

To all operators of traditional vessels

Members within our German rooforganisation for traditional vessels (www.gshw.de) have suggested that you – the operators of the vessels concerned – and ourselves should together organise a sensitizing campaign during the Kiel Week.

The campaign will be called **BLACKFLAG**. It is designed to point to the unsatisfactory situation in which traditional vessels operating internationally find themselves as a result of the many constraints placed on them.

There is no doubt that there are other important aspects of traditional shipping that would also deserve more attention and better legal regimes. For this campaign, however, we would like to focus on this one aspect .

The campaign is based on the following considerations:

1. **In order for all traditional vessels present at Kiel Week to be able to participate in the campaign it is vital that we select a motto that everyone can subscribe to. This avoids a situation where some players might feel they could be instrumentalised for the purposes of others.**
2. **In many instances, existing constraints on the free movement of traditional vessels operating internationally are blocking attempts at resolving other issues that operators of traditional vessels are battling with at the national level.**
3. **The idea is to create a campaign that is easy to understand also for outsiders, i.e. visitors of Kiel Week. The campaign should not be too fragmented or get lost in great detail.**
4. **The campaign will avoid pointing fingers at those who are allegedly responsible for existing problems, but will instead focus on the urgent need for action in the international context.**
5. **The campaign will not seek to be aggressive, nor should it in any way interfere with the normal course of events during Kiel Week.**

THE BLACKFLAG – CAMPAIGN

A campaign group will distribute black flags and information material at the beginning of Kiel Week to all vessels wishing to participate in the campaign. Ideally, these flags should be flown by more and more or even all vessels as

the week progresses. The black flag must, of course, be hoisted in addition to, not instead of the national flag.

The cost of the campaign is to be covered by voluntary contributions by those who receive a flag.

Flyers with the most important information about the campaign, about traditional vessels in general and the problems confronting these at the international level particularly, will make up the information material to be distributed with the flags.

We would like to secure both as detailed a feed-back and as supportive a documentation of the event as possible which is why we would like to **collect signatures** from supporters of our cause. Getting people to sign the list of supporters (e.g. while on board) will require the active co-operation of crews that have decided to fly the black flag and thus *nail their colours to the mast*.

While banking on your active contributions, the campaign group will take it upon themselves to act as co-ordinators wherever necessary during Kiel Week. If participants so wish, a meeting of all those interested could be arranged on one of the evenings.

We will inform the organisers of Kiel Week up-front of our intentions and of the background to the campaign.

Waterside police will also be informed by us. There will be an additional exchange of views at the Annual Information Conference on Traditional Vessels which WSP-Kiel holds in Kiel on June 23.

We shall inform the press about the campaign and give journalists the opportunity to get detailed infos from contacts that we will provide.

A website on the BLACKFLAG Campaign has been launched (cf. below) which contains additional pieces of information and contacts for all aspects of the campaign.

We would like to kindly request you to contact us in advance at info@blackflag.eu if you are interested in participating. Also, please tell us whom to approach aboard your vessel in Kiel. Please do not go via our GSHW-Office!

We are confident that the BLACKFLAG Campaign will receive the support from as many operators as possible.

We hope, too, that BLACKFLAG can help create a heightened awareness of the fact that putting constraints on the free movement of *some* traditional vessels will afford few benefits to other sections of the fleet, but that restrictions will, at the end of the day, affect everyone negatively.

BLACKFLAG symbolises our support for the continued operation of traditional vessels as a relatively young and very fascinating branch of shipping thus bridging the many differences that exist between individual ships and operating concepts.

WWW.BLACKFLAG.EU