

MEDIA INFORMATION

Micheline Calmy-Rey to name and launch the “sun21” solar boat in Basel before it leaves for New York

At 6:30 pm on Monday, 16 October 2006, the “sun21” catamaran will set off from Basel Schiffflände on the world’s first solar-powered transatlantic crossing. Its ultimate destination – New York. The vessel, which sleeps up to five people, is powered only by the solar energy produced on board. Before it leaves, it will be officially launched by Federal Councillor Micheline Calmy-Rey. The crossing is being sponsored by the transatlantic21 association under the guidance of Daniela Schlettwein-Gsell, a doctor from Basel.

Once the boat has completed the overland trip to Basel from its berth in Yvonand (Vaud), it will be christened “sun21” at a ceremony to take place before an invited audience on 16 October 2006. The transatlantic21 association considers it a great honour to have the boat christened by Federal Councillor Micheline Calmy-Rey. The WWF will also be sending the boat its best wishes for the journey.

As soon as it has been officially christened, the “sun21” will set off on the first part of its journey to Rotterdam, while the guests at the christening ceremony are treated to a preview of the film “An Inconvenient Truth”, based on the remarkable “Travelling Global Warming Show” by Al Gore. The film is being presented by the energy forum sun21.

The boat will be open to the public for viewing on Saturday, 14 October 2006, from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm on the Kleinbasel side of the Dreirosenbrücke. The crew members are already looking forward to meeting and talking to visitors.

The transatlantic record attempt itself will begin at the end of November in Seville, Spain. The journey will take in the Cape Verde Islands in the Caribbean en route to Florida. From there, the boat will sail along the American coast to New York, an official arrival celebration is being planned to mark the completion of its 7,000 mile journey on 8 May 2007. It will be the longest-ever voyage attempted by a solar boat.

Sun in place of diesel

The innovative solar boat was built by MW-Line at its shipyard in Yverdon in the west of Switzerland. The “sun21” is fourteen metres long and six metres wide. Fitted out with solar cells, batteries and electric motors, the catamaran will travel day and night without using a single drop of fuel.

The boat offers sea-going accommodation for five people. It will be captained by Mark Wüst and Michel Thonney, who both hail from western Switzerland. The other members of the crew are Martin Vosseler, a doctor from Basel, the historian Beat von Scarpatetti and Professor David Senn, who will be carrying out marine biology studies during the trip.

The transatlantic21 association was founded specifically for this project. It is funded by a group of idealistic private individuals led by Daniela Schlettwein-Gsell, a doctor from Basel.

Solar boats are the future

The promoters of this record attempt wish to provide a vivid demonstration of the tremendous potential of solar technology - even in sea transportation. They feel that renewable solar energy could provide the power for many of the world's growing number of cargo vessels and leisure craft. The know-how and technology are already available and there is nothing to stop it from being put into practice – as transatlantic21 is about to demonstrate. To take just one example, the solar-powered electric motors used to power the “sun21” could in future replace the two-stroke engines that take sailing boats into harbour.

After Bertrand Piccard's solar-powered flight around the world scheduled for 2011, and the plan to circumnavigate the globe in a combined solar-hydrogen boat announced recently in Romandy, the transatlantic21 is now the third solar project from Switzerland with the potential to break records. The “sun21” catamaran is the most advanced of these projects. All three teams involved are working closely together. The experience gained in crossing the Atlantic will benefit the projects that follow.

For more information, please visit: www.transatlantic21.ch

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Basel, 9 October 2006

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FACTS

Catamaran Aquabus C60 type sun21

Dimensions:

Length: 14.0 m

Width: 6.6 m

Draft: 0.8 m

Empty weight: 11 t

Fully loaded weight: 14 t

Propeller: 2x diam. 60 cm, carbon

Material: fiber glass, polyester resin and aluminium

Power:

Electrical engine EE2 from MW-Line: 2x8 kW

Batteries dryfit lead: 2x800 kg

Batteries tension: 48 V

Solar:

Solar panels: silicium monocristallin

Solar panel surface: 65 m²

Solar power: 10 kW

Economical speed: 5 knots (9.2 km/h)

Maximum speed (batteries): 7 knots (12.6 km/h)

Maximum speed (sun): 7 knots (12.6 km/h)

Batteries autonomy:

Cruise speed autonomy without sun (5 knots): 2 nights or 18 hours or 90 nautical miles (166 km)

Furniture:

Beds: 6

Kitchen

Bathroom

Clear water tanks: 600 litres

Radar

Satellite communication phone

Auto pilot

VHF

Tender for 5 persons with electric engine

Safety material

Boat builder:

MW-Line SA, ch. des Cerisiers 27, CH-1462 Yvonand, www.mwline.ch

BILDER/IMAGES/PICTURES



Catamaran Aquabus C60 Typ sun21

Logo transatlantic21



Bildmaterial kann unter
www.transatlantic21.ch/medien herunter geladen werden.

Vous trouverez également ces images sous
www.transatlantic21.ch/medien.

The graphical material can be downloaded at
www.transatlantic21.ch/medien.

transatlantic21

The first Atlantic crossing in a solar boat



“Nothing is stronger than an idea whose time has come.”
(Victor Hugo)

The time is ripe for the broad use of solar technology. The fact that this especially applies to navigation will be proven with the construction and journey of the solar boat “sun21“. During the winter of 2006/2007, the catamaran will travel from Basel to New York, thereby becoming the first entirely solar-powered boat to cross the Atlantic.

Solar boats are vessels with electric engines that are powered by photovoltaic cells. No other vehicle is better suited to transforming photovoltaic energy into mobility. This technology is quite advanced and has demonstrated its potential in practice. Environmentally friendly solar energy could be used to power a large proportion of the increasing number of ocean-going commercial vessels, as well as many leisure boats. The technology of solar boats is part of the future; it needs increased publicity and acceptance to enable its breakthrough. This is the objective of transatlantic21.

The Idea

transatlantic21 has constructed an ocean-going vessel that is powered exclusively by solar energy. In the winter of 2006/2007, it will be the first solar boat to cross the Atlantic. This new record will demonstrate the great potential of this ecological and sustainable technology, stimulating new ideas to enable its breakthrough.

The boat will be christened in Basel in October 2006 and will start its journey with a promotional tour down the Rhine to Rotterdam, from where the “sun21“ will be shipped to the south of Spain. The actual record route across the Atlantic will start from Seville in November. The route will go via the Canary Islands and Cape Verde to the West Indies, and from there to Florida. The boat will continue its trip along the US coast to New York, where the “sun21“ will arrive in the spring of 2007, having covered about 7,000 sea miles.

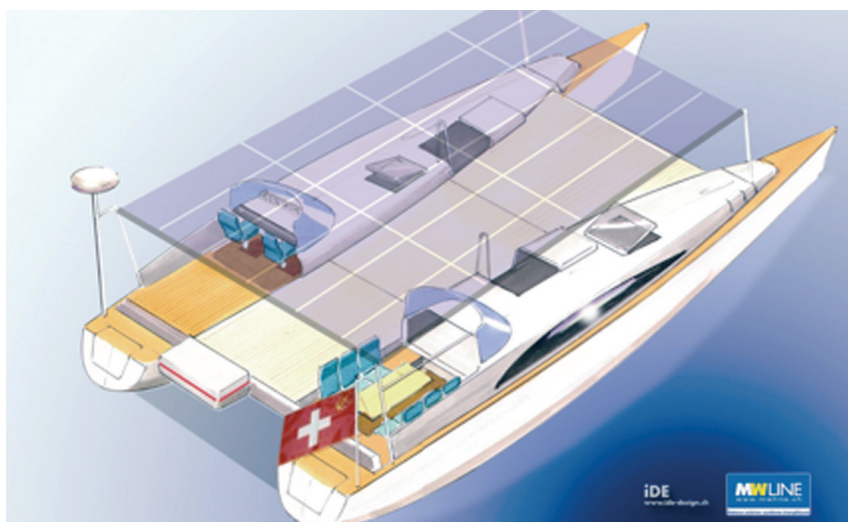


The Goals

- The first Atlantic crossing in a specially constructed solar boat will be an unqualified success and lead to an entry in Guinness World Records.
- The public will be made aware of the potential and advantages of solar boat technology and the industry will be encouraged to invest in new developments.
- The project will produce important practical findings for the use of ocean-going solar boats, not least for the planned circumnavigation of the earth by the PlanetSolar team.
- MW-Line will gain further experience in solar boat technology and will establish itself as a pioneer in the conception and construction of solar boats.
- With this special innovation, Switzerland will demonstrate its commitment to the development of sustainable sources of energy.

"sun21"

The "sun21", is a MW-Line type C 60 catamaran with the same hull construction as the boats that were built for Expo.02, the Swiss National Exhibition. The boat is around 14 meters long and 6.6 meters wide. It will sleep 5 to 6 people for the several weeks of the ocean crossing, and has room for several dozen visitors when moored. In addition to the bunks, there is a floating galley attached to one hull and sanitary installations linked to the other. Between the hulls there is a large deck covered by a roof with photovoltaic panels. Solar panels, batteries and engines allow an average speed of 5 to 6 knots (10 to 12 km/h), 24 hours a day, which equals the average speed of sailing yachts.



The Organizers

transatlantic21 (www.transatlantic21.ch)

The transatlantic21 association was established in December 2005 by a group of private individuals connected with sun21 for the sole purpose of financing and realizing the project. The association will handle project management and communications. Financing is guaranteed by a group of committed individuals.

sun21 (www.sun21.ch)

The sun21 association was founded in 1997 in Basel as an association to promote the efficient use and application of renewable forms of energy. Among other initiatives, the association organizes an annual energy forum for experts in the field and also undertakes specific projects. The transatlantic21 project is honoring the 10-year anniversary of this association by giving the boat the same name.

MW-Line (www.mwline.ch)

MW-Line SA, a private company based in Yvonand on Lake Neuchatel, is an international pioneer in the development and construction of solar boats. Since 1991, the small team has built more than a dozen medium-sized solar boats. The company received special attention for building the four solar-powered catamarans that were used during Expo.02, the Swiss National Exhibition. MW-Line is responsible for the conception and construction of the “sun21“, as well as for organizing and captaining the journey.

The Organization

A variety of individuals are involved in the project. Once built by the team at MW-Line, the boat will be handed over to its crew: Mark Wüst, MW-Line, Skipper 1, Michel Thonney, Skipper 2, Martin Vosseler, MD, President of transatlantic21, Beat von Scarpatetti, Ph.D., Director of transatlantic21 and Prof. David Senn, Professor of Zoology and Marine Biology at the University of Basel.

As a Director, Dr Daniela Schlettwein-Gsell, MD, has built up the financing network and will handle relations with partner organizations at the various stopovers. Communications and information are the responsibility of Urs Wehrli.

Communications

The first Atlantic crossing in a solar boat will not only be a technical adventure; it also needs special PR promotion. There are many possibilities:

- Media work during the entire project (concept, construction, journey preparation, start, arrival, etc).
- Media and social events and networking to mark key milestones.
- Day visits or short-term trips for journalists or VIPs.
- Interactive website to track progress.
- Environmental projects for schools, etc.

Partnerships

transatlantic21 is also looking for active collaboration with partner organizations. The “sun21“ project depends on broad support. Meanwhile, the pioneering spirit of the parties involved, not to mention a fascinating boat, provide an attractive platform for communications. transatlantic21 welcomes partnership and ideas from any quarter.

- Celebrities and other top people who will publicly express their support for “sun 21“ and thereby improve the public’s perceptions of the project.
- Related organizations and bodies with the same objectives who wish to use the boat for their own events while at the same time perpetuating the messages of the project.
- Schools and teachers, who can actively follow the adventure and use it as a platform for discussing the future of the world’s energy supply and energy use.

Research Projects

transatlantic21 is more than just the promise of a record, it also includes research projects. All types of technical data will be collected and evaluated in order to serve future projects.

For Professor David Senn, this journey will also offer ideal conditions for studies in marine biology, with the water near and the speed constant. Among other observations, he intends to analyze plankton across the Atlantic. Phytoplankton and zooplankton will be recorded microscopically for their biodiversity. The results will be evaluated in cooperation with the University of Basel, with the hope of finding additional data for the analysis of climate change.

Follow-Up

After the Atlantic crossing, the boat will continue to promote the idea of sustainable energy. Traveling on a solar boat is a very special experience, as the electric engines function with hardly any noise, therefore making the power they generate even more impressive. The boat’s maintenance is relatively simple, which means the first solar boat to cross the Atlantic could easily be converted into a party or excursion boat for two or three dozen people. For example, its use in this capacity would attract a great deal of attention in Valencia in 2007 during the America’s Cup. It might also be used to run tourist excursions. Other ideas are welcome.

Contact

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Partners:

www.sun21.ch

www.mwline.ch

www.wwf.org

transatlantic21, Basel, May 2006