

HMM steps up interest in car carriers as container market tanks

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Newbuilding contract signing / Credit: China State Shipbuilding Corporation

HMM has joined its peers in looking at the burgeoning car carrier segment to ensure steady revenue streams as the container shipping segment continues waning.

South Korea's flagship carrier has joined Ocean Network Express' affiliate Seaspac Corporation in booking 10,800-unit pure car and truck carriers (PCTC) for long-term charter to Hyundai Motor's shipping arm Hyundai Glovis. To be LNG dual-fuelled, these will be the largest ever PCTCs to be built, and are intended to carry electric vehicles.

China State Shipbuilding Corporation announced during the ongoing Marintec China exhibition that its subsidiaries, Guangzhou Shipyard International (GSI), and Shanghai Waigaoqiao Shipbuilding (SWS), had won the PCTC orders from HMM and Seaspac, respectively.

HMM has commissioned six vessels at GSI, with options for another four vessels, while Seaspac booked an identical order at SWS, all for 10-year charter to Hyundai Glovis. The newbuildings are expected to be delivered in 2026; the options must be exercised in the next three months.

HMM, like other container carriers, is diversifying into the growing PCTC segment, and in March, had already ordered three 8,600-unit PCTC at GSI, also for charter to Glovis. *Container News* was also told that HMM had ordered another four PCTCs before the latest commission at GSI, but additional details were not released.

HMM's spokesperson told *Container News* that re-entering the market for PCTCs is part of its business growth strategy. The company had operated PCTCs more than a decade ago, but exited the business due to restructuring.

The spokesperson said, "HMM unveiled a future growth strategy to diversify its business portfolio in July last year, including the expansion of bulk business, and the order of PCTC is in line with these plans. We will keep monitoring the PCTC markets for flexible response and, at the same time, will continue to seek other various business opportunities."

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