



What's in a name change?

Matthias Mroß, Managing Partner Global Renewables Shipbrokers GmbH, tells PES about the current challenges facing the shipping industry. He also explains the GRS name change and their expansion in to other business areas.

PES: Welcome back to PES Wind magazine. Thanks for talking with us. Would you like to begin by explaining a little about the background of your organisation and how you currently serve the offshore wind industry?

Matthias Mroß: GRS was established as a pure ship broker, offering the most suitable tonnage needed for specific client requirements at competitive prices from ship-owners. Over this time it has become more and more necessary to respond to the needs of our clients, whether charterers or ship owners, with appropriate brokerage services. Firstly the sales and purchase

agreements and thereafter followed by the brokerage of equipment in connection with particular vessels and last but not least adding a service to the vessel and the equipment, resulting in a tailor made "all around carefree pack". Clients define a project and we provide tailor made solutions for them. Thus providing a highly specialised service resulting in cost savings needed in the entire industry.

PES: Since our last interview your company has changed its name to Global Renewables Shipbrokers, what prompted this and do you think it has made a difference?



Matthias Mroß

MM: Some of our clients were surprised that we also do business outside Germany, which we have always done and which is absolutely normal for the shipping industry. With the opening of our site office in Aberdeen, UK, we thought it was time to reflect this also in our company name, without losing the well-known abbreviation GRS. We are globally active – all around Europe, Mid and Far East, India and the Americas.

PES: What new developments have there been since our last interview?

MM: Certainly our growth has continued and beyond our normal business we provide further services for our clients, such as tailor made reports on the market, supported by our huge data base as well as our forecast tool. Due to our profound newbuilding and S&P deals, as well as our charter rates review we provide vessel valuation certificates and support our clients with tender reviews and preparations. We still support our owners in receiving the Equivalence Certificate and we provide various consultations to our clients.

PES: Has there been a big take up on the GRS shared run? What sort of savings are clients making?

MM: Yes as an independent broker house we have consolidated the Cargo Run

business considerably with our partners. We did over 50 runs last year and on most runs there was more than one client participating. Those team runs resulted in considerable savings of up to 40% for each client. However it depends on the timing and the area of operation. Therefore on our website we have added the upcoming runs, which are permanently updated, so everybody interested can “jump – on” an existing run. Or just get straight in contact with us for best offers for an individual run, including a one stop shop service for the client.

PES: Why is it important to have local GRS offices? How are you developing this and what is the client response to this initiative?

MM: We ensure our level of quality by our specialised brokers in each area: vessels, equipment and services. So when you call us, you will be put through to our specialist for you particular enquiry. However we also see the need for a personalised face to face contact with the support team within GRS. Therefore we opened up local site offices to be physically closer to the client. So far this initiative has been positively received.

PES: Geographically speaking, where are the key markets for GRS?

MM: Simply said, everywhere where renewables, such as offshore wind, are,

Certainly by far the strongest market is northern Europe, followed by the Far East, and slowly, the Americas. Outside of renewables, which are our main focus, we have been active worldwide.

PES: The change of name suggests expansion into other markets, which areas are you targeting?

MM: Yes that’s right; it suggests our expansion into other regions, but not into other industry markets. We have already done this with our Aberdeen Office and out of Hamburg internationally as far as the Far East. Our main focus is still northern Europe as here the renewables are the strongest, followed by Far East. USA with the Jones Act it is very difficult for all service providers.

PES: How important is your Offshore Market research to your clients?

MM: We see a strong demand for our research studies of companies who either diversify their core business within renewables, or who intend to enter this industry. Our studies give them a broad but very detailed insight into the industry. This is also the reason for the interest of the owners, the largest group of our research clients, who intend to extend their fleet or equipment. They request tailor made studies for in order to make informed decisions about investment.





PES: Which aspect of the offshore wind industry provides the most satisfaction for you right now?

MM: There are several aspects. Fundamentally we are looking forward to the market maturing. Meaning we see that logistic concepts, best practice and overall work flows have developed so far to enable the industry to save costs by a clear division of work and labour. In the past, many clients handled various tasks in-house, which in fact were outside their core business. You might wonder which commercial benefit and what professionalism lies in such an approach? None, or better to the contrary it has been waste of time and money (and still sometimes is). The only benefit we could see is gaining experience at quite some cost. This broad approach luckily is turning slowly into normal business practice as seen in any other offshore or shipping industry. All our clients save time and money by vessel chartering through using us because this is our core competency which we do on a daily basis. Resulting in economy of scale compared to even large setups chartering substantial numbers of vessels. A look into oil & gas and any other shipping sector might be an eye opener to wind offshore and to see how an industry is successful due to the division of work.

PES: And conversely, what presents you with the biggest challenges?

MM: Political instability in general. All our governments need to see that a healthy and vital industry can only grow and mature



when there are reliable long term conditions in place. We have seen political adjustments on nearly a yearly basis, disrupting the industry over and over again, with some dramatic impacts. The political aim should create a framework optimised for – in particular – smaller and mid-sized companies. Larger entities will also benefit from such a framework, because they can rely on a healthy network of highly specialised companies enabling them to operate with the smaller/mid-sized companies on a cost competitive basis.

PES: What are your thoughts about prospects for 2016 with regard to your organisation, and the wind industry in general?

MM: 2016 is progressing slowly, later in the

year we feel the market will pick up again. We have seen far less fixtures throughout the market in nearly every segment of vessels, in particular CTVs are hit hard. Many owners have a substantial part of their fleet idle. However at a closer look some sub segments are still in short. the low rates coming across from the oil & gas market are good for the charterers and also applies to some vessel sectors in offshore wind. Several oil & gas owners are only now starting to consider the offshore wind market even with new buildings. One must be clear here that the volume of offshore wind will never compensate for the dramatic decreases of oil & gas in the short term. ■

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