

## **Workshop 9:**

### **Progress towards a Maritime Transport Space without barriers**



## **Report**

### **Chair and Speakers of Workshop 9** *(by order of intervention):*

Ms Kersti KARLSSON (Chair), Chairman of the Shipping Group of the Council of the EU

Mr Dimitrios THEOLOGITIS, European Commission, DG for Energy and Transport, Head of Unit for Maritime Transport and Ports Policy, Maritime Security.

Mr Paul TOURET, Scientific Counsellor, the Conference of Maritime Peripheral Regions

Mr Willem VAN DER SCHALK, Chairman of the Maritime Transport Institute, CLECAT

Mr George BAX, Supply Chain Services, International Trade Operations Europe, Dow Benelux BV

Mr Alfons GUINIER, Secretary General of ECSA, European Community Ship-owners Association

Mr Jonathan WILLIAMS, General Manager FONASBA / ECASBA

### **1. Key messages:**

The panellists and the audience gave an enthusiastic reception to the Commission action plan with a view to establishing a European Maritime Transport Space without Barriers (EMTSwB) in view to supporting Short Sea Shipping (SSS). However they underlined that the foreseen administrative simplification will still require a lot of work involving numerous stakeholders and administrations. An integrated approach is thus necessary.

A balance has to be found between administrative simplification and safety/security. Administrative simplification shall also benefit to SSS including calls in non-European ports.

A wider use of interoperable information technologies will also play a prominent role to further reduce delays and costs induced by

administrative formalities and enhance the competitiveness of EU industry.

## **2. Summary of the interventions from the Panel and reactions/questions from the floor:**

The objective of the EMTSwB is to make maritime transport more efficient by abolishing administrative formalities for Community goods at their arrival and at departure from EU ports. It will complete the internal market in maritime transport. The Commission identified a number of actions contributing to this objective. Amongst the measures to be taken at EU level, the most important one will be the simplification for customs procedures for SSS vessels. The generalisation of enhanced electronic data transmission systems for administration to business communication and the creation of an administrative single window at national level will facilitate further the overall administrative procedures.

The Chairperson, Kersti Karlsson introduced the issue. The objective of the workshop is an exchange of views between shipping companies, ports, shippers and national public administrations on the best way for implementing these short and medium term measures and maximising their positive effects for maritime trade. The Chairperson recalled the Council Conclusions recently adopted on 30 March which are very favourable to the concept of EMTSwB and the Commission action plan. For decades, there has been a consensus that SSS should be promoted for transport and environmental reasons. However, only limited progress has been achieved yet. Cutting red tape is necessary for SSS but one should take care to avoid a trade-off between security/safety and administrative simplification.

Dimitrios Theologitis representing the European Commission set the scene and presented the three short term measures, the four medium term measures and the four recommendations to the Member States proposed by the Commission in order to simplify administrative procedures applying to SSS. Customs simplification is the most important measure, which will be tackled through an amendment of the implementing provisions of the EU Customs Code. In addition, the Commission adopted a legislative proposal in order to clarify the application of the IMO/FAL requirements and rationalise procedures for the arrival/departure at from EU ports. Dimitrios Theologitis also reported about the progress of discussions in the various EU institutions.

Paul Turret recalled the objectives of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR), notably its willingness to limit the negative effects of being in the periphery. SSS is a priority for the CPMR. An obstacle to the development of SSS is the excessive customs and administrative procedures and CPRM supports the concept of the EMTSwB.

The CPMR proposes the creation of a multimodal transport document/contract for door-to-door transport.

Willem van der Schalk representing CLECAT reported the difficulties encountered by logistic providers. CLECAT represents the European freight forwarders and customs agents. Promotion of SSS is important in the present crisis and could stimulate EU trade. 41% of intra EU trade is carried by SSS of which 28% is pure internal market. A level playing field should be established with the other modes. However the legislator must act cautiously in order to avoid contradictory effects. EMTSwB is one element in a broader picture including the improvement of infrastructure, port services, technology and human factor.

George Bax representing the European Shippers Council considered that there is a large progression margin to improve the market share of maritime transport of chemical products. Customs procedures can be rendered less cumbersome for maritime transport as there is today a too wide difference between trucks and vessels. Electronic declarations will largely speed up the maritime transport of goods, reduce errors and increase safety. Challenges for customs are the ability to tackle rapidly last minute changes, disparities between Member States practices and between transport modes. He underlined the unnecessary costs for the shippers for developing different software solutions for the different transport modes. In summary, administrative data should be transmitted once in a simpler and more efficient way.

Alfons Guinier representing the European Community Shipowners' Association (ECSA) recalled past initiatives to facilitate SSS, including the introduction in the Customs facilitation for Authorised Regular Shipping Services. However, progress shall be pursued in order to reduce the distortion between procedures applied to maritime and the other transport modes. He supported the previous speakers, for instance the need to avoid new customs measures which could induce contrary effects, notably for feeding services. Travels between EU ports including a call in a third country should also benefit from facilitations, as Community goods and non Community goods can be easily distinguished and treated in two different ways. His association welcomes each measure foreseen by the Commission action plan with a view to establishing the EMTSwB, e.g. the recognition of English as the language of shipping and the recommendation to Member States to authorise the granting of Pilot Exemption Certificates for shipmasters showing all necessary qualifications. Concerning the single contract, he encouraged the entry into force of the Rotterdam Rules developed in UNCITRAL.

Jonathan Williams representing the European Community Association of Ship Brokers and Agent (ECASBA) described the tasks performed by shipping agents who are acting as port Single Windows. His association supports the implementation of the EMTSwB and most of the proposed actions. He considered that considering the high cost of maritime transport and port calls, administrative procedures and notably

inspections, should fit with the vessels' needs, not the inspectors' needs. Existing facilitations as the IMO/FAL Convention should be fully applied. Electronic data transmission should be generalised, but the existing systems should be integrated, not superseded. English is the lingua franca for maritime transport and it should be used as such according to EU laws. ECASBA does not support the use of the ADR Regulation for dangerous goods moved by vessels as this Regulation is not accepted by Third Countries for maritime purposes, as well as separate area for SSS in ports as it is seldom feasible.

The presentations were followed by a debate with the audience on the EMTSwB and on possible additional measures, notably the need to continuously improve environmental performance of SSS in parallel to its promotion, underlining the role of pilots to ensure safety in ports, the usefulness to provide information on port services and maritime lines to the users through up-dated guides.

In conclusion, the Chairperson, Ms Kersti Karlsson observed that the EMTSwB was a very popular subject, but much work has still to be done to make it fly. Simplification should not lead to increased safety/security risks. The issue involves a range of administrative and private stakeholders and an integrated approach is required in order to solve it.