



# Berthing Systems – Better Planning of Cruise Calls

Thanos Pallis

Department of Maritime Studies  
University of Piraeus, Greece



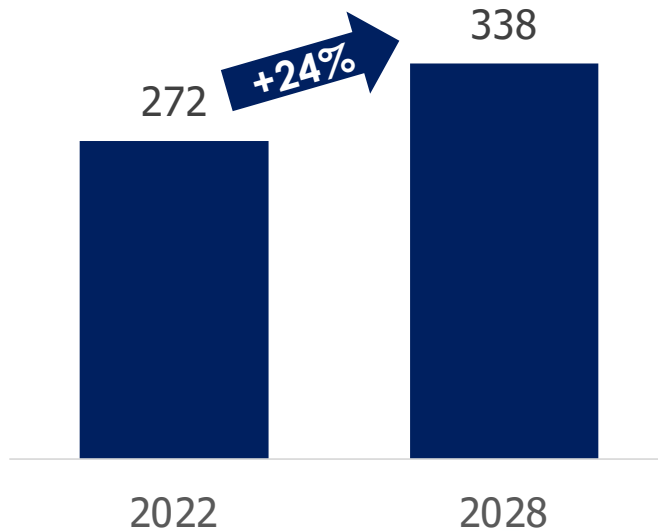
GENOA | 2024

**EUROPEAN  
SUMMIT** GENOA  
2024

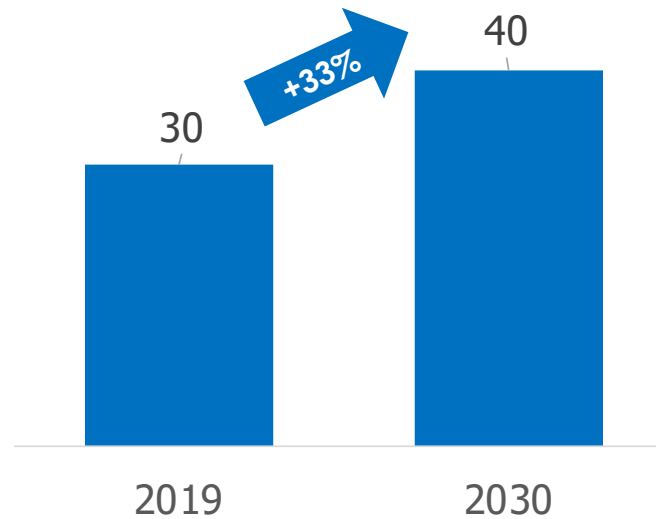
11-14 MARCH

# WHY DO WE NEED A BERTH ALLOCATION SYSTEM?

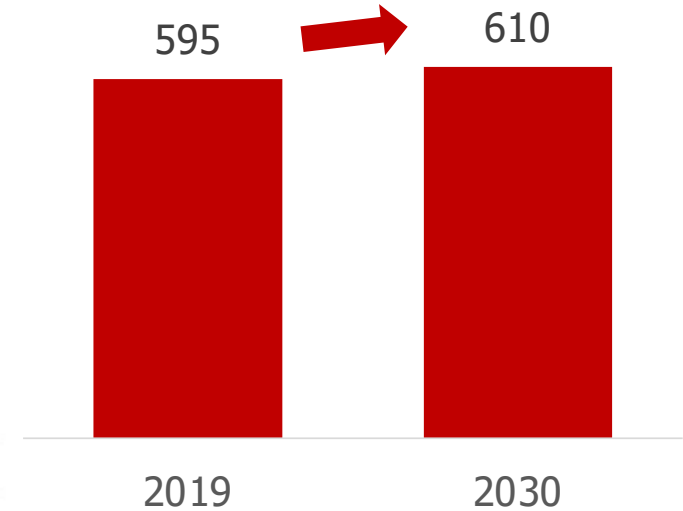
# of ocean-going ships



# of guests (M)



# of destinations



80% OF GUESTS GO TO ONLY  
20% OF DESTINATIONS (ABOUT  
115 PORTS)



WE NEED COLLECTIVE ACTION TO AVOID THE CONGESTION  
PROBLEM

# CRUISE LINES NEED A BERTH ALLOCATION SYSTEM

- ① You cannot publish - and sell - an itinerary without securing berthing slots
- ② The vessel's technical characteristics dictate the use of a specific berth,
  - Length
  - Depth
  - Apron Area
- ③ Efficient planning of port operations
- ④ Satisfy passengers (no last-minute surprises)



# PORTS NEED A BERTH ALLOCATION SYSTEM

## 780 reasons

*\* The No of requests for rescheduling that one Mediterranean port alone received within three (3) months (Nov-Dec-Jan)*



PORTS OPERATE BEYOND PEAK DEMAND

TOO MANY SHIPS IN  
THE SAME PORT/SAME DAY

THE PORT MIGHT ACCOMMODATE ALL  
SHIPS, BUT THE DESTINATION CAN'T



## SEEMINGLY SIMPLE PROCESS BUT CHALLENGES ARE TOO MANY

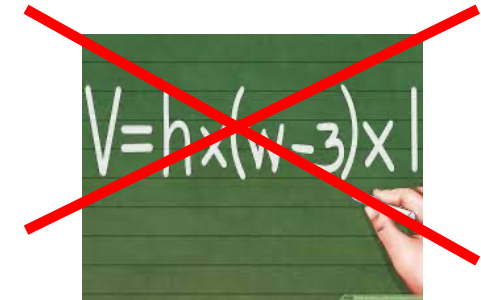
- Ports shall consider criteria such as
  - Available berths
  - Technical characteristics of berths and apron areas
  - Capacity of the port facilities
  - Sufficiency of port & related resources to service vessel & pax needs.
  - Destination infrastructure restrictions
- Important factors to be agreed upon with port users:
  - System parameters
  - Priorities
  - Deadlines
  - Changes
  - Cancellations

# KEY PRINCIPLES

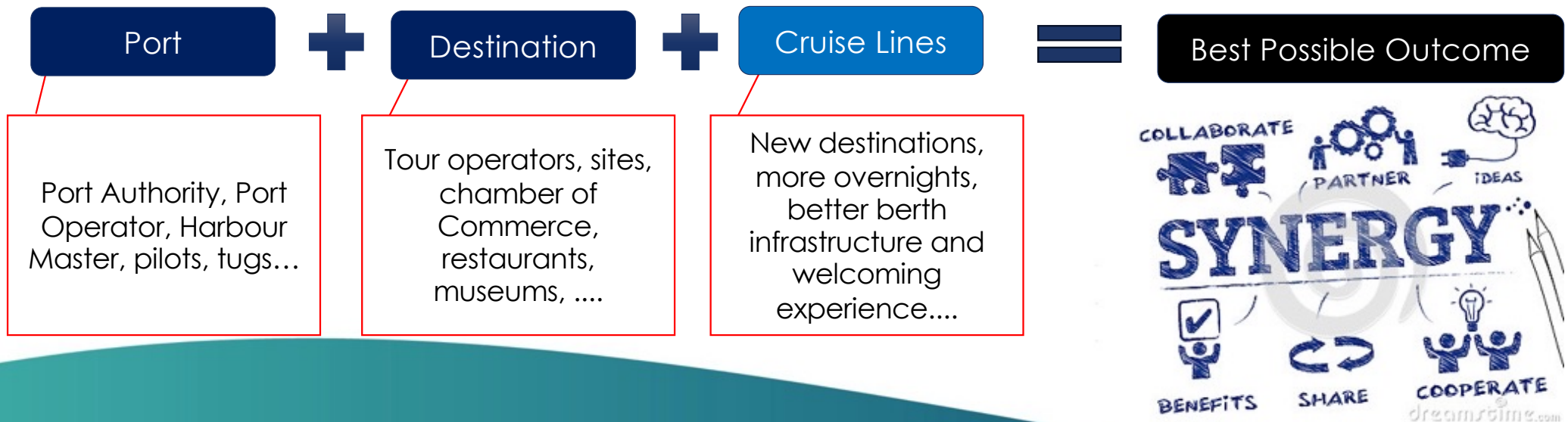
- ① There is no tailor-made berth allocation decision applicable to all.
- ② Planning itineraries, not destinations
- ③ Every port/destination is different
- ④ Two Berthing slots are never the same
- ⑤ Weather conditions can be instrumental
- ⑥ Consider capacity beyond the port infrastructure
- ⑦ Resist external pressures
- ⑧ Base any applicable cap /berthing limits on the actual capacity of vessels
- ⑨ Synergies are too important and include cooperation between ports
- ⑩ The significance of B2B relations should not be underestimated
- ⑪ Direct application (Limit intermediates)
- ⑫ Simplicity
- ⑬ Transparency
- ⑭ Any decision 2 years before – with amendments concluding 18 months before the cruise period

# THERE IS NO PERFECT SOLUTION

No formula-driven approach



But a viable and workable alternative exists.



# A WORKABLE BERTH BOOKING PROCESS FOR 2026

Cruise Lines

Ports

November 2024

1 Deadline for submitting Call requests

January 2025

2 Confirmation of calls & berth

2 Alternative days offered

2 Confirmation of calls & Class of berth

2 Priority statement

February 2025

3 Alternative days confirmed

3 Objections to assigned berth submitted

4 Reply to objections

5 Considering late (post-Nov 24) requests

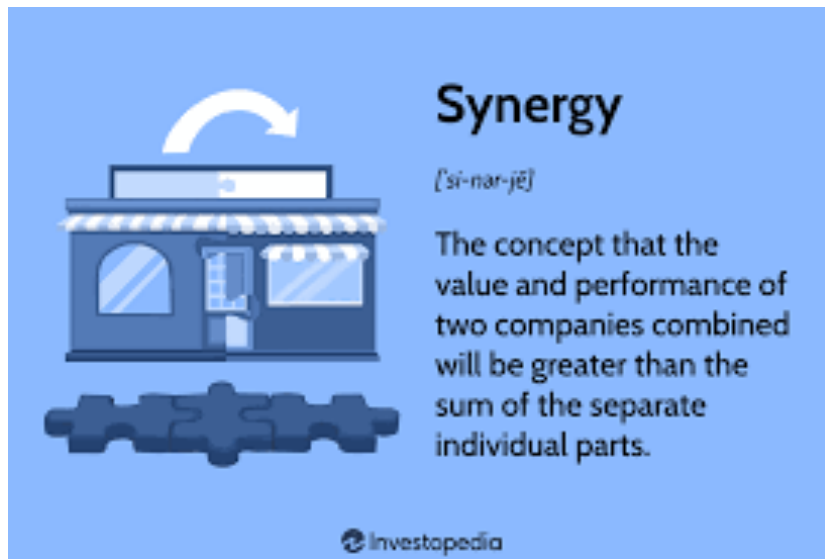
April 2025

6 Ends the period to cancel or to request a change of the call date with no penalty.

Post-November 24 requests are considered on a 'first-come, first-served basis'



# SHAPING THE CRUISE WORLD VIA MEANINGFUL SYNERGIES



Thanos Pallis

Department of Maritime Studies

University of Piraeus

Greece

[apallis@unipi.gr](mailto:apallis@unipi.gr)