

Port of PE home to newest merchant ship on SA Ships Register

The Port of Port Elizabeth is the home port of the third ship registered on the South African Ships Register. Oil tanker MT LEFKAS docked at the port's berth 100 on 13 July, where a ceremonial plaque exchange ceremony was officiated. This marks another step in South Africa's drive to become a recognised maritime nation in line with the government's Operation Phakisa initiative which aims to unlock the potential of SA's oceans economy.



MT LEFKAS docked at Berth 100

The merchant vessel was previously registered under the flag of Liberia but will be using the Port of Port Elizabeth to provide a new offshore bunkering operation in Algoa Bay. In December 2012, the concept of attracting vessels to the Algoa Bay region was identified as an opportunity to grow the maritime industry in the region. In bringing this initiative to fruition, the South African Maritime Safety Authority (SAMSA) and Aegean Bunkering Marine Services worked together to formalise the concept.

Aegean subsequently embarked on a rigorous process of securing approvals from the necessary authorities. The company has also obtained bunkering licenses from Transnet National Ports Authority to conduct bunkering operations in the Ports of Port Elizabeth and Port of Ngqura. Aegean is the first company able to offer fuels outside port limits (OPL) in South Africa and expects to attract passing ships with bunkers at anchorage in South Africa's Algoa Bay.

Benefits

"The registration of the MT LEFKAS and other vessels that will follow is significant towards the employment of South African seafarers. Every vessel has extra accommodation that allows for the training and development of cadets. The registration of the vessel is not restricted to our bunkering operations only but also introduces many economic benefits for the people of Port Elizabeth such as surveying, offshore services and crew changes (more traffic through the airport), hotel accommodation and light and heavy manufacturing " said, Greek businessman Kosta Argyros.

Port of Port Elizabeth manager, Rajesh Dana added: “The Port of Port Elizabeth is proud and honoured to be the registered home port for the Aegean vessel, MT LEFKAS. We congratulate Aegean for the registration of the vessel on the South African flag and look forward to the opportunities that this will present to Nelson Mandela Bay and South Africa.

“This historic event is significant to the Port of Port Elizabeth and South Africa at large as it marks the catalytic growth in the South African Ship Registry and once again highlights Nelson Mandela Bay’s attractiveness as a Maritime City and its potential to exploit the Blue Oceans Economy”.

Merchant ship registry

Previously the South African Department of Transport had noted that most shipping lines registered their ships outside the country, with the country relying on about 12,000 foreign vessels to export South African goods to the rest of the world. In September 2015, the bulk carrier CAPE ORCHID became the first ship to be registered on South Africa’s merchant ship registry since 1985, followed by sister ship Cape Enterprise.

The development of a locally owned commercial shipping fleet in South Africa is among the intended outcomes of South Africa’s involvement in BRICS to increase trade and cooperation.

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