

Report: MSC Proposes Take Over of Romania's Mangalia Shipyard

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by The Maritime Executive



Damen had operated the yard for the past few years and now MSC is reported to be seeking the yard (file photo)

The Romanian government has according to reports in the media received a surprise proposal for the management and operation of the Mangalia shipyard from MSC Mediterranean Shipping Group. The government has been considering alternatives for the shipyard after the collapse of an agreement with Damen Group sent the yard into insolvency.

Europa Libera Romania reports it has seen a letter sent from MSC Shipmanagement to the government in April that expressed the group's interest in the shipyard. It cites the company's need for repair facilities as well as potentially newbuild capabilities. They report the letter says MSC would take over the management and operation of the shipyard and bring in outside management to assist in restoring the operations.

MSC says it is interested in Mangalia because its newbuilding is currently concentrated for containerships in Asia and cruise ships in Europe. MSC reportedly told the government it intends to consider the shipyard for the future construction of cruise ships, ropax, and tugboats. The company also said it was paying in advance for repair work to provide the yard funds for hiring back employees.

Owning over 600 containerships and managing a total fleet of nearly 1,000 containerships plus its cruise ships, ferries, tugs, and the recent entry into the car carrier segment, MSC reports it needs more shipyard capacity. It cites that it already owns space in Antwerp and Naples which also gives it experience in managing shipyard operations.

MSC however is reported to have competition for the shipyard. The government had started seeking investors early in 2025 and the media indicated Turkey's Desan was in advanced negotiations for Mangalia. The media stories said Desan was proposing to rent the yard facilities from the government and hire the workforce. Desan is reported to be interested in Mangalia for additional production capacity and because it has larger dry docks which would permit work on post-Panamax vessels.

It is unclear from the reports how MSC proposed to structure its deal with the government for the yard. Mangalia is undergoing insolvency proceedings with reports it has debts of more than €400 million (\$460 million). The yard may need to be reorganized before a new agreement can be completed.

Mangalia which was established by the government in 1976 had been closed since 2024 after Damen notified the government of its intent to end a joint venture in which it owns 49 percent of the yard. Damen had taken over the yard in 2018 after South Korea's Daewoo Shipbuilding & Marine Engineer ended a partnership that had begun in 1997.

Damen highlighted when it formed the joint venture that the yard had three large drydocks and it was the largest in its group. It said Mangalia had delivered over 200 ships, but the company was hurt by the downturn in shipbuilding and especially the offshore sector.

Romanian media indicate the yard resumed work in May 2025 with two ship repair assignments and a third to follow. It reportedly has brought back approximately 800 workers and has at least 13 more repair projects scheduled for the second half of 2025. is momentum."