



EURONAV: A UNIQUE APPROACH

SeaTalk had an interview with Rudi Vander Eyken, head IT and Innovation at tanker shipping company Euronav, a company that he describes as “young, dynamic and fast-growing”.

Rudi has been working in the maritime transport industry for 36 years, 25 of which in IT and innovation. He has now been working at Euronav for 7 years and talks enthusiastically about the innovative technologies the shipping company uses to tackle various problems in shipping: “Some years ago, Euronav adopted innovation and digital transformation as an integral part of its strategy and vision. It’s now in our DNA.” The company mainly invests in technologies that provide sufficient Return on Investment, but also has a limited cooperation with start-up and scale-up companies that engage in research on Proof of Concept of new technologies.

Euronav concentrates on three main challenges it wants to tackle with new technologies. The first of these, as Rudi explains, is crew safety and crew welfare. “Especially thinking back on the whole COVID-saga, guaranteeing the welfare of our crews is one of Euronav’s most important missions,” says Rudi.

He mentions drone technology as a useful tool: “We are exploring the possibilities of deploying drones in tank inspections, so crews can perform this kind of task more safely.” Euronav is engaging in this project in collaboration with DNV. “We are now testing the use of drones in gas-free tanks, but the objective is to be able to use them in non-gas-free tanks in the future. It’s not easy to obtain ATEX certification and make a drone nonflammable, so it can safely take samples in a non-ventilated tank. In this project, Euronav is making its vessels available in a dry dock to carry out tests.”

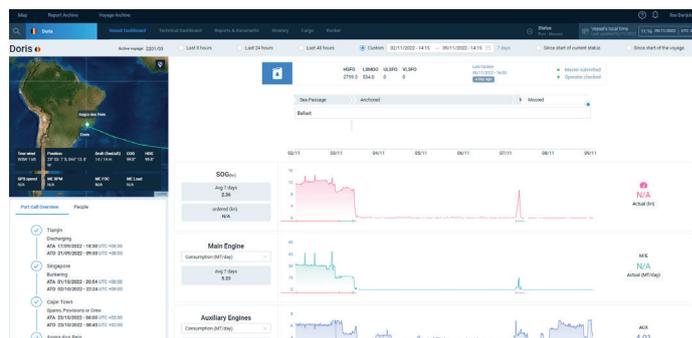
In addition, Euronav aims to ‘de-carbonise’ by closely monitoring the performance, consumption and emissions of its fleet. Reducing CO₂-emissions in shipping, otherwise known as ‘green shipping’, constitutes an important contribution to meeting climate goals.

Euronav’s third objective is the reduction of costs through digital innovation, in which the mapping of fleet performance is crucial.

The latter two objectives are closely related in their technical implementation, as collecting, visualising and analysing fleet performance happens on a single platform, called FAST.

(Fleet Automatic Statistics and Tracking). “Here, we bring the data of all ships together in a transparent platform, which can be consulted both on board the ships and in the offices,” Rudi explains.

FAST allows for easy monitoring of performance and fuel consumption of all ships, and following that, deciding what actions for improvement can be implemented. “You can perform operational as well as





“Combining all the measurements on the entire fleet and the actions we perform on it, allows us to apply data-driven decision-making.”

technical actions. It's important to measure these actions, so we know their impact on the vessel's performance. So, we come full circle and based on all these measurements we can apply data-driven decision-making. Which is not only useful for lowering fuel consumption of the fleet, it also makes maintenance easier and cheaper. Early detection of technical component degradation ensures timely scheduling and performing of maintenance, which in turn helps to avoid possible defects and unforeseen costs.

FAST is the basis for numerous technical improvements. Among other things, this platform enables the implementation of 'Voyage Optimization' and 'Port Call Optimization'. Many shipping companies are working on similar solutions. Euronav chose to develop its own independent platform, assuring a bigger freedom of development," Rudi adds.

It's obvious why people at Euronav are enthusiastic when talking of digitalisation and technical innovation in shipping. The wide range of applications of a data collection and analysis platform such as FAST offers many possibilities. It gives green shipping a tremendous boost and makes fleet maintenance more efficient. On top of that, welfare and safety of Euronav's crews improve considerably thanks to these innovative techniques. One can only applaud such commitments.

ABOUT EURONAV:

Euronav is the world's largest independent listed tanker shipping company, active in maritime crude oil transport and storage. The company was founded in Belgium, has its headquarters in Antwerp and offices throughout Europe and Asia. Worldwide, Euronav employs about 200 permanent staff ashore, and around 3200 people as crew on vessels. The company evolved from a family company with 17 ships to a strong international player, listed in Euronext Brussels and on NYSE under the acronym 'EURN'.
www.euronav.com



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