Report on Workshop C – Maritime Safety

**Moderator: Mr Pierre Schellekens, Head of Unit, DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, European Commission**

**Summary**

The Baltic Sea today is one of the busiest seas in the world, accounting for more than 15% of the world’s cargo transportation. According to the Automatic Identification System (AIS) data, around 56,000 ships were plying the waters of the Baltic Sea last year. There are about 2,000 ships in the Baltic marine area at any given moment. Forecasts indicate that due to economic growth, especially in the eastern part of the region, the amount of cargo shipped on the Baltic will soon double from 500 million tonnes a year to 1,000 million tonnes annually by 2015. The transportation of oil and other potentially hazardous cargoes is growing steeply and steadily. By 2015 a 40% increase is expected in the amounts of oil being shipped on the Baltic, which currently stand at 170 million tonnes of oil a year. The use of much bigger tankers is also expected to rise – there will be more tankers in the Baltic carrying 100,000-150,000 tonnes of oil. In addition, with increasing shipping, ship accidents with possible loss of life, injuries and environmental pollution have become more probable. Thus, the enormous growth in Baltic shipping makes us keep maritime safety and security issues high on the agenda.

With the active role and intensive work of HELCOM in the field if maritime safety and security, much progress has already been achieved in the Baltic. Nevertheless, there is still room for improvements, especially concerning more efficient cooperation in the Baltic. Cross-sectoral and cross-border integration of surveillance systems, including a pilot project in the Baltic, a Formal Safety Assessment and harmonization of VTS reporting systems should be achieved. There is also a need for a comprehensive Baltic-wide analysis to check whether there is a sufficient level of preparedness to tackle medium-size and the largest spills of oil or hazardous substances. Equipment to respond to worst case scenario has to be shared among different countries. All this has to be closely linked with HELCOM work.

**Maritime Safety and Security: Mr Jorma Rytkönen, Research Director, Kymenlaakso University of Applied Sciences**

Maritime traffic, and especially oil transportation is increasing significantly in the Baltic Sea area. During the last 10-15 years, the structure of maritime transportation has changed a lot. Containerisation is growing; ship size is also increasing, pointing out the economic demands in the maritime business. The overall management of the maritime business is also changing – maritime transport must be seen as a part of the whole delivery chain, where the ultimate goal is the optimisation of the whole delivery chain from the factory’s door to the customer. Short sea shipping and intermodalisms have their importance in the Baltic Sea area. These changes prove a necessity for novel preventive measures to maintain maritime safety.
Mr Rytkönen's presentation highlighted various trends affecting maritime safety and security in the Baltic Sea area. He emphasized the change from traditional discussions on maritime transport with only safety related aspects, to cover also security issues. Therefore, the main objective is to develop the risk prevention measures to improve safety and security. However, the difficulty to select the optimum set of risk control options available may endanger the right decision making procedure. Thus, joint harmonized approaches are required to guide the maritime society and decision makers. In that respect, the Formal Safety Assessment, adopted by IMO, would help the process remarkably.

*Maritime Surveillance Management: Mr Isto Mattila, Policy officer – Maritime Surveillance, DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, European Commission*

Mr Mattila presented the ongoing work in Maritime surveillance area at European level. Progress towards establishing an integrated EU maritime surveillance network was one of the key objectives set out in the Action Plan for an Integrated Maritime Policy adopted by the Commission in October 2007.

Recently the European Commission published a non-paper on Maritime surveillance, describing the current state of play as regards the surveillance, monitoring, tracking, identification and reporting systems put in place by EU Member States and EU Agencies. It also identifies the next steps to be undertaken and the challenges to be resolved in order to achieve an integrated maritime surveillance network for Europe. Such an integrated and cross-sectoral network would provide essential added value for national authorities in handling a range of challenges, such as trafficking in drugs, arms and people, illegal fisheries, pollution, piracy and terrorism. Greater systems integration would also help national authorities in charge of surveillance operations become more efficient and reduce their operating costs over time.

Despite already existing substantial sectoral cooperation taking place at both EU and national level on specific matters such as border control, maritime safety and security, as well as fisheries, Mr Mattila emphasized a need to move towards a greater cross-sectoral and cross-border integration. We need to work towards the full interoperability of the various systems, and this new working document identifies precisely what needs to be done next in order to realise that vision. Therefore, within a few months, the Commission will finance two large-scale pilot projects to evaluate how Member States can improve cross-sectoral exchange of surveillance data and carry out joint activities.

Mr. Mattila sees a need to build common approach to surveillance in the Baltic Sea basin.
Oil Spill Accident Response: Ms Monika Stankiewicz, Professional Secretary, HELCOM

HELCOM co-operation has been ongoing for more than 30 years, and preparedness to accidental oil spills and maritime safety is within the core of HELCOM work.

More than 45 sea going response vessels and around 30 emergency tugs with bollard pull of 50 or more tonnes are located around the Baltic; several kinds of exercises are conducted under the HELCOM flag; the Baltic Sea countries have been conducting regular joint surveillance activities to spot and monitor oil and other substances released into the sea. Additionally, the Baltic Sea is covered by satellite surveillance of the EMSA’s CleanSeaNet. The whole Baltic Sea area has been covered by land-based Automatic Identification System (AIS) stations since 1 July 2005 making the Baltic Sea the first region in the world capable of real-time monitoring of ships traffic and elaboration of reliable statistics for further use for maritime and response purposes.

The detailed set of measures to further improve maritime safety and increase response capability in the Baltic has been agreed in the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan, adopted by the ministers of environment in November last year, in Krakow, Poland.

Even though substantial resources to respond to pollution at sea do exist in the Baltic Sea region, no comprehensive Baltic-wide analysis have been done so far to check whether they are sufficient to tackle medium-size and the largest spills of oil or hazardous substances. Such analyses is required by HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan and will be done for each sub-region of the Baltic within the project Sub-regional risk of spill of oil and hazardous substances in the Baltic Sea (BRISK), approved for financing by the Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013. Based on the risk assessments, the BRISK project will identify missing resources to tackle medium-size and the largest spills and will prepare a concrete investment plans how to jointly fill in the identified gaps.

Discussion

To ensure safety and security at the Baltic Sea, Russia's involvement is necessary. HELCOM could be an efficient link to Russia.

GOFRREP, a mandatory Gulf of Finland Ship Reporting System, was mentioned as a well functioning cooperation among Finland, Estonia and the Russian Federation. Cooperation among Denmark, Sweden and Germany is also working quite well.

Concerning cross-sectoral and cross-border integration of surveillance systems in the Baltic, a political decision needs to be taken at the first place. As an example, countries around the Baltic could sign a Memorandum of understanding. Afterwards, a Formal Safety Assessment needs to be carried out and on the basis of that, further measures have to be decided.

Surveillance covers not just a position of the ship. It also contains all internal information, such as cargo, departure and destination point, name of the captain, etc. Different VTS systems exist around the Baltic. Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway and Germany have already started working on harmonization of the VTS and reporting systems. Other countries have to be involved as well. The greatest concern for seafarers is
reporting requirements. They have to report the same information for many times, although their main job should be navigating – not reporting. In that respect, the legal obstacles for unified reporting system have to be identified and the exchange of reporting information among different authorities should be improved.

Another issue of concern is training of the VTS operators. It could be more cost efficient and more interesting for training institutions to train operators from all Baltic countries in one center, instead of each country having its own training system.

Increasing illegal oil spills are of great concern in the Baltic. What are the possibilities to track illegal oil spills? It seems that the technologies are in place; just the political will is missing. It was suggested to introduce a requirement to have a black box (containing all information on what is happening on the ship) for all ships in the Baltic Sea area, to have a separate place, where ships could dump their sewage or discharge. Strict legislation concerning penalties for illegal pollution is also needed.

Other issues raised: How to promote green vessels in order to reduce pollution from ships? How to improve winter navigation? Do we need mandatory pilots in the Baltic Sea?