

Dear Readers,



Shipping is like physics. At the 'quantum' level of haphazard news feeds, not a day goes by without an item about this-and-that forward-looking company investing in such-and-such energy efficiency measure (EEM) or even ordering a newbuild that's 'ready' to run on x-future fuel. But take an astronomical step back and the green part of shipping becomes something else entirely – a handful of pebbles swallowed by the endless sand of the broader seascape.

This is even more quizzical for the Baltic Sea region. Here, many a ferry or ro-ro company is doing its best to push the green needle – for the sake of the environment, regulations, bottom line, or a mix thereof. To showcase that championing spirit, this issue features an article on the world's largest battery-retrofit project to date (with a twist!). However, another read explains why ferry decarbonisation hinges on an adjustment of the EU Emissions Trading System. Yet, even at their boldest, these regional green knights remain ants beside the elephantine container, bulk, and tanker fleets that break oceanic waves under the banner of fossil-fuel smoke.

Drawing on a World Bank investigation into EEMs, one of this issue's articles makes the case that while shipping can (partly, at least) decarbonise itself, it probably won't. Much like our previous look at EU transport mega-projects, this piece also doesn't shy away from circulating a few unasked-for remarks in a column-style fashion. A reasonable stir-up of emotions, which may be – if you'll allow a thought – more refreshing than a certain sub-stack on LinkedIn that gets twittersy every time a new proposal for the IMO Net-Zero Framework surfaces (at this rate, by iteration 666 we may witness the opening of the Seven Seals, or the end of another Maya or Curonian or Ostrobothnian calendar, or the dawn of a new, spectacularly unremarkable day altogether...). Even without the millionth Middle East crisis, NZF would be deadlier than an unplugged lava lamp. Prove me wrong!

What's as rare as a green EEM deployed at scale? Rare earths. Continuing our exploration of modern EU woes, we dissect another report by the European Court of Auditors, this one on the bloc's faltering efforts to secure critical materials (for the energy transition, among others). To flip the coin, presumably, nobody in Europe would like a mine dug in their backyard. In other geographies, meanwhile, nobody cares about others' backyards...

Perhaps nuclear propulsion will shift the paradigm. Another piece digs into a joint research by Lloyd's Register and LucidCatalyst into 'atomic' container ships – this one with engineering rigour that has the ambition to take that nuclear speculation right onto the drawing board – and then shipyards and commercial shipping, the model of which can fundamentally change if you need to replace your fuel cartridge every five to seven years only. That's boldness with extra seasoning!

This spring issue also includes a decade-in-review of the LNG-as-marine-fuel market (now entering its bio-phase en route to e-methane) and about adaptive, mobile multi-sensor platforms for enhanced security and resilience of maritime infrastructure – because we no longer live in the boring times when ports and ships were 99.9% preoccupied with 'merely' handling cargo and passengers. Wishing you a springy read!

Przemysław Myszkowski



Wreck on the beach Nordstränden by Martinus Rorbye, photo: Artvee

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