



Brussels,  
MOVE/D2/AD

## **Conference on Maritime employment and competitiveness**

**27 June 2012, Brussels**

**Subject: summary outcome of meeting**

Mr Fotis Karamitsos, the Chairperson, welcomed the participants and underlined that it was the first conference on the maritime employment and competitiveness organised by DG MOVE. The conference was split into two sessions: the morning session devoted to the follow up of the task force on maritime employment report and the afternoon session focusing on education and training.

He recalled the context with the creation of the task force, for a limited period, conceived as a think tank to give fresh views to the European Commission with the ultimate objective of feeding in the social agenda for maritime transport. The task force reviewed the legal framework, the working and living conditions on board and the maritime training.

Then, he introduced the speakers and the panellists.

Mr Henrik Hololei, Head of VP Kallas cabinet, opened the conference and emphasized that the VP attached a great importance to the quality shipping and human element. He described some of the past actions undertaken to revamp the EU maritime industry and encourage young people to go to sea and also showing the limitations of the exercise. He insisted on the fact that the conference was the occasion for experts, maritime schools, stakeholders to start networking, develop ideas together, and gear the efforts toward excellence.

### **I. The follow up of the Task Force report**

#### **1) First panel: regulatory framework**

- Mr Erik Hietbrink, Chairman Board of Directors in the STC group, as an ex member of the Task Force presented the findings of the group with the controversial and non-controversial issues.

- Mr Abrahamsson, panellist, focused on the role of state aids and suggested making a better use of them by linking them up with employment of EU seafarers, investment in environmentally friendly energies. He diged the old idea of creating a European flag, the Euro to promote a level playing field.
- Mr Nordseth explained the Danish maritime policy regarding the human resources and gave a few examples: awareness campaigns, campaigns on quality shipping. His key messages were:
  - collect data in a systematic way, possibly with the support of EUROSTATS
  - Privilege high standards and quality
  - ensure a strong maritime cluster driven by the shipping industry
  - keep the state aid guidelines
  - Not forget the global dimension
    - Other interventions:
      - sponsor young people, unemployed people to go to sea (John Richardson)
      - promote internet communication, possibly with tax exemptions (John Richardson) and be consistent in IMO (EU/India opposite views on costs; Alan Graveson)
      - have a uniform approach for social security in the EU (Romania)
      - No need for more regulation (John Boreman)

## 2) Panel on working and living conditions on board ships

Further to his previous intervention in panel 1, Mr Abrahamson pinpointed the following topics:

- control the manning agencies is necessary
- revamp the manning directive
- apply the non-discrimination principle for the salaries
- remove the labour law excluding seafarers from the scope
- improve the fair treatment for seafarers and struggle against criminalisation
- strengthen the maritime cluster
- monitor the policy based on a systematic methodology for data collection
  - Mr Sulpice, panellist, underlined the evolution of management practices (increase of automation and administrative burden) and the traditional and new dangers in the maritime profession (piracy and still natural conditions). He also stated that

the conviviality on board had deteriorated since the 70ies (communication obstacles, fatigue, short stops in port).

- Mr Simon Bergulf, panellist, mentioned the difficulties to recruit women on board, engineers, IT specialist.

On the internet issue, he suggested EU guidelines for the use of internet on board.

He deplored the cases of harassment on board and underlined the work done to tackle the issue in the social dialogue committee.

He expressly supported the blue belt and the e maritime initiatives.

Regarding piracy, he stated that the shipowners were well aware of the best management practices and did apply them. He expressed concerns concerning legislation applicable in situations of ransoms.

- Mr Andreas Nordseth addressed the shore leave issue and he constructive dialogue with the USA to tackle the security matters. He said the ratification of the ILO Convention 185 would not solve the problem.

### 3) Panel on education, training, career developments

- Mr Patrick Blondé described the success story of the maritime school in Antwerp: increasing numbers of students, jobs guaranteed, an increasing tonnage registered under Belgian flag.

He seems to explain the good results by the nature of the education, the close cooperation with the industry, the focus on niches.

- Mr Alan Graveson raised the issue of accommodation linked to the convention on tonnage measurement of ships. He advocated modifying the rules in order to exempt the accommodation from taxes. According to him, the taxation regime does not favour the creation of berths.

## **II. Focusing on education and training**

- Mr Takeshi Nakazawa, Professor in the world maritime academy, strived to delineate the idea of excellence and cautioned the public authorities against creating double standards resulting from the possible creation of a specific maritime certificate.

Indeed, in certain areas, having specific certificates might create an added value but in the global maritime industry, more diplomas would lead to higher salaries and less competitiveness.

However, he gave examples of certificates delivered by accredited institutes and label of quality.

- Patrick Blondé, Simon Bergulf and Andreas Nordseth supported the idea of excellence that can take various form: cooperation between schools and industry; creation of networks of excellence.

Poland described the experience in Stettin with the creation of the Baltic network and the creation of 5 centres of excellence.

- Mr Dimitrios Fokas made a presentation on the advantages of the in house training in terms of quality, tailor made education, teambuilding and corporate identity, durability and retention of personnel while this option remains expensive.
- Captain John Boreman provided a concrete example of tailor made training with the TOTS (tanker officer training system) in INTERTANKO. He specified that this training was recognised and even monitored by IACS.

After these concrete examples and experiences, the Commission's services (DG EMPL, EAC, MARE) presented the relevant EU tools potentially applicable for the maritime sector; the sector skill alliances, the European social funds, the initiative "new skills for new jobs", "blue growth initiative".

To conclude, Mrs Christine Berg, Head of the unit "maritime safety", insisted on the potential paths for better skills for the EU long term careers ashore in the interest of the maritime clusters.

She encouraged the participants to build upon the exchanges developed during the conference to networking and promote future initiatives.

Anne Devouche

**Agenda: Annex 1**

**Participants: Annex 2**