared to be sinking with people on board. The master of the *San Clemente* ordered the vessel to be diverted from its intended course and to make best course and speed towards the sinking fishing vessel to render assistance.

While making its approach, the *San Clemente* was skilfully manoeuvred to within a safe distance of the fishing



vessel to ensure the recovery of survivors. All nine survivors were successfully rescued and received safely on board the *San Clemente* in a rescue operation which lasted only

twenty minutes from the time the third mate first sighted the distressed fishermen. The fishing boat sank minutes after the last fisherman reached the pilot ladder of the *San Clemente*.

After the successful completion of the search and rescue operation the *San Clemente* resumed its voyage to Ho-Chi-Minh-City, where all nine fishermen were disembarked safely ashore.

This was the second rescue operation performed by the *San Clemente* within the space of a year. In January 2007, the vessel's crew also rescued four fishermen off the coast of Indonesia.

Margaret Ansumana, Deputy Commissioner of Maritime Affairs for Liberia, said, "The dedication and professional actions displayed by the master and crew of the *San Clemente* reflect great credit upon themselves, Reederei Claus Peter Offen (GmbH & Co) KG and the Liberian Registry, and are in keeping with the highest maritime traditions of saving lives at sea".

New appointments boost registry's global presence

Apostolos Tzounas (*below*) joined the Registry's office in Piraeus as Regional Operations Manager in October 2007. Apostolos was born in Greece and graduated in naval architecture and marine engineering from the National Technical University of Athens in 1991.



Prior to joining the Registry, Apostolos worked for fifteen years as a naval architect and surveyor in two Greek technical consultancy offices in Piraeus. His technical background is in ship design, stability studies, ship repair, newbuilding supervision for hull and

outfitting items, cost assessment of ship repair work, pre-purchase, condition and damage surveys, and Chinese and European shipyard representation.

Apostolos has been involved in many vessel conversions to Marpol and chemical code requirements, as well as in other structural and piping modifications. During the course of these assignments, he says, he came to recognise the importance of a high degree of co-operation between shipowners, classification societies and shipyards in order to achieve prompt plan approval and to facilitate the process of proper design construction procedures.

Meanwhile, David Friesem (*right*) joined LISCR in November 2007 as Manager of Maritime Security & Audit Programme Development. He brings to the job a skill set perfectly suited to the demands of the world's most innovative ship register.

Prior to joining our Virginia Office staff, David was Senior Aviation and Maritime Security Specialist and Project Manager for a consultancy which specialised in providing threat/vulnerability assessments and other security-related services to governments and international companies. Before that, he was vice-president of marketing and training with a global security company, where he was responsible for ship and port assessments related to ISPS and STCW compliance, and for training security officers and vessel crews in safety and security matters.



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On the register



Capt Sergios Nanos, who joined the Liberian Registry at the opening of its Piraeus office in 2000, is to retire at the end of June, following the Posidonia exhibition.

Capt Nanos sailed for thirty years as master on a variety of vessels, including tankers, bulkers and OBOS, before joining the Registry as a nautical inspector and manager of seafarer registration and documentation.

He says he has greatly enjoyed his time with the Registry and notes with satisfaction the increasingly close relationship which has developed in recent years between the Liberian Registry and the Greek shipping community. "It is a relationship built on trust," he says. "And increased trust has resulted in increased demand for Liberian services."

Michalis Pantazopoulos, General Manager of LISCRA Hellas in Piraeus, says, "I will certainly miss Capt Nanos when he retires in June. He has enjoyed a wonderful relationship with all of our Greek clientele. As one of the pioneer colleagues in the Piraeus office since 2000, with his gregarious, easy-going, friendly, and gentle manner, he has provided continuous and substantial assistance to our clients on seafarer and marine inspection issues and has contributed to the growth and success of LISCRA's Greek office and the Liberian Registry."

LISCRA COO Scott Bergeron says, "Capt Nanos has provided outstanding support in building the register's client base in Greece, while at the same time continuing to perform to the highest levels of professionalism. In a country with a great maritime tradition, Capt Nanos can be proud of his accomplishments in customer service, maritime expertise and the day-to-day communications that we have all come to rely on. Our success is only as good as our last response, and Capt Nanos embodies that philosophy. Capt Nanos has played an important role in the maintenance of the registry's excellent reputation for professionalism and responsiveness. We will all miss him and his gentle, friendly style".

Capt Nanos envisages that he will continue to work as an adviser in the shipping industry after his retirement. But he also intends to spend more time with his family, and on his vineyard outside Athens.

We wish him continuing health and happiness.

