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# Cosco unit halts stock trading amid sanctions fallout


COSCO SHIPPING ENERGY Transportation, the oil and gas shipping arm of China Cosco Shipping Corp, has halted trading in its shares, following the imposition of US sanctions involving one of its major subsidiaries.

Cosco Shipping Tanker (Dalian) Co, named by the US government yesterday as breaking unilateral sanctions on Iran's energy and shipping sector, is 100% owned by CSET and a major revenue and profit contributor to the Shanghai- and Hong Kong-listed parent.

It is also a major stakeholder in China LNG Shipping — a joint venture with China Merchants Energy Shipping — which owns 18 liquefied natural gas carriers in operation and three units on the water, according to the latest financial reports published by CSET and CMES in late August.

Some of these LNG carriers were ordered together with foreign partner Teekay. There are also ties in this ordering set-up to Dynagas.

CSET, which operates a live fleet of nearly 200 ships, including about 50 very large crude carriers, said the trading halt was pending the release of an announcement in relation to inside information relating to the company.

The move comes after the US sanctioned subsidiaries of state conglomerate Cosco Shipping for breaching sanctions on Iran, along with several other Chinese shipowners involved in transporting energy commodities cargoes via a complex ship-to-ship transfer logistics network used to obfuscate their origin and destination.

Other listed entities include Cosco Shipping Tanker (Dalian) Seaman &

Ship Management Co, which was previously 100%-owned by Cosco Shipping Tanker (Dalian) but sold in June to Cosco Shipping Investment Dalian, a fully-owned investment unit of Cosco Shipping.

The blocking sanctions apply only to these listed entities and any entities in which they own a 50% or greater interest, according to a notice published by the Office of Foreign Assets Control.

The designation does not apply to the ultimate parent company, Cosco Shipping, or any other of its subsidiaries or holdings.

While CSET itself should be excluded from the US sanctions, its business is unlikely to be completely immune to the blocking action against Cosco Shipping Tanker (Dalian).

The company recorded Yuan184m ($26m) net profits and Yuan738.5m revenue for the first half this year, accounting for 39% and 10.4%, respectively, of the parent CSET's total. As of end-June, its total assets stood at Yuan11.6bn, about one sixth of the parent company's.

Lloyd's List Intelligence data shows that Cosco Shipping Tanker (Dalian) is the registered owner of 14 tankers, including four VLCCs. Besides this, it is also the technical manager of 39 ships.

The company, at the last count, held a 50% stake in China LNG, a level that can make the latter fall within the US sanction sphere.

CSET did not immediately respond to requests for comments.

An official from CMES said the company was assessing the event.

## WHAT TO WATCH

# Maersk Tankers buys seven AET vessels

MAERSK Tankers has bought seven chemical tankers from Malaysia-based AET for an undisclosed sum, all of which will operate in its handy tankers pool.

The first tanker, which has been renamed the *Hans Maersk*, entered to pool yesterday with a further six tankers delivered between 2009 and 2010 from the same South Korean shipyard to the same specifications and deadweight tonnage.

The remainder of the handysize fleet of AET will be joining over "coming months", the company said. All are currently trading with the prefix "Bunga" in their name.

"They can be deployed in any market, any grade and to any customer," Hans Ulrik Norgaard, Head of Chartering, Intermediate & Handy at Maersk Tankers, said in a statement.

Earlier this month, Maersk announced 20 medium range tankers owned by commodities trader Cargill's ocean transportation division will enter the Maersk Tankers MR pool in October, bringing total pool size to 60.

# Bunker tax exemptions cost EU $26.3bn

THE European Union is missing out on around €24bn ($26.3m) of revenue each year by not taxing bunker fuel sales, according to a new study.

The European Federation for Transport and Environment report calls on the EU to regulate shipping emissions.

Bunkers and lube oils are tax exempt in the EU and, according to the Brussels-based organisation, some of the lost revenue gap could be plugged by including shipping in the controversial EU Emissions Trading System.

T&E estimated the value of the lost revenue from the tax exemption by comparing it with the level of excise duties on diesel for road vehicles in different member states.

The Netherlands and Belgium are missing out on €6.1bn and €4.6bn respectively, according to T&E's calculations. Spain and the UK are also losing out on €2.7bn and €2.3bn respectively.

The exemptions come under the 2003 EU Energy Taxation Directive that defines rules for member states taxing fuels for transport, electricity and heating.

Revising the ETD and changing rules for bunkers would likely be difficult; the European Council would have to approve it unanimously.

Nonetheless, the European Commission recently published an evaluation of the ETD, emphasising its shortcomings and how it is hindering the EU's climate and energy goals.

While the Commission said in its evaluation that some of the exemptions were in "stark contrast with the environmental objectives" of the EU, it also spelled out what revoking the exemption for bunker fuels would mean.

"Any taxation regime for marine fuels, if not established at the international level, would likely be circumvented by a shift of bunkering operations to countries with no or lower fuel taxes," the report noted.

The European Community Shipowners' Association also warned that this exemption should be retained.

The T&E report follows a report by the International Transport Federation, which claimed that Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development countries spend around €3bn every year in maritime subsidies that have proven to be, for the most part, ineffective.

**The Emissions Trading System**

Given that scrapping bunker exemptions is a tall order, T&E reiterated that shipping should become part of the controversial Emissions Trading System.

The EU would rake in $3.6bn per year by including shipping in the ETS, according to the T&E, based on the level of emissions from ships in the EU's Monitoring, Reporting and Verification programme and the current carbon price.

With a new Commission coming into power in November with an amplified environmental agenda, shipping's inclusion in the ETS is poised to become a focal point faster than was previously expected.

After much deliberation, the EU decided in late 2017 to keep shipping's inclusion in the ETS in abeyance provided international regulators have agreed to a sufficient decarbonisation measure by 2023. This is also the year the IMO will revise its initial GHG strategy.

But the incoming European Commission president, Ursula Von der Leyen, has explicitly called for the extension of ETS to shipping, indicating that shipowners will have to contend with the measure before 2023.

The inclusion of shipping in the ETS was opposed by industry lobby groups as a unilateral measure that undermines the efforts of the IMO and an attempt at being a regional body trying to regulate a global industry.

## OPINION

# Kathy Metcalf wins Lloyd's List Lifetime Achievement Award

US MARITIME veteran and president and chief executive of the Chamber of Shipping of America Kathy Metcalf was honoured on Wednesday at the Lloyd's List Americas Awards in Houston.

Ms Metcalf, who has served in the Chamber for over 20 years and has been chief executive since 2015, was awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of her industry leadership throughout her career that has spanned both sea- and shore-time, regulatory and policy issues, government and industry.

Lloyd's List chief correspondent Richard Clayton, this year's Americas Awards host, applauded her passion for the industry, her commitment, and her humility. In her acceptance speech, coming just a day before the International Maritime Organization's World Maritime Day with its focus on "empowering women in the maritime community", Ms Metcalf said she believed her "stubbornness" was an important part of her character.

The event was supported by the Lloyd's List Future Fuels Forum, which took a deep dive into the bunker fuel issues that will be kicked up by the global sulphur cap, and also into the potential for alternative fuels in the period from 2020 to 2025. It was fitting that several of the other maritime awards recognised excellence in environmental protection.

APL, an independent subsidiary of CMA CGM Group, won the Excellence in Environmental Management Award in recognition of its reduction of carbon emission intensity by 47% between 2009 and 2018. Parent group CMA CGM won the Excellence in Decarbonisation Towards 2050 Award, sponsored by Shell, for its own 50% reduction in carbon emissions between 2005 and 2015, and for its ambitious goal of a further 30% reduction between 2015 and 2025.

NAMEPA (North American Marine Environment Protection Association), in association with LISCR (Liberian International Ship & Corporate Registry) and ProSea, won the Excellence in Safety and Training Award, for their work on educating sea- and shore-staff on marine environment regulations, compliance and management. Wärtsilä won the FuelTrax-sponsored Excellence in Future Fuels Solutions Award for its work with Teekay on an e-shuttle tanker concept that turns harmful emissions into fuel.

Other winners were the Port of Virginia, which won the Excellence in Port Management and Infrastructure Award in recognition for its huge investment in dredging, recruitment and training; and NYSHEX won the Excellence in Supply Chain Management and Innovation Award for its new standardised freight contract and digital trading platform; the American Bureau of Shipping won the Excellence in Data and Technology Innovation for its new methodology to measure cyber security risk associated with operational technology.

Blank Rome won the Excellence in Maritime Law Award, while Seward & Kissel won Deal of the Year for its work on the merger between Scorpio Tankers and Navig8 Product Tankers.

The well-attended Americas Awards and Future Fuels forum were held at the Marriott Hotel in Downtown Houston.

# Viewpoint: Are you feeling vulnerable?

DURING the long years of the Cold War, there was a railway junction in Holland that would keep Nato planners awake at night, *writes Michael Grey*.

In the event of the stand-off between the Soviets and the West heating up, it was over those very few rails that the bulk of the reinforcements for the armies on the Rhine would have to pass on their way from at least three major ports.

A well-aimed missile on this crucial and strategic junction could, in one fell swoop, menace the resupply of the whole Western response to Soviet aggression. In terms of vulnerability, this was the one that mattered.

It doesn’t do any harm to consider this issue of vulnerability, from time to time, lest people get too complacent.

We get the occasional reminders, such as the interruption of electricity supplies after a power station and a wind-farm went off the grid a few weeks ago. We are being asked to think about our vulnerabilities in the UK as Brexit day approaches, with dire warnings of what we might run out of if the European Union cuts up rough.

Rather more serious is the reminder of the continued dependence on oil carried by sea after the drone attacks on the Saudi Arabian facilities at Khurais and Abqaiq had an almost instantaneous effect upon oil prices and questions of availability.

If a few carefully placed cheaply delivered explosives can, at a stroke, wipe out 5% of the global oil production, this is a real wake-up call to address the industrialised world’s vulnerabilities.

You might consider that with the movement away from our dependence upon imported crude oil from the Middle East to other greener and more sustainable fuels, we are less vulnerable than we might have been before great forests of wind turbines were planted in our surrounding seas. But the power from these has to be gathered, brought ashore through undersea cables and distributed down national grids, which are liable to interruption.

Are we not switching to clean green liquefied natural gas to keep our industry running until science has found fossil fuel alternatives?

Well, yes, except that there is a great deal of LNG that has to be shipped from the top of the Middle East Gulf, in a region constantly teetering on the edge of full-on conflict, with the ships having to transit the increasingly problematical Strait of Hormuz.

Maybe we should be buying more from stable and safe sources such as the LNG supplies of Australia, except that the ships have to come a very long way through seas that might become less safe.

You might suggest that a more diverse energy mix strengthens the defences, except that just about everything has some sort of vulnerability to interruption.

In this context,  it is worth considering exactly from whereabouts that Europe is increasingly getting its gas and the geo-political currents surrounding its growing dependence on Russian energy. It is convenient to conclude that President Vladimir Putin might be reluctant to bite the hand that feeds him, but Europeans maybe shouldn't count on it.

If we are thinking about vulnerability, we don't need to be considering conventional weaponry, or even cheap drones attacking our oilfields, when our vulnerabilities to cyber attacks are being registered practically every day.

It is quite difficult to keep up with the dire warnings we are being given about cyber security, with the official and unofficial hackers beavering away to circumvent all the defences. Transport, logistics, communications — the more elaborate and sophisticated our systems become, the more liable they are to interruption.

We don't carry enough stocks of anything in our just-in-time world and the assumption is that it will always arrive just when it is needed.

Then a ship sinks, or a factory catches fire and assembly lines grind to a halt and the shelves empty themselves with a worrying rapidity. What if strategic straits, or the Suez Canal, are blocked? Maybe we shouldn't live our lives in this rather too delicate balance of supply and demand and these unpleasant reminders ought not to be ignored.

When the accountants tell us about the costs of maintaining inventories and the savings there are to be made from a hand to mouth existence, we should perhaps tell them to go away and do something useful, and that stock levels are a very necessary insulation against something awful happening.

We need to be less complacent about risks and more serious about providing realistic alternatives to interruptions in supply. Some enthusiastic railway construction in the 1960s managed to mitigate the threat to that Dutch railway junction that worried Nato so much and we maybe ought to take a lead from these attitudes of "constructive prevention".

We need more alternative sources of everything. You probably cannot have too much port capacity and refineries and power stations should not be shut down when demand falls, but considered for their strategic possibilities. And if our dependence on sea trade is to continue, we need to think about how these maritime supply lines need to be defended. Nelson bemoaned his lack of frigates. It is a sentiment modern admirals would understand.

# IMO urges maritime industry to empower women

IN an industry where there is an above-average risk of personal injury, particularly for those working at sea or in ports, women can make a difference, *writes Janet Porter.*

Employers say women are more likely to be careful, follow the safety rules, and avoid macho behaviour that could lead to accidents.

So there is a good business case for greater gender balance in the workplace, at all levels, from seafarers and dockworkers, to senior management.

That, of course, is not the only reason for wanting to encourage more women to join the maritime industry, but for the sceptics who label such initiatives as political correctness, this is a powerful counter-argument.

Just as importantly, shipping offers great career opportunities for women, whether it be working on board ships or in the myriad different shore-based jobs that are available, and which require an extraordinarily wide range of skills.

The real challenge, though, is to get that message across to girls and women around the world who have little contact with the shipping industry and assume it is an unglamorous dirty business that has little to offer them.

The truth of the matter is that the maritime industry provides a genuine window on the world, and all efforts to improve the gender balance and tap into this pool of talent will be a plus for shipping.

Today, the International Maritime Organization is doing its bit as the global maritime community celebrates the annual World Maritime Day, under the theme 'Empowering Women in the Maritime Community'.

Gender equality "has been recognised as one of the key platforms on which people can build a sustainable future", says IMO secretary-general Kitack Lim.

"It is one of the 17 goals that underpin the UN's Sustainable Development Agenda, which countries all over the world have pledged to implement."

Numerous activities throughout 2019 have helped support the message that, for sustainability and success in the modern world, empowering women in the maritime community makes sense, he says.

"Shipping needs diversity in the workforce."

The IMO is inviting the entire maritime world to highlight and showcase commitment to empowering women by, for example. posting photos, stories and messages of support on social media, using the hashtags #WorldMaritimeDay and #WomeninMaritime

"Women in the maritime world today are strong, powerful and constantly challenging old-fashioned perceptions," Mr Lim continues.

"Experience tells us that diversity is better; it's better for teamwork, better for leadership — and better for commercial performance. The maritime world is changing. And for the better. With help from IMO, and other organisations, exciting and rewarding career opportunities are opening up for women. And a new generation of strong and talented women are responding."

Shipping still needs more female role models, though. Even now, few women make it to the top. Whether that is because of sexism, conscious or otherwise, inflexible working hours, lack of career break opportunities, or just industry perception, the problem needs to be addressed and big global campaigns are only part of the answer.

In the UK, Maritime UK's Women in Maritime initiative is undoubtedly gaining traction.

Companies are being invited to sign a pledge committing them to "building an employment culture that actively supports and celebrates gender diversity, at all levels" throughout their organisation or company.

Pilot companies have already started to set targets for improving gender balance over the coming years, and each will have a champion to help it achieve those goals. The project is now being widened to other companies that want to recruit more women, and may need assistance understanding why some of their current employment practices could discourage potential female job applicants.

It is these grassroots efforts that are needed to complement the IMO's programme of gender-specific fellowships and other initiatives such as access to high-level technical training for women in the maritime sector in developing countries; creating the environment in which women are identified and selected for career development opportunities in maritime administrations, ports and maritime training institutes; and by facilitating the establishment of professional women in maritime associations, particularly in developing countries.

The IMO can set the tone, but it is schools, colleges, universities, employers, trade associations, and other stakeholders that now need to take up the challenge and make sure the diverse maritime industry, with its huge demand for people with all sorts of qualifications, is able to take full advantage of this under-utilised resource.

Women themselves need to be broaden their focus when choosing a career, and employers must make sure they provide a workplace where women feel respected, safe, appreciated, and able to develop their potential to the full.

## ANALYSIS

# Order contract dates pushed back to 2015 distorting supply picture

THE apparent consensus among industry participants pointing towards an improving vessel supply scenario looks patchy, as the recent orderbook across vessel segments has undergone some subtle manoeuvres, says Maritime Strategies International managing director Adam Kent.

Around 5m gross tonnes of vessels have recently been added to the orderbook database with 2015 as the contract year, Mr Kent noted. “The simple reason is to avoid cost of complying with emissions reduction regulations.”

If the keel is laid before 2016, the ship is allowed to trade to the US with a cheaper Tier II engine.

“So, if you look at the headline numbers of what has been contracted in 2019, it appears relatively low across the board of all the shipping.”

“But in the databases, new vessels get continuously added to the orderbook that we have not seen before, with the actual contract date pushed back to 2015 and not recorded in 2019,” he conceded.

“Therefore, if we are just analysing the market from a 2019 contracting level, they look very low, but there a number of newbuild ships that will come on the water in the next 18 months.”

“If you look at when vessels appear on the database, they are actually very high, just the mismatch between when they appear and the year of contract,” Mr Kent said in a recent interview with Lloyd’s List on the sidelines of the Marine Money Week Asia conference in Singapore.

“It is an interesting development and one that I think a lot of the industry has not really grasped because everyone is talking about low contracting, but actually, it could be a lot higher than that.”

All ships built between 2000 and January 2011 had to have engines that were compliant with Tier I and those built between 2011 and January 1, 2016 have to have Tier II engines. Tier III applies to vessels built after January 1, 2016

The tiers relate to the percentage of emissions relative to the power of the engine, as NOx emissions are relative to engine efficiency.

Although many new orders would hit the industry in the next few months, there is clearly a requirement for new investments in tonnage.

“I think doing nothing is simply not an option for all,” he said, pointing out that there are many 2000-built ships which would need to be replaced by the middle of the next decade.

Mr Kent agrees however that there is uncertainty over what technology is needed for new ships to operate over the next 20 to 25 years, and what is the best fuel to use in order to meet emissions regulation.

Still, towards the second half of the next decade contracting will increase significantly in order to match incremental demand requirements and also begin to replace, what will then be, the ageing tonnage ordered in the 2000s, he says.

Over the course of the next five years we will see an uplift in contracting, increasing by 24% versus the past five years, he said.

MSI forecasts contracting will be over 50% higher during the 2025 to 2029 period on average, when compared with the past five years.

# Weak demand forces box carriers to lower rates

CONTAINER shipping lines have moved to slash spot rates to compensate for sluggish volumes on the major east-west trades.

In the lead up to China’s Golden Week carriers were forced to drop prices to ensure ships sailed as full as possible, with the pre-empted rush ahead of the holiday period failing to materialise.

With factories across China closing in early October, the freight market often looks for a welcome boost before the winter slack season in the hope that shippers will look to bring forward cargo consignments to ensure inventories are maintained.

However, as one major European carrier told Lloyd’s List, the “pre-Chinese Golden Week rush proved to be a no show”.

As a result, spot rates, before factories brought down the shutters in the final week of September, slumped to their lowest level since May on the principal trades out of Asia.

Analysts Platts commented that the normal general rate increases one would expect at the frontend of the month had been replaced with rate decreases, as carriers began “to compete for a limited number of cargoes leaving North Asia”.

The Shanghai Containerised Freight Index, which uses Shanghai as a base origin port, made for grim reading. Spot rates on the Asia-northern Europe trade stood at just $639 per teu, and $797 per 20 ft box on Asia-Mediterranean service off the back of further week-on-week declines.

And the pattern was repeated on the transpacific routes, where rates per 40 ft unit fell to $1,338 and $2,351 on the respective eastbound Asia-US west coast and Asia-US east coast trades.

Spot rates throughout the peak season have though flattered on either east-west route. On the transpacific trade the major factor has been demand, which has been impacted significantly by the US-Sino trade war.

Frontloading late last year and in early 2019 by US shippers to avoid impending tariffs was always going to result in a shortfall in cargo with inventories well stocked.

The latest count from Container Trades Statistics through to the end of July showed box traffic on the transpacific route was down 0.4% compared to last year. Volumes in July were up, however, only by a measly 0.2%, according to CTS.

Anecdotal market reports suggest transpacific traffic was once again around par in August and September with last year.

Indeed, Orient Overseas Container Line co-chief executive Wang Haimin said in late August that a peak season on the transpacific was unlikely.

Such developments prompted six major US west coast ports to issue a letter in late September detailing the adverse impact of the trade war on their exporting clientele.

"The impacts of the back-and-forth tariffs between the United States and China have hit our exporters particularly hard," said the letter signed port directors in Los Angeles, Long Beach, Oakland, Tacoma, Seattle, and Portland.

If not for a buoyant US economy and weighty consumer purse, the situation could have been a whole lot worse and rates even lower.

On the Asia-Europe trade, volumes had been healthy through to the end of July, with teu numbers up nearly 5% in the first seven months of 2019 against last year.

All pointed to a fruitful peak season, but, like the transpacific, there appeared to be a lack of volume impetus in July and August amid continued Brexit uncertainty and weaknesses in key European markets both north and south. This was reflected by unprecedented culls to capacity during August, in addition to the gradual decline of the spot market through the summer months.

With market sentiment low on either trade it stands to reason why carriers have moved to introduce numerous blank sailings through October, in response to expected further weakening of demand.

The list of blanked sailings on the Asia-Europe trade includes the temporary suspension of 2M's AE-2/Swan offering. The service, one of six loops offered by Maersk and 2M under their alliance partnership, operates on the Asia-northern Europe route and represents weekly capacity of around 18,000 teu, according to Alphaliner. The service will resume in mid-November, demand dependent.

However, this is just the tip of the iceberg with all three major alliances announcing a comprehensive blank sailing programmes on not only the Asia-Europe and transpacific lanes.

SeaIntelligence noted how in October alone The Alliance will blank six Asia-Europe sailings and nine transpacific sailings, while the Ocean Alliance will withdraw 11 Asia-Europe and 10 transpacific sailings.

In addition to the three AE-2/Swan sailings pulled in October, 2M will blank a further trio on Asia-Europe and five on the transpacific.

Depending on how the opening weeks of October pan out, further blank sailings could follow.

So, what of the fate of rates in the final quarter. The weakening of the spot market in late September certainly does not bode well, as carriers fight for the limited cargo on offer.

Platts commented at the time that it had been a tough few weeks, but in the post-Golden Week period "things are likely to get worse".

Meanwhile, Alphaliner noted how curbing capacity will do little to escape the rate rot.

"While void sailings can be useful for dealing with seasonal short term drops in cargo demand, it has proven to be ineffective as a sustainable strategy to cope with a structural decline in cargo volume growth," it said.

Keeping ships out of the market for too long becomes a costly affair, Alphaliner explained.

Moreover, with scrapping low and more slot heavy laden ships due on the water before the year is out, the smart money will be on further rate erosion in the closing months and another difficult quarter for the major carriers.

## MARKETS

# Second LNG freight swap trades on nascent indices

A SECOND freight derivatives trade for liquefied natural gas has been executed and settled against the Baltic Exchange's newest LNG freight index. Counterparties were LNG traders JERA Global Markets and Vitol, with the freight swap settled against the Sabine, US-to-Tokyo, Japan round voyage route.

The bilateral trade on the so-called BLNG3 index was brokered by Affinity Shipbroking, which also arranged the first LNG freight swap, in mid-July, on a different route. The BLNG3 index was introduced on a trial basis in March along with two other LNG routes. It went live in mid-August.

LNG is one of the fastest-growing seaborne trades for 2019, with Clarksons Research estimating volumes will gain 8% this year, versus 0.8% for oil trades and 1.2% for dry bulk. Some 314m tonnes was shipped in 2018, according to the International Group of LNG Importers. Of this, 99m tonnes was shipped on a short-term or spot basis.

"Interest in BLNG3 has been off the charts as this trade lane links an increasingly liquid spot market in the Atlantic and the key demand centre for LNG in Japan," said Affinity head of LNG derivatives Benjamin Gibson.

"As the LNG market continues to commoditise, freight is now catching up with the cargo in terms of transparency and the ability to trade BLNG3 will become an important tool."

Time charter earnings for LNG carriers are now at $61,734 daily on the Sabine-Tokyo route, while the BLNG2 trial route for a Sabine — northwest Europe round voyage is $66,596 and BLNG1 (Gladstone-Tokyo) is $61,119 daily.

## IN OTHER NEWS

### CSET orders two LR1s at Cosco Dalian for $68m

COSCO Shipping Energy Transportation has placed orders for two 49,900 dwt product tankers at Cosco Shipping Heavy Industry (Dalian) for $67.8m.

Delivery of the twin long range 1s is scheduled for the third and fourth quarter of 2021 respectively.

CSET noted continued production cuts by the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and rising supply from the Americas was driving an expected rise in long-haul voyages and further support for tanker demand.

### E2Open extends Avantida platform into Asia

SUPPLY chain enabler E2Open's Avantida platform is being launched in Asia, with Japan chosen as the initial market, beginning from October.

The digitally optimised container transport planning platform first launched services outside Europe at the beginning of 2019, with Maersk offering services on the platform in the US and Canada.

Avantida expects to start with four major ocean lines, offering street turns, as well as a change of drop-off and pick-up yards, through its platform.

### Piraeus Propeller Club elects Frangoulis as president

FRANMAN founder Costis J Frangoulis has been elected as the president of the Propeller Club of Piraeus.

"I am grateful to all members for their support and feel proud of the passion they have shown for the club and its goals," Mr Frangoulis told Lloyd's List. "During the past years, the Propeller Club has achieved a lot. We have the responsibility and obligation to move even further forward."

He succeeds George Xiradakis, who has held the post of president since 2013.

**New grants handed out for UK ports' post-Brexit preparations**

A GROUP of 16 UK ports have been granted £10m for infrastructure upgrades to prepare for and improve cargo flows after Brexit.

The fund is part of a £30m scheme announced by the UK government last month for Brexit-related infrastructure improvements, amid mounting concern that customs delays and trade flow disruptions could interrupt the passage of vital food and medical supplies.

Worst-case scenario planning assumptions for a no-deal Brexit that were recently declassified pointed to a chaotic implementation of immigration and border controls that would affect many of the key container and ferry ports in the UK.

# Classified notices