

**Seminar**  
**PIRACY AND ARMED ROBBERY AGAINST SHIPPING:**  
**To Prevent, Deter, Protect and Fight against an ACTUAL Threat**  
**21 JANUARY 2009**  
**Centre Borschette, 36, Rue Froissart, Conference room AB 0D**  
**B-1040, Bruxelles**

## **Context**

The seminar focussed on the growing number of acts of piracy and armed robbery and its consequences on the global economical and geopolitical situation, as well as on its impact on the Human Element.

The number of attacks by pirates and armed robbers against merchant vessels, in particular in the seas off Somalia and the Horn of Africa, has escalated in frequency and violence. An increase in attacks by pirates and armed robbers has also been reported from other parts of the world, such as the Mozambique Channel, some areas off the coast of India and the Caribbean, as well as in the Niger Delta and in the South China Sea. The situation in the Malacca and Singapore Straits is improving but this area remains problematic.

## **General Objective**

The overall objective of this seminar was to examine the existing legal framework and the need for possible developments in this field, including the compilation of a list of practical recommendations and good practices in terms of ship self-defence in order to combat more effectively acts of piracy and armed robbery, based on the experience and the research of the participants.

This seminar sought to provide a global picture of the influences of the actual threat of acts of piracy and armed robbery from a geopolitical and economic perspective as well as taking account of the threat to human life, the right of innocent passage through international waters and the rights of seafarers to safe working conditions.

## **Conclusions**

- Vice-President Tajani stated that acts of piracy and armed robberies pose a serious threat to the lives of seafarers, the security of the shipping industry and the safety and security of coastal states and called on all the stakeholders to engage actively in tackling this phenomenon and to seek lasting solutions to a scourge that affects the whole international community.
- These acts constitute a major threat which destabilise the international economy via its maritime routes and these attacks interfere with the political and economic development of the region where it takes place. The seminar highlighted notably the situation in the Horn of Africa, the Red Sea, the Suez Canal and the East of the Mediterranean.

- The acts of piracy and armed robbery on ships require enhanced security alertness on the part of the crew and increased manning levels.
- The speakers and the moderator considered that the international judicial framework currently exists to enable the prevention and countering of such acts and that the Member States should now ratify and apply the relevant legislative instruments correctly and quickly. While ratification is certainly a good first step, subsequent transposition into national law is essential. A key step is to explicitly define how the Member States will establish their jurisdiction under UNCLOS provisions related to universal jurisdiction for piracy cases and, of course, the establishment under national law of a penal incrimination (crime of piracy).
- To seek a more long-term resolution of the phenomenon of maritime piracy and armed robberies at sea, some regional agreements with the coastal and bordering countries are being negotiated and conducted under the auspices of IMO. Furthermore, European Union humanitarian and development instruments will be used, both geographically and on a more comprehensive level, in particular by means of the 'Instrument for Stability' (IfS), which sets out a programme on 'critical maritime routes' for 2009-2011.