

## Groundbreaking Offshore platform takes shape



A FLOATING concrete platform housing an offshore regasification plant will be floated out of the port of Algeciras this summer and towed to the Adriatic Sea, where it will operate anchored off the Italian coast.

The port's natural deepwater and favourable climate have made it an ideal location for the construction of unusual projects such as this.

The platform, pictured, is being built by Aker Kvaerner and Dragados Offshore and represents a groundbreaking engineering concept.

It has generated significant employment and expertise in a region where unemployment is a major problem.

This is not the first such project. Prior to this, the port was used by Dragados, FCC and Bec as the site for building a floating concrete dock now installed in the port of La Condamine, in Monaco.

Authorities in Algeciras are keen to attract as much of this business as it can because of the major economic impact of the work on the region.

At its peak, more than 1,200 people have been employed directly in building the plant although the average number of workers at the site over the past three years has been around 500.

It is not just about direct jobs but also about the knock-on benefits for

companies ranging from freight forwarders and ship agents to the local hotels and restaurants that host visiting dignitaries.

The plant, with an annual regasification capacity of 8bn cu m, is part of a broader gas project owned primarily by ExxonMobil and Qatar Gas.

The concrete structure on which it is built measures 180 m in length, 80 m in width and 47 m in height — with the superstructure including an accommodation block with space to house 60 people.

There are unconfirmed reports of another similar project already lined up once this platform is completed.

# Algeciras move works well for Perez

## Lawyer opens office in home city to help develop growing logistics platform

BACK in 2006, after working for more than 20 years in international law firms in London and Madrid, Algeciras-born lawyer Carlos Perez had high hopes for his new business venture, Perez Albors.

He had just set up an office in Madrid and decided to also open offices in Algeciras and Sotogrande (an exclusive luxury retreat near his home town) to offer specialist maritime services in a region where shipping and transport services were in high demand.

He was banking that growing maritime trade would lead to a parallel increase in demand for related legal service and, two years on, his expectations "have been exceeded by far".

"More and more operators are coming to the area, attracted by the present expansion and the potential business opportunities," explained Mr Perez. "Shipping is a very specialised and sophisticated business and clients demand maritime specialists who can combine local market knowledge with solid, international track records. Algeciras is no exception and both established domestic clients and international players with a presence in the area require more first-class legal advice and input than ever before."

The nature of the work can vary from ship arrests to cargo claims and salvage or collision work.

Mr Perez, formerly a partner at both Stephenson Harwood and DLA Piper, is

among the many experienced maritime players who are helping to develop the Strait of Gibraltar as a logistics platform offering every sort of service a client might need.

Despite keen competition between the ports in the area in some types of business, the general consensus on both sides of the Strait is that there is a common benefit to working together.

Having offices in Madrid, Algeciras and Sotogrande, as well as an associated office in northern Spain, Mr Perez is convinced this will mean more work for companies like his.

"Definitely, these are exciting times for Algeciras and its neighbouring ports," he said. "No doubt they will continue to succeed in making the Strait a key spot in the international maritime scene."



Perez: expectations for legal services demand have been greatly exceeded.

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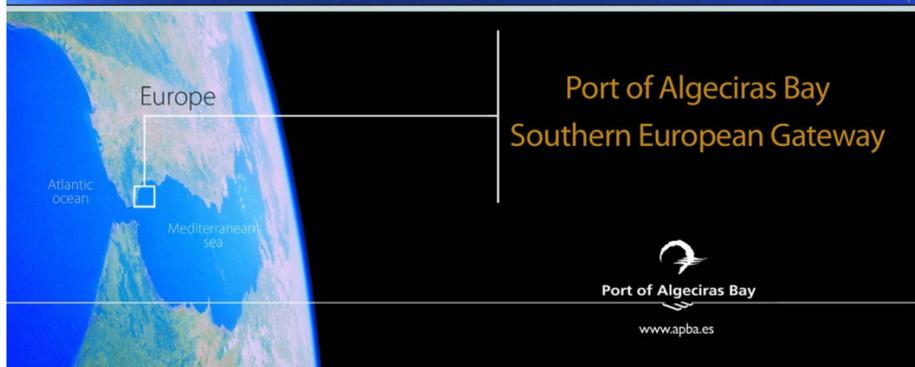
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