

News story: Government pledges to double UK fleet flying under the Red Duster

Britain's famous Red Duster will fly proudly in new ports across the globe as part of our new trade drive after our exit from the EU.

The flag of the UK's Merchant Navy, more properly known as the Red Ensign, is one of the most admired and well known emblems on the high seas with every vessel sporting it under the protection of the Royal Navy.

And now Shipping Minister John Hayes wants to increase the amount of trade carried under the Duster to showcase Britain's trading and maritime might around the world.

The government is working to double the size of the UK Ship Register from 16 to 30 million gross tonnage after we leave and build a new partnership with the EU – propelling the UK from 15th place into the top 10 global maritime nations. This will be good for the UK, helping boost trade and exports, create jobs and ultimately boost the economy across the UK.

Maritime Minister John Hayes will use next week's London International Shipping Week to start the drive for new business, selling the main benefits of flying the British flag including:

- international tax breaks for vessels flying the Duster
- British consular support for ships in foreign docks
- the protection of the Royal Navy

Shipping Week is expected to feature ministers from up to 50 nations around the world and up to 15,000 high level shipping delegates.

Maritime Minister John Hayes said:

In Britain's post Brexit future we will grow the Red Duster, forging new global relationships.

Our ship register has a special significance and our flag is of distinct quality.

Unfurling the Red Duster shows Britain's maritime leadership to the world. Once again Britannia rules the waves and the UK will be a dominant maritime force.

The UK Ship Register team has taken great strides to ensure the Red Ensign is more commercially attractive to a 21st century shipping community. For instance, the register's customer account managers are available around the

clock to registered vessels, meaning doing business has never been easier.

The register shows the size of our fleet, measured by the number of vessels and by gross tonnage. It grew by 11.5% between 2015 and 2017.

New-build vessels registered from companies such as Atlantic Container Lines, Stena and Stolt Tankers helped increase the UK's gross tonnage from 14,470,895 to 16,067,921 over the last 2 years.

Overseen by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, the ship register has a reputation for maintaining the highest international standards ever since it was established by an act of King George III in 1785.

On top of the prestige of donning the world's most recognisable maritime flag, vessels carrying the Red Duster will benefit from British consular support, a world class tonnage tax regime and low registration, survey and certification costs with no annual renewal fees.

The news comes as the UK showcases the best of its maritime industry at London International Shipping Week 2017, which runs from September 11 to 15 2017.