



Maritime Transport Strategy 2009 - 2018



Citizen's Summary

The Commission has adopted on 21 January 2009 a Communication setting up a 10-years strategy plan to promote safe, secure and efficient shipping on clean oceans, the long-term competitiveness of European shipping and related maritime industries in world markets, and the adaptation of the entire seaborne transport system to the challenges of the 21st century.

● What's the issue?

Maritime transport is a catalyst of economic development

For Europe, shipping has been one of the key stepping stones to economic growth and prosperity all along its history. At the start of the 21st century, the maritime transport system ensures 90% of the freight exchanges of Europe with the rest of the world and 40% of the intra-EU freight exchanges. With more than 400 million sea passengers passing each year through European ports, passenger ships and ferry services have a direct impact on the quality of life of citizens in islands and peripheral regions.

In recent years, the shipping sector has expanded considerably. There has been a considerable increase in the number of ships in operation, both in the international markets and in the short sea trades. European shipping companies have invested vast amounts of resources in the renewal and expansion of the fleet in order to sustain the expansion of world trade.

At the end of 2008, the economic context changed radically. Moreover, the economic crisis arrives at a moment in time when the European shipping sector is facing multiple challenges, including fierce competition from companies that operate under much less strict safety and environmental standards, climate change concerns, energy sources, human factor, piracy and terrorist threats and stability of the international trade system among others.

● *How will the Communication help?*

The Communication presents the strategic goals for the European maritime transport system in the years to come. In the short term, maritime transport can contribute to the recovery of the economy. In the medium and long term, it has an enormous potential for ensuring sustainable development, i.e. fostering prosperity while tackling decisively climate change, demographics and poverty or safety and security problems.

The Communication examines those issues and identifies far-reaching measures in six main areas of action, namely: globalization prospects, care of human resources, quality shipping as the result of a safe, secure and environmentally friendly transport system, international order, short sea shipping & logistics and RTD requirements. While taking account of the current conjuncture, the proposed strategy looks at developments in the next 10 years.

● Why has the EU done this?

The reassessment of the EU maritime transport policy was announced with the mid-term review of the Transport White Paper (2006). The necessity of this reassessment was confirmed in the context of the EU Maritime Integrated Policy (2007, the "Blue Book").

In recent years, the EU has done an enormous effort to address maritime safety problems (the three consecutive maritime safety packages). Today, Europe is at the forefront of quality shipping efforts. European shipping means safe, secure and efficient maritime transport services all over the world.

Now is the moment to capitalise on those efforts. In 10-years time, the European maritime transport system should be, at the very least, as safe, secure and efficient as it is today. European quality shipping services should be able to retain their leadership in world markets.

● Who will it help?

The proposed strategy will ensure that Europe offers attractive conditions for building up a vibrant shipping business model based on the core values of sustainable development, fair competition in open markets and high environmental and social standards.

Benefits will arise for all the maritime transport related industries, i.e. the whole "cluster" of maritime activities, in terms of business opportunities and job's opportunities. The logistic system serving the EU and the world economy will benefit from quality transport services. European coastal areas and peripheral regions will also greatly benefit.

● How would it work?

The Communication is the result of one-year long consultation with the experts of the Member States and Norway, top leaders of the shipping industry and independent research examining trends and signals of change in shipping.

This partnership approach will continue to apply. The implementation of the proposed strategy will be conducted by means of a strong involvement of the authorities in charge and of the industry itself. Soft regulation measures, innovative public-private solutions and a team effort for improving the international system are key vectors of the work to be done.

● **When would the new strategy be implemented?**

The proposed strategy and the ways to implement it will be discussed at a high level European Conference early in 2009. In the subsequent months, the Commission will prepare the launching of the required actions. Some effects should be felt almost immediately as stakeholders and the general public get involved in the debate and discussions between national governments get under way. In any case, the proposed strategy will guide the Commission action for the years to come.

● **Further reading:**

- **Communication on the strategic goals and recommendations for the EU's maritime transport policy from 2009-2018** (available in all languages)
- **Recommendations of the Group of Senior Shipping Professionals to Vice President Antonio Tajani** (in English)
- **Benchmarking strategic options for European shipping and for the European maritime transport system in the horizon 2018** (study by Lloyd's Register Fairplay Research Ltd in cooperation with Planet, AIS Live, Dynamar, Global Insight, ShipBiz International, Fundación Valenciaport and SAI - Institute of Shipping Analysis) (in English).

http://ec.europa.eu/transport/maritime/studies/maritime_en.htm