

## Rotterdam welcomes innovative hull-cleaning service HullWiper

Rotterdam – Europe’s largest port is the latest to allow the GAC EnvironHull’s eco-friendly hull cleaning system to operate in its waters. The launch of HullWiper at Rotterdam, widely acknowledged as a pioneer in innovation and shipping technology, was marked by a panel discussion, webinar and live demonstration.

The Port of Rotterdam’s Senior Manager, Peter Mollema, said the ground-breaking technology exactly aligns with Rotterdam’s ambition to be the most sustainable port of its kind.

“In its 'The Global Competitiveness Report 2015-2016' the World Economic Forum has for the fourth consecutive time declared that the Netherlands has the best port infrastructure,” he told more than 100 industry figures from the city and beyond who gathered at the Floating Pavilion or followed the event online. “How did we get there? And how will we stay there? One very important aspect is innovation. There is a real and pressing need to decarbonise the shipping industry, and [HullWiper] is just one way that vision can be achieved.”

Co-hosted by GAC EnvironHull and the Port of Rotterdam, the ‘Smart Ship Technologies and Measures for Greener Ports’ discussion addressed the technological and regulatory pressures on ports and operators. It also highlighted solutions to help vessel owners and operators save costs and remain compliant – particularly with hull maintenance.

Traditional hull cleaning operations using divers with brushes are prohibited within Rotterdam’s port waters due to concerns about marine pollution. No such problem exists for GAC EnvironHull, thanks to HullWiper’s adjustable water-jet cleaning and debris collection systems.

Christer Sjödooff, GAC’s Group Vice President - Commercial, said: “Ports around the world are under a lot of strain when it comes to the environment. GAC, as part of the maritime community, has realised that we must change and evolve, and part of that evolution is the creation of innovative products with world class partners. New technologies and initiatives are contributing to a cleaner, safer and healthier shipping world – a world that GAC is an active part of.”

Sjödooff was joined on the panel of experts: John Willsher, Global Accounts Manager at AkzoNobel’s Marine Coatings Business, International; Gavin van Popering, former Performance Manager, Underwater Services for A.P. Møller-Maersk Shipping; and Ron van Gelder, Senior Advisor to the Port of Rotterdam, who stressed that the port “has an eye for innovation, especially when it supports regulatory compliance”.

Van Popering said the presence of HullWiper at a “significant” port like Rotterdam would only be seen as a positive step: “The advantages speak for themselves. The versatility and value is still there, despite the drop in fuel prices. HullWiper is a positive step forward for the shipping industry in general.”

The event ended with a live demonstration of HullWiper in the waters of the Nieuwe Maas. Its inventor and GAC EnvironHull’s Technical Director, Robert Andersen, was at hand to answer questions and demonstrate the online fuel calculator which enables ship owners and operators to compare savings reaped using HullWiper with traditional diver-based cleaning methods.

HullWiper is seeing growing interest and uptake at the ports where it operates in the Middle East, Far East and Europe. One of Northern Europe’s oldest ship owners has ordered hull cleaning in Singapore and in Rotterdam, and is implementing a policy to use HullWiper to clean all its vessels

from here on. A leading scientific marine consultancy has also expressed an interest in conducting a rigorous data analysis of HullWiper with a view to putting it to their customers as an efficiency solution.

The full panel discussion and HullWiper demo may be viewed online at <http://bit.ly/HullwiperWebinar>.