

Joint Industry Statement on the mid-term review of the EU's Maritime Transport Policy



In June 2014, the Council invited the European Commission to present a mid-term review of the EU's Maritime Transport Policy until 2018 and outlook to 2020. Eager to provide the Commission with valuable input, ECSA together with ECASBA, ETA, EuDA, CLIA Europe, Interferry and WSC have decided to make the review exercise the cornerstone of the European Shipping Week 2015. Following the very fruitful discussions held in the context of the week's flagship conference entitled "*Charting the route of EU shipping policy: An input to the*

EU maritime transport strategy review", the main representative bodies of the shipping industry have adopted the following statement.

Shipping is a global industry faced with increasingly fierce competition. Shipowners need a stable and predictable EU fiscal regime and a regulatory framework in accordance with international rules in order to maintain their competitiveness and ensure shipping's beneficial impact to the EU economy and society, while maintaining a global level playing field. These international rules, including environmental and safety regulations, which need to be adopted by the International Maritime Organisation in order to be global, should promote the highest standards for worldwide quality shipping, in line with the interests of our industry.

The EU discourse surrounding the industry's sustainability should be re-evaluated. Shipping is the most efficient form of commercial transport as it emits far less per tonne/km than other modes and carries around 90% of goods worldwide. When it comes to CO₂ emissions, far from being the root cause of the problem, shipping is and should be viewed as part of the solution. By shifting more cargo and passengers to the sea, the EU can thus exploit the superior energy-efficiency of shipping to reduce its global CO₂ emissions. The shipping industry does not rest on its laurels and is actively pursuing the reduction of its carbon footprint, and indeed those of other gas emissions for example SO_x and NO_x, but in order to do so effectively, EU environmental standards should be aligned with those at global level.

The shipping industry needs skilled labour as it plays an integral part not only on-board ships but also, and perhaps more importantly, in the wider maritime cluster. Without a new generation of seafarers and shore-based shipping personnel, the whole maritime cluster stands to lose its know-how. The key objective must be the improvement of the attractiveness of the seafaring profession, which can be achieved, among others, through the reduction and streamlining of administrative formalities and the fight against the risk of criminalisation of seafarers following maritime accidents or discriminatory restrictions on shore leave.

Furthermore, the internal market has not yet delivered its full potential for shipping, as significant administrative burdens and customs hurdles remain throughout Europe, preventing the EU from reaping the fruits of a truly European Maritime Transport Space without Barriers. Customs procedures are burdensome and place shipping at a disadvantage when compared to other modes of transport, resulting in huge productivity losses and placing unnecessary stress on maritime professionals. Addressing any potential abusive restrictions on market access to port services and/or inefficiencies observed in European ports would also be mutually beneficial to the EU economy and the EU shipping industry. By making waterborne transport more attractive to shippers, the EU also stands to make strides in its efforts to reduce its CO₂ emissions.

For shipping to remain a facilitator of trade, a provider of jobs and a dynamic sector of the economy, the EU must carry on with what it does best: continue its role as a commercial heavyweight. Free Trade Agreements are mutually beneficial to the EU and the shipping industry as they ensure the prosperity of the Union, by relying on the services of the industry. Consequently, it is vital to keep the open seas secure and eliminate all threats of piracy and armed robbery that put human life as well as the global logistics chain at risk.

The EU institutions should also ensure a more efficient deployment of adequate Port Reception Facilities in all EU ports and facilitation of the seafarers' movement from third countries within the Schengen Area, as well as other measures that allow the cruise industry and other sectors of the shipping industry to continue supporting the sustainability of coastal communities through trade and marine tourism.

Finally, special reference is made to a recent topic that has been causing much concern to the industry: migrants at sea and in particular the recent events relating to the growing refugee and migrant crisis in the Mediterranean. The industry will never shy away from its obligation of assisting any person at sea faced with serious danger. It must be recognised, however, that in spite of their best efforts, crews are not trained in humanitarian operations and ships are scantily equipped to deal with dozens or hundreds of distressed people, including women and children. The EU and Member States must find a solution to this ever deepening crisis, taking steps to ensure that migrants found at sea can be taken ashore at the earliest possible opportunity in order that they can be given the correct and necessary humanitarian and medical care and support under the best possible conditions, and these are only available ashore. It should be understood that, as in the case of piracy, the shipping industry should not be relied upon to execute tasks and undertake initiatives that should be the sole prerogative of governments and international bodies.

The organisations endorsing this statement are:

ECSA, the European Community Shipowners Associations
ECASBA, European Community Association of Ship Brokers and Agents
CLIA, Cruise Lines International Association
ETA, the European Tugowners Association
EuDA, European Dredging Association
Interferry
WSC, the World Shipping Council

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