

**MINUTES OF THE
ECASBA PLENARY MEETING
HELD AT THE FOUR SEASONS HOTEL, AMMAN
AT 9.30 a.m. MONDAY, 16th OCTOBER 2023**

Present:

Mr. M. Tak
Mr. J. Dulce

Chair, ECASBA
President

Mr. M. Belaid	Algeria	Capt. M. Dalabieh	Jordan
Mr. H. Saad	Algeria	Ms. Nadia Shahin	Jordan
Mr. M. Fahem	Algeria	Mr. Nader Shahrouri	Jordan
Ms. N. Kenane	Algeria	Mr. O. Qafesha	Jordan
Mr. J. Delfino	Argentina	Mr. S. Arnaout	Jordan
Mr. A. Mingo Jozami	Argentina	Ms. D. Estaitia	Jordan
Mr. R. Troch	Belgium	Mr. M. El Yaman	Lebanon
Mr. M. Neri	Brazil	Mr. T. van Vreden	Malaysia
Mr. A. Zanim	Brazil	Mr. N. Banovic	Montenegro
Mr. T. Dos Santos	Brazil	Mr. A. Mantrach	Morocco
Mr. S. Stanoykov	Bulgaria	Mr. M. El Mezouar	Morocco
Mr. S. Kraychev	Bulgaria	Mr. R. D'Orey	Portugal
Capt. J. Karmelić	Croatia	Mr. A. Belmar da Costa	Portugal
Mr. C.P. Papavassiliou	Cyprus	Mr. J. Fernandez Guillen	Spain
Mr. A. Papadopoulos	Cyprus	Mr. A. Ferrandiz	Spain
Mr. D. Kouzapas MICS	Cyprus	Mr. B. Tonguç FICS	Turkey
Dr. A. Geisler	Germany	Mr. E. Kahya	Turkey
Mr. A. Dobson FICS	Great Britain	Mr. K. Turkantos	Turkey
Mr. A. Veneris	Greece	Observers	
Mr. A. Mataragas FICS	Greece	Mr. N. Tuan	VISABA, Vietnam
Mr. B. Szalma	Hungary	Mr. A. Stevenson	Simpson, Spence & Young
Mr. F. Carlini FICS	Italy	Mr. R. Llerena	WWSA
Mrs. F. Reghellin Carlini FICS	Italy	Mr. A. Awwad	Jordan Shipping Association
Mr. T. Iigaki	Japan	Capt. Y. Al Serhan	Jordan Shipping Association
Mr. Y. Dohi	Japan	Mr. I Sacca	Jordan Shipping Association
Mr. K. Tsunoda	Japan	Ms. E. Gammoh	Jordan Transport Ministry
Ms. U. Yoneda	Japan	Mr. M. Abdulbahdi	Jordan Shipping Association
Dr. D. Mahasneh	Jordan	Mr. Z. Kaladeh	Jordan Shipping Association

In Attendance:

Mr. J.C. Williams FICS	General Manager
Ms. E. Modde	General Manager Designate

This meeting was undertaken in compliance with FONASBA's Anti-Trust and Competition Policy and at no time were any discussions undertaken in relation to: fixing of terms, prices or rates, matters relating to particular customers or suppliers, boycotting or black listing particular customers or suppliers, dividing markets or customers or otherwise seeking to distort competition

Item

Action

1. **President's Welcome**
The **President** welcomed all those present to this first plenary of the 2023 Annual Meeting and thanked the Jordan association for hosting the meeting at short notice.
2. **Chair's Opening Remarks**
Mr. **Tak** also welcomed delegates and observers to the meeting and expressed his hope that it would be interesting and informative. The **General Manager** reminded those present that the meeting was being held in accordance with FONASBA's Anti-Trust and Competition policy (see above).
3. **Minutes of the Last Meeting held in Antwerp on 24th May 2022**
No comments were received, the minutes **were approved**.
4. **Matters Arising**
There were no matters arising that were not otherwise covered in the agenda.

5. European Issues Update

The **Chair** invited the **General Manager** to make a presentation on the main issues addressed by ECASBA since the Antwerp meeting. In summary these were:

- The ECASBA 2023 European seminar held in Brussels in June
- Customs & VAT Issues including:
 - Implementation of the current European Customs Code, with emphasis on the revised Import Control System (ICS2)
 - The Wise Persons Report, its main recommendations affecting ship agents and how they will feed into the
 - UCC Update, also known as the New UCC, including confirmation the current UCC will be fully implemented (expected by 2025) before the New UCC is introduced.
- The European Maritime Single Window environment (EMSWe), noting the currently scheduled “go-live” date of August 2025 and ECASBA’s engagement with the DG-MOVE steering groups
- ETIAS/EES, the electronic visa and passport control systems and their impact on seafarer travel and cruise passenger processing. Of particular interest are the recent revisions to the Border Guards Handbook in respect of issuing seafarer visas on arrival
- The introduction of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme on 1st January 2024 and the potential impact of vessel diversions on ports, agents, and other shore-based shipping sectors. This topic was the subject of a further discussion at the close of the presentation
- ECASBA’s participation in the reorganised European Shipping Summit in Brussels in September and the session hosted jointly with the World Shipping Council on drug-smuggling in north European ports This topic would be discussed further in the next agenda item
- Joint industry action to secure more funding for transport under the EU’s Connecting Europe Facility
- A concluding summary of the main issues, notably the issues relating to large scale European IT projects in customs, single windows and immigration, the possible introduction of a new Union Customs Code before the current one is fully embedded and operational, and the impact of drug-smuggling on the agency community. The presentation finished with news that the new Director General of DG-MOVE, Magda Kopczynska, is very well known to ECASBA and that a new Commission will be elected in 2024, possibly bringing new or changed policy priorities.

A copy of the presentation can be found in the Members’ Area of the website.

Following the presentation, the **Chair** invited questions, most of which related to the expected impact of the ETS on ports, agents, and the shore-based shipping sector. Mr. **Belmar da Costa**, Mr. **Fernandez**, Mr. **Papavassiliou** and Mr. **Venieris** urged ECASBA to take action to raise the industry’s concerns with the European Commission, whilst Capt. **Karmelić** noted that the shipping lines were already looking at imposing surcharges on cargo to cover the cost of the ETS charges. Dr. **Geisler** said only a small part of the income generated from the ETS would go back to the transport sector, the balance would be diverted to the overall EU budget. Mr. **Llerena** reported that WWSA members were also concerned about the impact of the ETS.

Thanking the delegates for their input to the discussion, the **Chair** confirmed ECASBA would be raising its concerns both directly with the Commission and in concert with other industry organisations. (*Post-meeting note: ECASBA has contacted the Commissioners for Climate Action, Transport and the Green Deal and collaborated with other organisations in joint letters and statements, which have been circulated to ECASBA members*).

6. Criminal Exploitation of the Transport Chain

The **Chair** introduced the subject by means of a short presentation and video highlighting the impact of drug smuggling on the shore-based shipping industry, how drugs are smuggled in containers, and the vulnerabilities in current container release processes.

A copy of the presentation can be found in the Members’ Area of the website. For copyright reasons, the video cannot be posted.

Group Discussions/Feedback

Following the presentation, the **Chair** invited delegates to join one of the four breakout groups:

- Prevention Methods, hosted by Capt. **Karmelić**
- The Impact on Ship Agents, Mr. **Belmar da Costa**
- Cooperation with Private Stakeholders, Mr. **Szalma**
- Cooperation with National Authorities: Mr. **Troch**

At the conclusion of the breakout sessions, a spokesperson for each group reported on the discussions and made recommendations for further action at FONASBA and national association levels:

Prevention Methods:

- Enhancing awareness of criminal activity in the maritime transport through education and training. Other criminal activities should also be covered, for example fraud
- Incentivise employees to raise concerns about illicit activities or unusual behaviour
- Increase the levels of fines and penalties for those involved in criminal activities
- Regularly rotate staff amongst departments/roles to avoid opportunities for exploitation

The Impact on Ship Agents:

- Ensure the authorities are fully aware of the role of ship agents and their contribution to the fight against illicit goods movements. Associations and FONASBA have a role to play in spreading the message nationally and internationally
- Companies should ensure their internal compliance programmes and protocols are sufficient to address the issues and are robustly applied
- Cooperation with customers and other stakeholders should be enhanced
- Companies should also ensure their staff are fully trained to recognise infiltration of their processes and systems and they are able to report concerns in confidence
- National associations should maintain regular communication with authorities and proactively cooperate in actions to prevent smuggling and other illicit activities, including training on prevention methods

Cooperation with Private Stakeholders:

- Enhancing security systems controlling cargo movements using advanced technologies and increased verification processes
- Frequently change procedures and processes to avoid regular routines
- Monitor late changes to cargo arrivals and urgent requests for pickup and ensure additional scrutiny is applied to unusual movements and actions
- Ensure staff are fully trained to recognise criminal actions and are able to adapt accordingly
- Have robust reporting procedures and measures to ensure whistleblowers are protected

Cooperation with National Authorities:

- Ensure the authorities are aware of the relationship between the agent, carrier, shippers and others in the transport chain and also the practicalities of the global shipping sector
- Encourage cooperation internationally, e.g. with source countries as well as those in Europe
- Support the use of international customs and security initiatives such as the WCO AEO programme and SAFE Framework of Standards
- Promote the sharing of intelligence and data, both globally and nationally
- Encourage the use of coordinated national reporting systems where possible, to avoid vulnerabilities in standalone systems
- Endeavour to find means to allow the exchange of information on individuals engaged in, or suspected to be engaged in, drug smuggling, currently blocked by data protection rules

At the close of the discussion, the Chair thanked all the delegates for their participation in the exchanges. He confirmed that ECASBA and FONASBA would use the recommendations from the breakout groups in their ongoing actions to raise the issue in all appropriate fora and urged national associations to do likewise. *(Post-meeting note: FONASBA has co-sponsored a paper to IMO Assembly 33 (A33.11.1) on the impact of organised crime in the maritime sector.)*

He closed the discussion with a warning that as ports such as Antwerp and Rotterdam tightened their procedures to deter drug smuggling, it would move to others where security was less tight.

7. **Any Other Business**

No issues were raised for discussion.

8. **Date and Place of Next Meeting**

The **Chair** thanked all those present for their contribution to a very interesting, informative, and active meeting. He also urged members to take the information gained and lessons learned at this meeting back to their national associations for further action locally.

He then advised the next ECASBA plenary meeting would be in Athens in **October 2024**, and looked forward to welcoming everyone to that meeting.

There being no further business to discuss, the Chair brought the 2023 ECASBA Plenary Meeting to a close.

JCW/12.2023