

Problems and Perspectives of the Greek Charter Yachts

The Interview of Mr Orestis M. GIOKAS

Member of the Board of Directors of the Union
of Ship Owners of Greek Yachting

Question: Mr Or. Giokas what is your opinion concerning the capabilities of Greek tourism and especially in the sector of maritime tourism?

Answer: It is well known that Greece in relation to its other neighboring countries, has a lot of advantages for the development of tourism in general, and of its special aspects (winter tourism, tourism as related to conferences etc.). It is also well known that our country has under its flag the biggest commercial fleet in the world, (the working positions that the Greek Commercial Shipping provides, goes beyond the amount of 50.000 - which constitutes a 3% of the total working force), despite the fact that the foreign registers of merchant shipping during the year 1996 ad. have absorbed a 9.6% of the capabilities of our National register of merchant shipping. Nevertheless, I would dare say that we haven't yet used are full potential in these given capabilities which head toward the various desired directions, like for instance in the case of yachting.

Question: Where do you attribute this weakness of ours?

Answer: To many reasons. For the time being I will avoid the subject of «absorbing» clients from the internal market and I will focus on the attraction of foreign «consumers» of these services.

The first thing that I should annotate, is the systematic projection of Greece, as well

as the infrastructure of tourism abroad which is quite good, at least in some sectors. In my opinion the State has to do a lot of things in order to fully understand the picture, that what is offered here is high quality of services in proper prices as well as complete professionalism in the relevant sectors...

Question: If it does so, do you think that this is enough so that foreign tourists will «swarm» in Greece?

Answer: Of course not, because other things should be done. For example the personnel which occupies with the activities related to tourism should get educated, the phenomenon of illicit gain should be eliminated especially in sectors with special activities, like yachting where the best infrastructures should be secured...

Question: At the moment these (infrastructures) do not exist?

Answer: They exist, but they are not enough. In order for you to have a more complete picture I should add at this point that the total of applications for the positions of anchoring, that the interested have submitted since last October, reach the amount of 8.255 with the following composition: 3.147 positions by private application, 4.755 positions by applications from Organizations of Self-Administration (OTA), from the Prefectural self-administrations and from the harbor funds and 333 positions by hotel applications...

Question: Lets assume that the relevant permissions are provided for the construction of harbors, then would the problems that the branch faces be solved from the above mentioned categories of interested?

THE NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE UNION OF SHIP OWNERS OF THE GREEK CHARTER YACHTS

There has been formed the body of the new Board of Directors, which has been elected during the General Assembly of the Union of Ship Owners of the Greek Charter Yachts in February 2 1997ad. The new Board of Directors goes as follows: President Mr Tr. Venetopoulos, a' Vice president Mr Mihopoulos, b' Vice President Mr Vernikos, General Secretary Mrs A. Tavianatos, substitute General Secretary Mr A. Papadopoulos, Treasurer Mr O.M. Giokas and Members Mr Afroudakis, Mr D. Vasilakis and Mr N. Demestihias.

Answer: With the construction (theoretically) of these harbors it is anticipated that the above mentioned positions (8.255) should be created and they are expected to smooth things to a large degree and also to facilitate the decongestion of the relevant activities, given that the new harbors will not only be constructed in places with a high tourist activity but also in markets which are under development. This way, if for example the relative demands are satisfied and the harbors that have been requested by petition are going to be constructed, then there will be new poles of relevant activities e.g. at Skorponeri of Boeotie, at Kineta in Ermioni, in Monemvassia, in Serifos, in Galata of Troizina, in Cavo Liano of Rethimnon etc.

Question: Except from the harbors what else should be done in Greece for the attraction of Tourists which have a higher income?

Answer: Beyond the construction of new harbors it is necessary that the facilities provided to «yachters» should be improved to the best possible degree and of course we should examine with logic and caution the relevant constitutional range of these activities. The basic law (L. 438 of the 24-27/9/1976 About Charter Yachts L. 2160/1993 About tourism...) was a pioneer for its time, but I am afraid that since then, a lot of things have changed, and also the demands of our clients have changed. All these should be examined in relation to other relative activities, like for example Greek coasting (which constitutes the bridge between the E.U. and the Countries of the East), the branch of cruisers, the provided Bank facilities towards shipping, the shipping sector of constructions, the creation of a National System of Harbors and others.

Question: One last question Mr Giokas: How do you see the internal market?

Answer: As a market which constantly develops and which has not yet acquired the «proper» dimensions for many reasons, like for instance the lack of information about the nature and the benefits of yachting. Towards this direction a campaign of systematic information should start, from the part of state services as well as from behalf of the involved Agencies, like for example the Union of Ship owners of Greek Charter Yachts and to be more specific, from the area of younger ages. Concerning the latter I think that it is time that the Union of Ship owners of Greek Charter Yachts should cooperate with our universities and this will lead to an intimate relationship between the students and yachting (establishing games and others). We shouldn't overlook at the fact that today's students will be tomorrow's Executives of Greek shipping enterprises of every kind, and the best users of the services provided by them...

ATHAN.