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New Kite System for Ships Tried on Transatlantic Voyage

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France-based wind propulsion specialist Airseas is sharing the first footage of its automated kite system Seawing in use during transatlantic sea trials.

The trial took place on board the roll-on/roll-off ship *Ville de Bordeaux* as it transported aircraft components between Europe and the United States. With the release of the new footage, Airseas is also announcing the successful completion of the crucial initial stages of sea trials.

Flying at an altitude of about 200 meters, the Seawing system comes in both 250 sq meter 500 sq meter versions, both of which are currently in trial.

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In the aerospace and maritime sectors, Seawing is aiming to slash fuel consumption and emissions by harnessing the wind to reduce the main engine load. It's using "digital twins" and advanced automation system could be safely deployed, operated and stored at the push of a button with minimal input with.

The Seawing system has applications on virtually any type of commercial vessel. Airseas has also received firm orders from K Line, a Japanese shipowner who owns the fifth largest fleet worldwide, for five Seawing systems, with additional options to equip up to 51 vessels in total.

Airseas says the first stages of the sea trials have successfully validated key steps such as the folding and unfolding of the wing, take-off and landing, and flights in altitude. The next phase will test the Seawing in a broader range of weather conditions and fine-tune the automation system.

“Seeing the Seawing in action on a commercial vessel is such a proud moment for us, and the culmination of years of meticulous research and development,” said Vincent Bernatets, CEO of Airseas. “Testing a brand new technology in real-life conditions and while respecting the operational constraints of a commercial ship is an ambitious endeavour, and the solid progress of our sea trials is a testimony to the dedication of our team of engineers on board and on shore.”

“With these strong initial results, we’re more determined than ever to keep testing the system and collecting data, and accelerate our mission to scale up and rapidly deploy wind propulsion technology on vessels around the world. Immediate action is needed to tackle climate change and shipping’s impact on GHG emissions; we are proud to have a solution that can help ships reduce their emissions right now, and accelerate the decarbonisation of the maritime sector over the coming years,” Bernatets added.

The deployment of Seawing on commercial voyages could mark an important milestone for wind propulsion technology in commercial maritime shipping, which is responsible for about 3% of global greenhouse gas emissions.

“We are committed to playing an active role in reducing shipping’s carbon emissions, starting now. We are proud to be associated with this project as a supplier and partner of Airbus, working for the success of this innovative wind propulsion solution alongside Airseas,” said Antoine Person, Corporate Secretary of Louis Dreyfus Armateurs.

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