

## Splashing out on newbuilding

Tanker ordering is underpinning the renewal of the Greek fleet. Mid-September, Newsfront Greek Shipping Intelligence reported that Greek interests had around \$6.5bn invested in standing newbuilding projects involving 118 tankers of all types, not including gas carriers, of some 17m dwt.

This massive ordering has been going on since the millennium underlining the fact that Greek owners were renewing their fleets before the European Commission moved to condemn single-hull tankers.

However, it has increased in the wet sector in recent months, as new orders again begin to outstrip the pace of deliveries. The present total orderbook for Greek interests remains fairly constant, at around 260 ships of just on 24m dwt worth a total investment of just on \$8.4bn.

George Banos of shipbrokers George Moundreas & Co, a close watcher of the newbuilding market, has however seen a change in attitude on the part of Greek owners.

Not so long ago Mr Banos thought there would be a slowdown in the pace of ordering on the part of Greek owners because of an "unwillingness to order three years ahead of delivery". This is no longer the case, but those ordering now are the major players, "the big owner".

Mr Banos said: "Orders of the past months show Greek owners have decided to renew their fleets through newbuildings rather than the S&P market."

Many of the options have been taken, but see them "upgraded to a large size ship or to higher specs like double hull," said Mr Banos.

He went on: "Many discussions are still underway and the ordering for 2003 will exceed 2002 by a big percentage." He said the contracts for the first eight months "are way ahead of 2002".