

Piracy Seminar 28/29 March 2012

Director General Matthias Ruete – Opening remarks

Brussels, 28 March at 09.25

- Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. First of all I would like to welcome Mr Ole Sohn, Danish Minister for business and Growth and also representing the Danish Presidency of the Council of the European Union, Mr Koji Sekimizu, Secretary General of the International Maritime Organization, Mr Brian Simpson, chairman of the Transport and Tourism Committee of the European Parliament, Mr Siim Kallas, Vice-President of the European Commission and Commissioner for Transport and all of our guests.
- We are honoured to have you here today to participate and share this third seminar on piracy organized by DG MOVE.
- Piracy and armed robbery at sea have considerably increased in some regions of the world, but the attention is currently mainly focused on the Indian Ocean where in 2011 about 300 attacks were attempted against commercial ships; 25 ships have been hijacked and 464 hostages taken; 11 persons killed.
- This is the third seminar organized by DG MOVE on piracy and armed robbery at sea in Brussels. The first seminar, focused on the consequences of the attacks on the stability of the global economy, on the legal aspects of piracy and armed robbery. The second dealt with on the human aspects of piracy and how to better protect seafarers. And today's one will mainly address: deterrence, reducing ships' vulnerabilities, including issues linked to the use of armed guards and the human costs of piracy.
- We all agree that only a comprehensive approach can bring a sustainable solution to the problem of piracy. This seminar "Piracy, the curse of maritime transport", will address the problem from a transport perspective, in order to find out what we have to do to make maritime routes safe and secure.
- The maritime industry is playing an important role in containing the threat of piracy. I am confident this two-day seminar, thanks to an open and constructive debate among highly qualified participants, will give many ideas and "food for thought" to find out and develop, inside their proper international framework, an even more effective strategy to contain - in the short term - and finally defeat piracy.
- Before leaving the floor to our Commissioner Vice-President Siim Kallas, I would like to thank all the speakers, moderators and other professionals who are giving their direct contribution to this event, the distinguished guests representing the maritime transport sector: the representatives of Maritime Authorities, ship-owners, the seafarers - seamen and captains; the international and national organisations and all other stakeholders, as well as all of you for your participation and support.