

MEDCRUISE NEWS

BRINGING THE MED TOGETHER

MedCruise meets in Constantza

The authorities and business communities of Constantza and Romania welcomed the Association of Mediterranean Cruise Ports' (MedCruise) for the 36th General Assembly held at the Hotel Vega, Mamaia from June 2nd to June 4th.

The event, hosted by National Company Maritime Port Administration SA Constantza, welcomed over 100 delegates representing MedCruise ports,

MedCruise membership has grown to 60 representing over 80 ports

Whilst MedCruise delegates held behind closed-doors meeting the cruise line executives and press went on a site inspection of Port of Constantza's facilities followed by a visit of the city of Constantza, organised by associate member, Intercruises.

A private round table between the ports and cruise lines took place in the afternoon to strengthen the dialogue between the destinations, tour operators and lines.

On the last day of the assembly Mediterranean and Black Sea cruising came under the spotlight (see Page 3).

During the event, participants had a chance to tour Constantza port and city, plus pay a visit to Tulcea and explore the Danube Delta with its abundance of bird life, hosted by Navlomar Maritime and Intercruises. Before proceeding to Bucharest international airport for flights home some delegates took a tour of the People's Parliament, the second largest administrative building in the world after the Pentagon, with over 1,100 rooms.



L-R: Giovanni Spadoni, president of MedCruise, Sorin Munteanu, secretary of state Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism, and Andreea Nistor, commercial manager of host port Constantza, at the opening ceremony.

several associate members, invited cruise line executives and local and international media.

Giovanni Spadoni, president of MedCruise, opened the event by thanking Andreea Nistor commercial manager of host port Constantza, Sorin Munteanu, secretary of state Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism, and Corina Martin, Romanian Riviera and Danube Delta Tourism for their support and hospitality.

He announced MedCruise membership had grown to 60, representing over 80 ports, including four new members: Bourgas (Bulgaria); Lisbon (Portugal); Marseille (France) and North Sardinian ports of Olbia, Golfo Aranci and Porto Torres (Italy). Associate membership has risen too to 23 with Select Black Sea (Odessa), Karpaten Turizm (Constantza) and Cemar (Genoa) officially welcomed at the GA. Detailed information all new member ports will appear in the September MedCruise News.

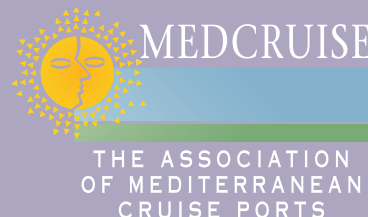


Over 100 participants from the Mediterranean Sea and surrounding areas attended the 36th General Assembly in Constantza, Romania.

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Cruise lines find GA participation invaluable

Invited cruise line executives attending the MedCruise GA found the opportunity to meet with member ports both formally and socially, and inspect Constantza port an invaluable experience, as MedCruise News finds out.

‘I am very satisfied with the way in which our family continues to grow bigger, the co-operation amongst members and the way in which we are all tackling issues with direct dialogue to try and improve on both sides,’ said Costa Cruises’ Elisabetta de Nardo. Costa will operate 324 Med cruises in 2010 using 30 home ports, rising to 370 next year and 2,500 calls in the extended Med basin,’ she said.



De Nardo - dialogue important

For first-time attendee Maurice Kennedy of Thomson Cruises (below) it was a great opportunity to see Constantza itself. ‘I have never been to Constantza although it is a port we have been visiting regularly in the seven years that Thomson has been sailing in the Black Sea so it was a great chance to see it first-hand. When I look at Thomson’s calls in the Med and then overlay the MedCruise member’s map I realised there are only about a dozen that we have never called, so this is a great forum to hear about these.’



Louis Cruises’ Charis Papacharalambos (above left) spoke of his company’s port-intensive operations in the region. ‘We operate mid-sized vessels visiting more than 100 Med ports so any chance to meet with ports, particularly new ones, and to also discuss new shore experiences helps us to improve our offering and create exciting itineraries.’



Roberto Perocchio, Juan Madrid and John Tercek

‘The Med continues to grow in importance for Royal Caribbean as we bring our bigger ships here,’ noted John Tercek. Fourteen of the group’s ships will sail in the basin in summer 2010, jumping to 17 next year. He found attending the GA very stimulating: ‘It enabled the ports to focus on what the real operational issues are and to hear from the cruise lines their needs, and concerns in a business-like fashion as well as in social surroundings.’

Attending the GA provided Princess Cruises’ Rob Roberts (pictured below with Constantza delegates) an opportunity to give ports feedback on his company’s passenger surveys. ‘It also gave me the chance to hear about new infrastructure developments which is so important for our future itinerary planning. The B2B meetings were of particular value.’



Cruise line executives had a chance to visit Constantza Port, one of Europe’s largest and leading multipurpose facilities which has over 150 cargo berths. Constantza Port’s passenger terminal representative, Teodor Patrichi (below right) showed them around the port’s dedicated cruise terminal, served by a 300mtr long quay. MSC Cruises’ head of planning, Capt Luigi Pastena (left), said, ‘We are operating 11-day cruises to the Black Sea from Genoa and Venice and currently call only in Yalta and Odessa but may offer Romania as a stopover in the future.’



Black Sea Forum highlights growth and challenges

Eight Black Sea ports are members of MedCruise, including the newly signed up Bulgarian port of Bourgas. The region was the subject of a forum at the MedCruise General Assembly in Constantza.

According to Sochi Ports' David Stupelman (pictured below), MedCruise board director for the Black Sea, 'five years ago there was only one Black Sea port in the association, now we have eight and hope in time to also add Varna and Novorossiysk.'

He added, 'with the lines deploying more and larger ships in the region many ports are studying their cruise facilities, services and shorex to see how they can improve their offering to the cruise market.'



His own port, Sochi, is an example where ongoing works include new cruise berths and terminal all on target to be ready in 2014 when the Russian resort hosts the Winter Olympics. Sevastopol and Bourgas are planning new cruise facilities too, he added.



Princess Cruises' Rob Roberts told delegates, 'whilst ports such as Yalta and Odessa score high in our passenger surveys for satisfaction and appeal, port fees in the Black Sea tend to be higher on average than in the Med.' Constantza Port's commercial manager Andreaa Nistor announced it will cut passenger head taxes from €5 to €2.5 whilst Odessa, the most popular port with 150 ocean and river cruise ships expected this year, recently implemented three initiatives to cut port dues, informed Yuriy Vaskov, first deputy general director of Odessa Sea Commercial Port.

The issue of sourcing passengers from countries surrounding the Black Sea was highlighted by Tura Turizm's Erkunt Oner who feels this would help to grow regional cruise business.

All Costa Group (Costa, AIDA and Iberocruceros) brands will sail in the Black Sea in 2011 but Costa Cruises' Elisabetta de Nardo

said 'we are not yet ready to start major sourcing locally' although she did not discount it for the future.

MSC Cruises' Capt Luigi Pastena noted the restriction of passengers ships over 300mtr long from transitting through the Bosphorus currently curtails MSC from taking its largest 333mtr long Fantasia-class ships into the Black Sea and he called on the local authorities to lift this restriction.

Royal Caribbean's John Tercek suggested ports think harder and more imaginatively about the shoreside offering. 'Ask yourselves what would appeal to international visitors arriving at your port for the first time.'

Looking at emerging ports with potential, Sergey Pryadko (above left), director of Crimea-based shorex provider Select Black Sea, highlighted the historic cities of Kerch and Evpatoriya in Ukraine: 'Both are listed as Eternal Cities by UNESCO and offer history dating back over 2,600 years.'



L-R: Odessa's Yuriy Vaskov and Oleg Fetisenko



Juan Madrid, former MedCruise president 2002-2005 is retiring from the Port of Barcelona this June after a long and illustrious career in the shipping sector lasting more than 40 years. He played an important role in shaping both MedCruise and his own port's cruise ambitions and was honoured by MedCruise for his achievements (pictured here with Giovanni Spadoni) during the Constantza GA.

Andreaa Nistor, commercial manager Constantza Port is presented with a gift from MedCruise by Giovanni Spadoni for the successful hosting of the 36th General Assembly during the Gala Dinner sponsored by Constantza County Council and Romanian Riviera Danube Delta Tourism Promotion Board.



Participants enjoyed an evening of Romanian traditional food, dancing and singing at Crama Murfatlar Restaurant, Neptun near to Constantza.

MedCruise...at Cruise Shipping Miami 2010



MedCruise president Giovanni Spadoni pictured with Bill Gibbons PSA director (right) and Nigel Lingard, Marketing director Fred Olsen Cruise Lines (left) at a reception hosted by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's consul general, Kevin McGurgan, in celebration of the inaugural UK Pavilion at Cruise Shipping Miami 2010. The evening will be co-hosted by cruiseBritain, The Passenger Shipping Association and VisitBritain.



Pictured at the MedCruise booth are L-R: Holland America Lines itinerary planners Simon Douwes and Timothy Littley (who has since joined Seabourn Cruise Lines) together with MedCruise secretary-general Jose Campos and Carlos Buqueras, director of Port Everglades Business Development & Cruise marketing division.



Since its launch in 2007, the French Riviera Cruise Club has grown to 50 members comprising local tourist offices, shipping and shore agents, pilots, restaurants, hotels and shops from: Cannes, Nice, Villefranche, Antibes and Golfe-Juan.

Amongst priorities for this year are to promote the latter two new cruise destinations, to grow the membership and to welcome delegates, speakers, exhibitors, and visitors to Seatrade Med 2010 taking place in Cannes, November 30 to December 2, - hosted for the first time in France.

Pictured at Miami (L to R): Anne-Sophie Peyran, marketing manager for French Riveira Ports, Catherine Vouillon, deputy mayor City of Cannes and Celine Turpin, manager Cannes Tourism office.

...and at Seatrade's Middle East Cruise Forum in Bahrain - Laurent of Arabia

MedCruise past president Laurent Monsaingeon (pictured 2nd from right) was invited by Seatrade to speak at the recent Middle East Cruise Forum which took place in Bahrain in May. Attended by over 150 delegates from around the Middle East, the French Riviera Ports executive gave an overview of how to set up and organise a successful regional ports association. He suggested a handful of ports take the initiative by establishing a working group to create a framework for an association in which all stakeholders active in the cruise sector join together to get a better understanding of what the challenges are. 'Exchanging knowledge, establishing common practices and standards and promoting the region to the cruise lines is important for growth,' he remarked..





La Spezia's new waterfront development

La Spezia has unveiled plans for a major waterfront redevelopment which will include a new cruise ship terminal. Covering an area of 330,000sq mtr, and a total investment of around €250m, the master plan includes the building of a triangular-shaped island allowing simultaneous handling of two cruise ships.

Two berths, 390mtr and 280mtr in length, will enable the Italian port to handle any ship currently sailing in the Med, says Lorenzo Forcieri, president of La Spezia Port Authority.

Ravenna ready to roll

Ravenna is gearing up for the inauguration of the first phase of a major new cruise facility. The first two berths will be ready in July and it will be fully operative in 2011.

Fifteen minutes from the centre of Ravenna, the port will comprise four berths with a main wharf of 300mtr and 9.5mtr draft, flanked by luxury waterfront developments and picturesque beaches.

Bookings for 2011 are already significant for the new facility — more than 75,000 cruise passengers are due in

Bookings for 2011 are already significant for the new facility

the first operative year — including calls from Seabourn, Holland America, P&O, Hapag-Lloyd and Pullmantur as well as MSC Magnifica and RCI's Brilliance of the Seas, the two largest ships scheduled to call.

Ravenna Passenger Terminal, a consortium of private companies which includes Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd, Venezia Terminal Passeggeri, Bologna Airport and tour operator/port agent Bassani, has been awarded the concession to manage the new cruise facility at Porto Corsini.

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Toulon welcomes Royal Caribbean duo



Royal Caribbean's Independence of the Seas and Adventure of the Seas made inaugural calls at Toulon's Le Mole berth in May. 339mtr long Independence is not scheduled to call again this summer however Adventure will stop over another seven times this season.

The Var Provence port is expecting 47 RCCL ships this year.

In total, 115 cruise ships will call bringing some 250,000 passengers and 100,000 crew this year representing growth of 57% and 110% respectively compared to 2009.

Toulon-La Seyne is the lead port of the Var-Provence network: a group of ten ports along the French Med coast, offering access to Provence and the French Riviera.

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In addition to the cruise facilities, the project includes a new marina, commercial and residential space with hotels and conference facilities, a sports centre and recreational areas.

The new cruise terminal will be the main attraction of the new waterfront, and berth facilities will offer cold ironing. The piers will be easily accessible to the city both by foot and bus.

Work is expected to begin in 2011 and completion is scheduled for spring 2014. The berths should be operational by 2013 with the terminal to follow one year later.

Currently La Spezia has around 100,000 cruise passengers annually with most ships anchoring in the bay and tendering passengers to the shore. The city is very close to Cinque Terre, reachable by sea as well as train. A train station will be built on the waterfront, next to the cruise terminal, providing easy access to the popular tourist destination. In addition Pisa, Florence, Lucca and Parma are all reachable in a day.

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La Goulette's Village Harbour - a first in the Med

Tunisia's La Goulette has opened a new tourist village built inside the port's perimeter. Covering an area of 6,500sq mtr, the Goulette Village Harbour resembles a medina with Tunisian architectural styling and comprises 100 shops selling local handicrafts, clothing, watches and jewellery. The facility also

includes an a la carte fish restaurant, cafes and juice bar plus hammam, health and beauty shops.

The village is managed by Goulette Shipping Cruise (GSC), which has been granted a concession by the Tunisian Ports Authority to manage all cruise activity at the port, and serviced by two new cruise

berths offering a total length of 657mtr and up to 10mtr draft.

Each berth has a new terminal for passport control and there is a bus parking area for 150 vehicles close by.

The facility is the first of its kind in the Mediterranean and will give passengers a chance to sample the essential attractions of Tunisia during a transit stop. Passengers will likely spend time in the village on their way to and from the ships having undertaken shore excursions into Tunis city, including Carthage, a popular draw.

Declared a national monument, the town of Carthage is awash with remains from of the days when it was ruled by the Romans and then the Phoenicians. The Romans returned to Carthage again making it the administrative capital for Africa. The Roman theatre is still used today for performances.

795,000 passengers are expected to call at La Goulette this year.

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L-R La Goulette port director Hamdi Fehri, Goulette Shipping Cruise's assistant general manager Mustapha Jabeur and managing director Belhassen Ben Tanfous

Costa Brava cornucopia

The port of Palamós (Ports de la Generalitat) in collaboration with the Costa Brava Tourist Board, the Council of Palamós and the Chamber of Commerce from Palamós organized a press familiarisation trip in May to showcase Palamos' cruise facilities and range of shore excursions on offer in the Catalan town and surrounding Costa Brava area. This visit was included in the action plan agreed by the four entities mentioned above for 2010. The partnership's aim is to promote cruise activity in the Costa Brava as a destination.

During their stay the journalists had the chance to see port operations during a transit call, as well as, experience being a passenger

participating in a number of the tours available for cruise guests visiting the Costa Brava. They enjoyed visiting the Dalí Theatre-Museum in Figueres, to admire all the surrealist paintings and sculptures as well as the Surrealist's jewellery collection. Moreover, in Cadaqués, where Salvador Dalí lived for part of his life, they experienced the landscape that inspired his works and they learned more about his life talking with local people, whilst tasting delicious fresh fish and rockfish rice. They then learnt about Escalivada, a typical Catalan dish. Their tour finished with a culinary experience when they learnt how to cook the traditional dish right in the heart of Palamós!

Due to the Costa Brava's appeal as a destination and the port's cruise facilities, 38 cruise ships are expected to call at Palamós in 2010 bringing 36,000 passengers in total.

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Star Flyer's hoists its new look Med programme 2011-12



Star Clippers is adding six new itineraries featuring 10 maiden port calls to Star Flyer's 2011-12 Mediterranean sailing season.

All three of the fleet's ships will continue to sail the Mediterranean in the summer, on cruises of five to 12 days that cover the entire region from the French Riviera to Turkey.

Star Flyer's new seven-night cruises between Athens and Istanbul sail from June to August and, with the exception of Mykonos and Patmos, Greece, and Dikili, Turkey, all the ports on the two itineraries are new.

In June and August, the ship will sail seven-night itineraries between Malta's Valletta and Monte Carlo, Athens and Malta and round-trip from Monte Carlo.

Star Flyer also continues round-trip Monte Carlo cruises along the French and Italian rivieras. This itinerary can be combined with an Athens departure for a 'Grand Voyage.'

Star Flyer is 115mtr long and carries 170 guests. All Star Clippers three sailing vessels will be in the Med this summer.

Crystal goes for eco-adventures

This summer, Crystal Cruises is offering several shorex highlighting Southern Europe's environmental treasures and natural wonders in its new Crystal Eco-Adventures tours onboard Crystal Serenity.

'With increasing consciousness of and sensitivity to the environment, travel-savvy guests are seeking more opportunities to become aware of and intimately enjoy the natural beauty of a destination,' says John Stoll, vice president, land operations.

Among the eco-adventures are:

- * Horseback Riding at Montseny National Park – (Barcelona, Spain) Ride through this UNESCO declared Biosphere Reserve;

- * L'Albufera Nature Reserve – (Valencia, Spain) Protected by many European environmental organizations, the reserve is a habitat for thousands of aquatic birds; and

In addition to these protected environmental attractions, many European Crystal Adventures ashore allow guests to explore the natural beauty of the destinations in a variety of ways, from mountain biking in Greece to paragliding in Spain and scuba diving off the coast of Turkey.

In 2010, Crystal Serenity sails 19 voyages in the Mediterranean, Black Sea and Canary Islands ranging from seven to 12 days. In March, Crystal Serenity was awarded the Venice Blue Flag environmental award for its earth-friendly practices in the Adriatic port.

Ponant's Le Boreal debuts

Compagnie du Ponant's first newbuild, Le Boréal, entered service in May with two 'Secrets of the Adriatic' itineraries, sailing to and from Venice along the Dalmatian Coast stopping at eight ports and islands in Croatia and Montenegro.

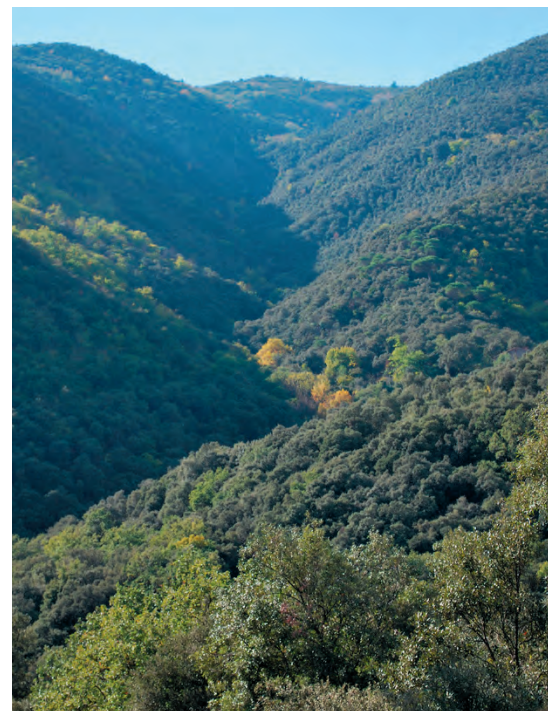
In June, 'Cruising to the Rhythms of Jazz



and Gospel' takes the ship around Italy from Venice to Nice, whilst the Nice-Honfleur cruise has a wellness theme; passengers can practice yoga and Pilates while visiting ports in France, Spain and Portugal.

The ship heads to the Baltic before returning to the Mediterranean in August with three Greek Islands and Turkey itineraries and two cruises to the Black Sea and then makes its way from the Adriatic to the Western Mediterranean at the end of October.

The 10,700gt ship, like sister L'Austral, to be delivered in April 2011, was designed by Nantes-based Stirling Design International and interior architect Jean-Philippe Nuel. It measures 142mtr with a beam of 20mtr and offers 132 outside cabins, 94% with verandas.



Montseny National Park near Barcelona

MEDCRUISE NEWS

BRINGING THE MED TOGETHER

P&O to winter cruise in the Med



For the first time, P&O Cruises' family-friendly ship Oceana will offer cruises from Southampton throughout the winter (October 2010 to April 2011), including the Mediterranean.

Also new next year fly-cruise holidays to the Mediterranean on new small ship Adonia joining the fleet in May 2011. In October, Adonia will reposition to the Mediterranean and offer six open-jaw Central and Eastern Mediterranean fly-cruises, departing from Savona, Athens, Trieste and Naples. Itinerary highlights include a Christmas and New Year cruise to the Holy Land.

P&O Cruises managing director Carol

Marlow said: 'The introduction of Mediterranean fly-cruising is an exciting step forward for P&O Cruises, and one that we know will make many of our existing passengers very happy. We listen to our customers and always try to give them what they want.'

'At the same time, we hope this will attract new customers who have previously chosen a holiday in a Mediterranean resort.'

New MedCruise ports of call featured in the 2011/12 brochure are Koper, Slovenia (Adonia, Oriana), and Zadar, Croatia (Adonia). P&O will also return to Trieste after a few years' absence with Adonia.



Volterra chef offers taste of Tuscany

Wind Surf will offer passengers the opportunity to learn about Tuscan cooking from Volterra chef Don Curtiss and Michelle Quisenberry on the September 5 Rome to Venice voyage.

The duo own Volterra which is located in Seattle and named after the Tuscan hilltop where the couple married. During the cruise the couple will discuss Tuscan cooking in a lecture and will give a cooking demonstration.

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