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MAN Energy Solutions Pushes for Emissions Reduction in Shipping Industry

New study designates current decade as crucial for success of maritime energy transition

Do we need to ban fossil fuels in international shipping in the future? According to the results of the #AHOY2050 future study – drafted by MAN Energy Solutions and the Fraunhofer Institute for Systems and Innovation Research (ISI) – such a step could become necessary in the latter half of the decade. The study outlines four scenarios that explore how to reach the maritime industry's climate targets by 2050, but also consider the failure to do so.

“The maritime industry currently has a goal, but not yet a way to get there,” said Dr Uwe Lauber, CEO of MAN Energy Solutions. “By 2050, the International Maritime Organization wants greenhouse-gas emissions to fall by 50%, however these targets have not yet been backed up by concrete measures.” According to Lauber: “Time is pressing – 2050 is just a single ship-generation away.”

MAN Energy Solutions also sees the study as a wake-up call. “With shipping, everyone always talks about the technical side. Technically, however, the maritime energy transition has long been feasible. For years, the challenge has been at the political and an overall, societal level,” said Lauber, summing up the situation. “Today, we can build engines that run on zero-emission fuels, but making the decision to ramp up synthetic fuels in the market is not something we can do alone.”

Maritime industry not isolated

#AHOY2050 therefore approaches shipping as part of a global ecosystem. Beginning with societal awareness of the problem and the importance of climate protection – and extending it to commodity prices, global economic development and Covid-19 – a multitude of factors impact global shipping. Lauber said: “It is these interrelationships that will largely determine how resolutely the maritime energy transition is pursued.”

To this end, #AHOY2050 gathers weighty voices from the industry and beyond. For the qualitative part, the Fraunhofer Institute interviewed some 40 experts from all areas of the maritime industry, but also from associations, science and politics. Over 30 industry experts subsequently discussed the scenarios drafted on this basis in a workshop.

#AHOY2050: four future scenarios

Through four scenarios, the study shows possible development paths for the shipping industry and their ramifications. It views the marine industry as part of a global ecosystem that is sensitive to overall societal and economic decisions. In

two of the scenarios, climate targets are met or even exceeded by 2050. By contrast, the other two scenarios point to the potential failure of climate policy.

According to one key take-away, left to market forces, the shipping industry could persist in a self-optimisation mode where the focus would then be on further maximizing efficiency with no real change taking place. A regulatory framework supported by social consensus, on the other hand, could trigger not only such a technological change, but also a boom in shipping as a result. A complete ban on fossil fuels in the second half of the decade could significantly promote such a development, according to the study.

Lauber: “We must not get caught up in selfish interests”

In Uwe Lauber's view, a clear political course and global regulation are the key parameters for a successful maritime energy transition: “If the world becomes entangled in selfish interests, we will not achieve a climate turnaround. In contrast, a smartly-set, global, regulatory framework can turn the decarbonisation of shipping into a growth engine for the industry. After all, if the global supply chain is consistently geared toward climate protection, ships are far superior to all other modes of transport.”

The complete study and all four scenarios are available for download at <https://www.man-es.com/ahoy2050>.



In its #AHOY2050 future study, MAN Energy Solutions and Fraunhofer ISI outline four scenarios that show what the shipping industry's path to 2050 might look like.

MAN Energy Solutions enables its customers to achieve sustainable value creation in the transition towards a carbon neutral future. Addressing tomorrow's challenges within the marine, energy and industrial sectors, we improve efficiency and performance at a systemic level. Leading the way in advanced engineering for more than 250 years, we provide a unique portfolio of technologies. Headquartered in Germany, MAN Energy Solutions employs some 14,000 people at over 120 sites globally. Our after-sales brand, MAN PrimeServ, offers a vast network of service centres to our customers all over the world.