

MANDATE FOR THE TASK FORCE ON MARITIME EMPLOYMENT AND COMPETITIVENESS (TFMEC)

1. Introduction

In its Communication on the strategic goals and recommendations for the EU's maritime transport policy until 2018 issued on 21 January 2009, the Commission presents the main strategic goals for the European maritime transport system up to 2018 and identifies key areas where action by the EU should strengthen the competitiveness of the sector while enhancing its environmental performance.

Among those areas, the Commission stresses the need to promote Maritime employment and address current shortages of European seafarers: "[...] *there is a genuine EU interest in emphasizing the attractiveness of the maritime professions to Europeans by means of actions that involve, where appropriate, the Commission, the Member States and the industry itself*".

One of the key issues in this context is to strike the right balance between the employment conditions of EU seafarers and the competitiveness of the European fleet. The Commission has announced that: "*a task force will be set up to identify ways of achieving this objective*".

2. Mission Statement

The mission of the TFMEC is basically to sustain reflections in the Commission with a view to develop social aspects of the maritime transport policy.

The Task Force should in particular focus on the relationships between the maritime industry employment and competitiveness which encompasses many topics such as labour market issues, attractiveness of the sector, the maritime clusters' needs, training and qualifications, working conditions...

The TFMEC will consider the possibilities offered by all maritime related industries providing revenues and jobs in Europe while taking into account market cycles affecting the shipping industries.

It has to be borne in mind that the TFMEC is not supposed to carry out specific studies or impact assessments. The Task Force's activities are to be kept separate from those of the maritime transport social dialogue committee which will continue to perform its particular role.

Within this framework, the TFMEC could in particular work on the following issues:

1) What are the causes of the EU seafarer shortages and drop outs in the shipping industry? For example, is it due to the image of the maritime industry, to a lack of competitiveness or to other reasons?

The starting point would be to identify the obstacles and incentives to become and remain a seafarer as well as hiring or not EU seafarers from the viewpoint of EU

companies. As for the specific area of intra-Community maritime transport services, what are the means to keep the various categories of EU seafarers (ratings and officers) on board and ensure a supply of new entrants?

2) How could European maritime education and training better meet the needs of the shipping industry and of the maritime clusters as well as the current and future seafarer's ambitions?

This theme encompasses the issue of qualifications, the evolutions of technologies with their quantitative and qualitative effects on maritime EU employment, namely the potential volume of jobs and their related costs as well as their added value. It also includes the organisation of the maritime teaching.

In addition, this question encapsulates the interactions between demand and supply of seafarers on the labour market and perspectives offered by career mapping on board and ashore and job opportunities. It also raises the issue of the choice for relevant tools liable to support the education sector, whether financial, legal or other. Consideration might be given to structural funds, EU/national projects and programmes, the Open Method of Coordination, or EURES, possibly by extending national and Community experiences on best practices to or across the maritime sector.

3) How could it be ensured that investment in high quality employment in the maritime industry does not penalize the EU shipping industry's competitiveness vis à vis third countries? Are there initiatives which could be taken, or at least further explored, by the industry, labour organisations or both of them together? Are there examples of successful measures, within the EU or elsewhere that merit consideration?

4) How could the development of unfair economic and social conditions at international level be avoided and how can the effects of an uneven level playing field on the EU maritime industry be limited?

These two questions refer to the variety of legal, economic and social situations between the EU and the third countries. In other words, the issues are on one hand, the unfair competition between shipowners and on the other hand, the pressure to lower labour standards affecting the seafarers.

5) Should more demanding links between permissible State aids and EU maritime employment be introduced in the context of the state aid guidelines revision foreseen in 2011?

This includes the conditions of attribution and the use made of the aid. It is also about evaluating the effects of the current policy on the maritime industry. Has it proved to be effective, efficient, well targeted and what are the impacts measurable?

By answering these questions as well as others that it considers appropriate, the TFMEC will:

- Put forward a report with recommendations for the future maritime transport strategy as regards employment and competitiveness, including all possible instruments ranging from legislation, social dialogue and voluntary measures to further research, surveys or opinion polls.
- By providing material to the Commission, contribute to the elaboration of a maritime transport social package including an action plan to be published by the Commission in 2011.

3. Organisation of work

The TFMEC will be installed by the Commissioner in charge of Transports. The DG MOVE C1 will ensure the secretariat. The meetings will take place in Brussels.

The TFMEC will meet 3 or 4 times in 2010 with possible additional meetings in 2011 depending on the roadmap agreed by its members. The Task Force works will lead to a final report which shall be completed by March 2011.

The working language will be English.

The TFMEC will work in cooperation with the relevant services of the Commission and the European Maritime Safety Agency.

The TFMEC may organise hearings of personalities likely to bring them an insight into the subjects and sustain its reflexions.

4. Participation

In order to gather a wide range of sensitivities and backgrounds, the TFMEC brings together leading figures and personalities from the maritime world, researchers and people with relevant experiences, visions on the maritime issues liable to help make the most of the potential of this field. There will be a chairman and 12 members in the TFMEC. They will be related to the 3 following groups: shipowners (3), seafarers (3), maritime cluster as a whole (6).

The members of the task force will sit *ad personam* and will have no deputy. They will not be bound by any mandatory instruction.

5) Reimbursement of expenses

Travel costs will be reimbursed to the Task Force members on the basis of the most economic tariff available for air travel, or 1st class travel by train (for all return journey of less than 800km), and on presentation of the travel ticket and boarding card. Furthermore one daily allowance, currently fixed at €92, can be paid (if the one-way journey exceeds 100km), except in cases where the expert is already in receipt of a daily allowance from another organisation. If the experts have to spend one or more nights at the place where the meeting is held because the times of meetings are incompatible with the times of flights or trains, they shall also be entitled to an accommodation allowance. This allowance shall be 100 €per night. The number of nights may not exceed the number of meeting days + 1.