

Press Release

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Voith Optimizes Vessel Propulsion Control System

May 2012

Voith will display a functional model of the new vessel propulsion control system for Voith Schneider Propellers and Voith Radial Propellers at the ITS (International Tug, Salvage & OSV Convention) in Barcelona from May 28 to June 01, 2012. The new system offers various new electronic control and assistance features including faster actuation and more precise control of the propulsion systems, remote diagnostics via the internet and communication through a range of interfaces. The new control system will be supplied for the first time in the last quarter of 2012 and will be available as a series product from mid-2013 onwards.

To meet customer requests for a control and propulsion system from one source, Voith for the first time developed the entire control system in-house. This comprehensive solution is underlined by the uniform Voith design of the bridge components: Joystick, steering wheel and propulsion control lever were developed in cooperation with Stuttgart University taking into account ergonomic characteristics. Voith already has a successful record of cooperation with the university during previous projects such as the Voith Radial Propeller since the Stuttgart University degree course "Design" requires a degree in engineering. This ensures that the focus is not just on esthetic and haptic aspects but also on optimum handling as well as on functional issues.

Integrated, open architecture

Thanks to the integrated architecture of propulsion and control system, Voith now enters the market as a system supplier. This results in faster response times for

customer-specific solutions, lower expenses incurred for interface adaptation as well as reduced costs for commissioning.

To monitor the propulsion units, the new control system records all data as well as faults. Monitoring can be done from the bridge as well as from the machine or propeller room. In addition, the new electronic control and assistance features lower the fuel consumption of the propulsion units. The control features can be tested on Voith's own vessel simulator. Open interfaces to external systems ensure that existing components can continue to be used. Communication is via interfaces such as CAN bus, Modbus TCP/IP, Modbus RTU, Profibus DP or NMEA.

Practical implementation of the new control system will be in the last quarter of 2012 for a double-ended ferry as well as in the first quarter of 2013 for an OSV (Offshore Supply Vessel). The series start is planned for the beginning of the second quarter of 2013.

"With our new modular, open hardware and software architecture, the Voith Schneider Propellers and Voith Radial Propellers will be controlled even more efficiently", says Dr. Dirk Jürgens, head of Research and Development at Voith Turbo Schneider Propulsion. "The new control system makes perfect use of the specific properties of Voith propulsion systems. This is particularly beneficial for vessels and floating platforms which require exact control and highly precise dynamic positioning even in rough seas." Examples for such applications are tugs, ferries, OSVs, oil platforms as well as special ships such as passenger barges, buoy tenders and floating cranes.

ITS Barcelona 2012

On the ITS in Barcelona, Voith Turbo will present the new control system as a trade show model together with the newly designed bridge components in booth 102. The control system will be linked to a simulator to allow interactive steering of a Voith Water Tractor as well as of a functional model propeller.

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Page 2 of 3
Press Release
May 2012

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Page 3 of 3
Press Release
May 2012

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