

Press release: Video 5: how technology from racing boats is being used aboard commercial shipping

On every Thursday in October, Eurolarge Innovation posted a Bretagne Sailing Valley® video on the theme of the Vendée Globe. The final one was shown on 29th October and was dedicated to the transfer of technology from sail boats to merchant shipping. Marc Van Peteghem, co-founder of the VPLP design team, Yann Penfornis, managing director of the Multiplast yard and Vincent Drévillon, assistant director at Pixel sur Mer, talked about this important process of diversification concerning all those involved in the sector.

Over the past few years, several types of technology developed for sail racing have been applied to the area of commercial shipping. That is in particular the case for projects that are now well advanced in the area of hybrid propulsion systems (sail/wing and engine). VPLP has been working on a 121m long transporter named Canopée, which is fitted with four wings offering a total surface area of 360 m², which by 2022 will be used to transport parts for the Ariane 6 rocket launcher from Europe to Kourou (French Guiana) with eleven return trips scheduled each year.

"We first became interested in this shipping problem in 2009 after the America's Cup when foils and wings first appeared," explained Marc Van Peteghem. "People thought we were dreamers, but over the past five years international shipping rules have become stricter to encourage the use of ships that are environmentally friendlier, which has led owners to become interested in our solutions. There is now much more pressure from society and what used to be seen as a constraint can now become a commercial advantage." The VPLP team has also been working on a project for a passenger ferry fitted with foils which will be used to transport people between islands. This is yet another example of the transfer of technology from sail racing to the transport sector. "This technology results from French know-how in sail racing and there is now a sector developing using wind power to propel commercial shipping," added the designer.

As for the Multiplast yard, they have been asked by the Chantiers de l'Atlantique shipyard to work on a rigid wing system referred to as Solid Sail. Initially tested on a J80, then on Jean Le Cam's Imoca, it is expected to be applied to cruise liners. *"The Chantiers de l'Atlantique yard has begun to present this solution to their major clients and they appear to be very interested, so they are now working on a project for a 200m long liner with three 85m masts and 1200 m² of sails," explained Yann Penfornis. Multiplast has been commissioned to build the top half of the sail with a 1:5 scale model of the balestron rig being tested on the harbourside in Pornichet.*

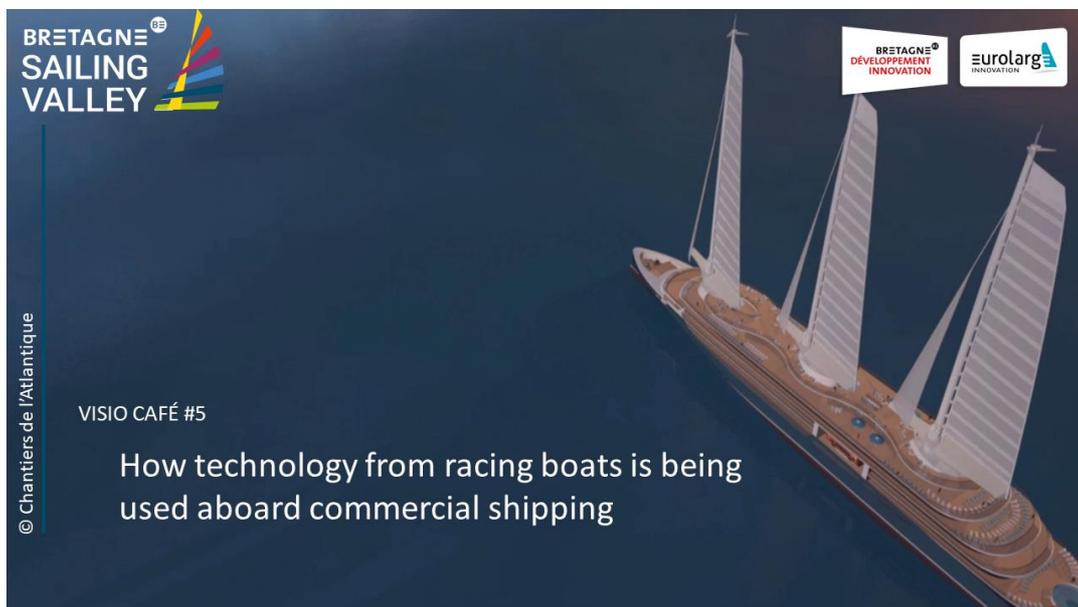
The new commercial shipping market is starting to open up for Pixel sur Mer, a firm specialising in onboard electronics developed for the ocean racing sector. *"Everything we developed for the gear aboard the boats used for acquiring and transmitting data and controlling how the boat flies, now interests these major clients,"* explained Vincent Drévilon. *"Ocean racing is a fantastic platform for testing and approving equipment for the industry, as we work on finding a solution within a fairly extreme environment, which means we deal with reliability, low consumption, miniaturisation and affordability. Firms come to us primarily to seek out this innovation."*

While for Pixel sur Mer, it is too soon to see how this interest will develop into increased turnover, for VPLP and Multiplast, that is definitely the goal. *"We would like to see the shipping market represent a third of our business,"* confirmed Marc Van Peteghem, who, with this in mind, launched a company dedicated to the development of wings, Ayro. *"The cruise liner market could represent 30-40% of our annual turnover,"* added Yann Penfornis, *"which is far from being a minor detail."*

**Go to the replay of the Bretagne Sailing Valley video coffee,
Subtitled in English (activate the YouTube subtitling function)**



[How technology from racing boats is being used aboard commercial shipping](#)



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