



## Press Release · Pressemitteilung

### SMM 2026: Platform And Pace Setter For The Maritime Transformation

Save the Date: 1-4 SEPTEMBER 2026 | HAMBURG

**Hamburg, 23 April 2026** – With several months to go until the trade fair opens, demand is soaring and exhibitor spaces at the four-day event are nearly fully booked. Visitor tickets can now be purchased. “We are expecting over **2,200 exhibitors** and around **50,000 international attendees from 120 nations** here in Hamburg **from 1 to 4 September 2026**,” says **Claus Ulrich Selbach**. “As the world’s leading maritime industry event, SMM is far more than a classical trade fair: It is a must-attend event for the global shipbuilding and shipping community, an occasion that is lots of fun and creates bonds between people,” the Vice President Exhibitions Maritime & Energy at Hamburg Messe und Congress adds.

International decision-makers from the industry, politics, science and numerous international organisations gather at SMM to discuss matters of critical importance for the future, promote technological solutions, and build strategic partnerships – whether at the conferences, the exhibition stands or the curated networking opportunities. The acceptance of the **event patronage by Chancellor Friedrich Merz** underlines the political, economic and societal relevance of SMM 2026.

#### Security & Defence: focus on maritime resilience

Sea route blockades, military conflicts, hybrid threats and cyber attacks are increasingly putting pressure on the global maritime infrastructure, revealing the importance of maritime security and resilience as core prerequisites for stable supply chains and economic agility. Acknowledging this reality, SMM 2026 will put the focus on **maritime security and defence** as a key topic.

The **MS&D – International Conference on Maritime Security & Defence**, the leading international platform for naval and dual-use technologies, promises to provide answers. Experts will discuss the future role of the maritime industry as a stabilising factor, in particular by advocating the responsible use of new technologies such as AI and autonomous systems in an increasingly fragmented geopolitical environment. The **MS&D Conference** will bring together international decision-makers from naval forces, politics, the industry and science. At SMM 2026, the conference will for the first time be supplemented by an exhibition of its own called **MS&D Expo** that will bolster its international significance. Located in Hall B8, the exhibition, conference and open stage – or Naval Stage – will be united under one roof.

The emphasis will be on key topics such as:

- Protection of critical maritime infrastructure
- Development of capabilities and military procurement
- Cybersecurity and Artificial Intelligence
- Autonomous and unmanned systems
- Maritime surveillance and dual-use technologies

### **Energy efficiency & decarbonisation: profitability is the key**

Amid rising energy costs and tighter regulations, the industry is under pressure to become more efficient and climate-friendly. Energy efficiency is considered the most effective and economically compelling short-term means to drive the maritime transformation. Themed “**Efficiency First: Powering the Future of Shipping**”, the **Energy Efficiency Hub** in Hall A2 will give tangible evidence of how innovative technology can lower carbon emissions while strengthening competitiveness. The strong demand for participation in the Energy Efficiency Hub underlines the high market relevance of efficient, scalable solutions for the maritime transformation.

“The Energy Efficiency Hub highlights the position of SMM as the globally leading platform for the transformation of the shipping sector,” says **Christoph Lücke**, Director SMM, Seatrade Europe and INMEX SMM India.

But in the long run, the decarbonisation of shipping will only be successful if the entire industry switches to alternative, carbon-neutral fuels. At **gmecc**, the Global Maritime Environmental Congress that will take place on the Energy Efficiency Stage in Hall A4 on 2 September, industry and science experts will discuss the pros and cons of various approaches. Another fascinating topic on the conference agenda is wind-assisted propulsion in commercial shipping.

### **Re-thinking port operations: all about ports**

The conference formats at SMM 2026 focus on specific subjects to provide strategic guidance to the maritime industry. Well-established highlights include the **Maritime Future Summit**, which puts the emphasis on the digital transformation of the industry, and the **Offshore Dialogue** dedicated to sustainable use of the oceans. The prestigious **TradeWinds Shipowners’ Forum** contributes key perspectives from international shipowning companies.

A new item in this year’s programme is an international specialist conference on the future of port operations called **all about ports** which recognises the growing strategic importance of ports as energy, security and logistics hubs. **all about ports** co-locates with SMM and will be taking place at



the CCH – Congress Center Hamburg on 2 and 3 September 2026. It sheds light on major challenges facing the global ports industry, proposing solutions in areas such as digitalisation, automation, sustainability, safety and security, and logistics. Participation in *all about ports* is included in the SMM ticket price.

### **Winning talents: finding professionals for the maritime sector's future**

The **Maritime Career Market** at SMM aims to help secure the industry's future by combining career information with talent recruitment. It will take place on 3 and 4 September 2026. The shortage of trained professionals is one of the greatest challenges of the maritime industry.

“The maritime sector needs to find new ways to attract talents. By hosting the Maritime Career Market, we are providing a centralised career-building and recruitment platform that puts employers in direct contact with skilled professionals and highlights specific career options,” said **Lücke**.

From young professionals to university students, and from pupils to career changers, interested talents can meet companies ready to hire in Hall B2.0G. The **Job Route** leads qualified professionals and career starters directly to exhibitors with hiring needs. Proven formats such as the **Career Happy Hour**, **guided tours of the exhibition**, and the popular **Pupils' Rallye** foster informal interaction while helping jobseekers find their way. In addition, the **Career Forum** provides insights into current developments and career paths in the maritime industry, from jobs in the digital realm to positions with an international perspective, and through to new educational and qualification requirements. On 3 and 4 September, university students, pupils and their accompanying teachers have free access to SMM and the Maritime Career Market.

### **Getting guidance at SMM: themed routes and digital tools**

Whatever their area of interest – career, maritime security, digitalisation, etc.: visitors can use six **themed routes** to find exactly what they are looking for. The participating companies can be easily identified in the **online exhibitor directory**, the **Visitor Guide** or the **SMM app**, clearly marked along the respective route. In addition, digital tools such as the **networking platform SMM Connect** generate personalised recommendations and offer matchmaking features that help visitors plan their visits efficiently and get guidance, both before and during their visit.

To purchase tickets, book hotel rooms or get further information, visit [www.smm-hamburg.com](http://www.smm-hamburg.com).

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## About SMM

**SMM – the world’s leading maritime industry event** – will take place from 1 to 4 September 2026 in Hamburg. Under the guiding theme “**Driving the Maritime Transition**”, it brings together international stakeholders from across the maritime industry to discuss key future topics and actively shape the development of the sector.

More than 2,200 exhibiting companies from around 60 countries and approximately 50,000 participants from up to 120 nations are expected. Spanning around 90,000 m<sup>2</sup> across twelve exhibition halls, SMM showcases the entire value chain of the industry.

The focus is on **energy efficiency** as a key lever of the maritime transition, complemented by **maritime security and defence**, artificial intelligence, decarbonisation, and digital technologies.

SMM serves as a central platform for innovation, international exchange and business development. A comprehensive conference programme accompanies the exhibition, including **TradeWinds Shipowners’ Forum**, **Maritime Future Summit**, **gmec** – Global Maritime Environmental Congress, **MS&D – International Maritime Security & Defence Conference**, and **Offshore Dialogue**.

Running alongside SMM, **all about ports** will launch as a new platform for integrated port solutions. The international conference and accompanying exhibition focus on port infrastructure, terminal technology and port logistics, bringing together port operators, technology providers and investors.

The main sponsor of SMM this year is once again DNV, the globally leading classification society for the maritime industry.

For further information please visit:

[SMM – driving the maritime transition | 1-4 September 2026 - SMM](#)

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