

Trends in shipping

Maritime transport has been a growing sector in the past 20 years worldwide (Figures 2.2 and 2.3) and is one of the economically most important maritime sectors in Europe (EC, 2008). Since 1998, ship traffic in the Greater North Sea and the Bay of Biscay/Iberian Coast has been increasing in line with market developments and policies to take transport of goods off the roads. This includes an increase in the number of ships, the cargo and the size of ships.

In particular oil tanker traffic has been growing rapidly as more and more oil is progressively being brought to the global market via EU waters. In tonnage terms, the amount of oil transported by sea worldwide increased from 1600 million tonnes in 1992 to over 2400 million tonnes in 2008 (Intertanko, 2009) (Figure 2.4).

World fleet development (million deadweight tonnage)

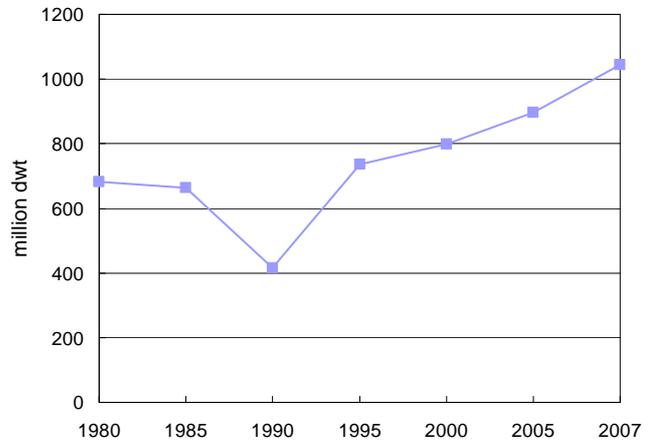


Figure 2.2 The trend of the world fleet's deadweight tonnage in 1980 – 2007 shows a 60% capacity increase. Data source: Lloyd's Register/Fairplay World Fleet Statistic.

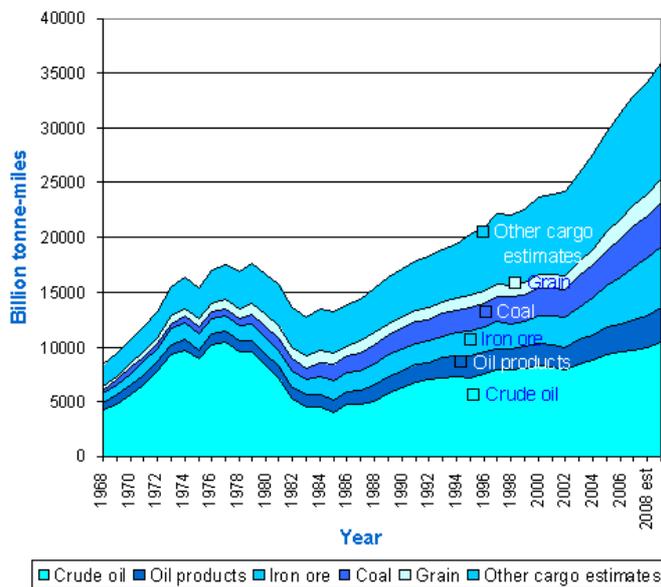


Figure 2.3 Development of seaborne trade 1968 – 2008 expressed as a tonne of freight moved one mile. Source: Fearnley's Review.

World seaborne trade (crude oil and oil products)

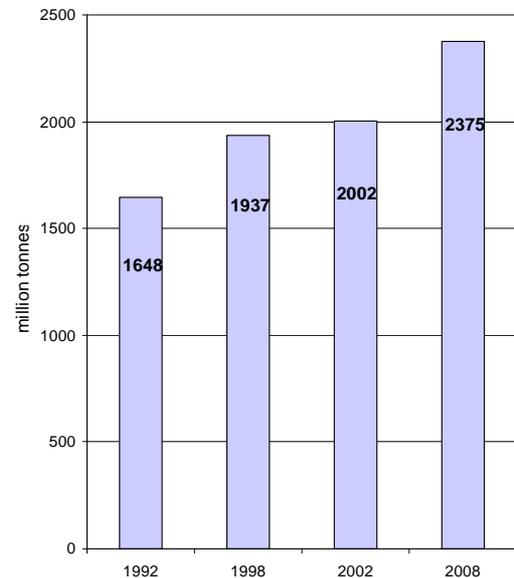


Figure 2.4 World seaborne trade in crude oil and oil products in million tonnes. Data source: Fearnley's Review.

Also passenger traffic has grown over recent years, reaching 350 million passenger journeys per year (EMSA, 2009). While still a comparatively small market, the European cruise sector is a growing industry which has increased in 1995 – 2005 by 230% to 3.3. million passengers (EC, 2008).

In the Arctic (Region I), shipping is mostly for transporting supplies, natural resources and marine tourism and less for through traffic. Cruise shipping in the Arctic has increased in the past ten years. Many of the cruise ships are not purpose built for Arctic waters (AMSA, 2009). This has increased risks of accidents and associated impacts on the ecosystem. With ice retreat and new technologies, new opportunities for exploiting Arctic resources (hydrocarbons, minerals, fisheries) are expected to increase demand for maritime transport. Growth predictions for the period to 2020 are difficult, however, due to confounding economic factors such as oil price and geopolitical issues. The most significant threats from Arctic shipping are incidental and illegal oil discharges (AMSA, 2009).

➔ *Go to full QSR assessment report on the impact of shipping on the marine environment (publication number 440/2009)*