

ECASBA POSITION PAPER



RECOGNITION OF AGENTS

BACKGROUND:

Recognition of the contribution of the ship agent to the efficient and effective movement of goods worldwide, and in the fight against criminal exploitation of maritime transport, is hampered by a lack of awareness by policy makers, authorities, and other sectors of the shipping industry of the central role the profession plays in maritime transport and international logistics supply chains. This partly due in most cases to the lack of formal acknowledgement in maritime law, but also to a failure by the agency community to make its voice heard in all relevant fora.

ECASBA POSITION:

In order for the ship agency community to be heard, and to ensure that ship agents are invited to participate and contribute positively from a position of knowledge and experience in all discussions relating to regulation of the maritime sector from the very beginning, ECASBA and its Member associations must ensure that policy makers fully recognise the role of the ship agent and acknowledge their place in the maritime transport chain.

The following issues are important in achieving this objective:

- Policy makers at all levels must recognise the role of the ship agent at the centre of the ship/port interface and respect and value the contributions of the ship agency community to the efficient and effective operation of the movement of cargo between the ship the shore and the hinterland. The role of the agent in the fight against criminal use of the maritime sector must also be acknowledged
- National ship agent associations must engage regularly with policy makers, as well as port and shipping bodies at all levels, in advance of changes to regional or national maritime policy to ensure that input from ship agents is obtained before firm policy proposals are made
- Every port user council or supervisory board, shipping association or other relevant body should include ship agents in their membership
- Regulators must acknowledge that looking at a problem from a purely legal based viewpoint provides only a limited view of its impact in practical terms. It must be recognised that conventions, established local practices and other means of addressing such issues have a bearing on how the matter is handled at individual port level. The ship agent has detailed working knowledge of those conventions and practices and should be consulted
- Ship agents should make their views known to the wider maritime community as well as policy makers by appearing as speakers in seminars, conferences, and trade events. Contributing to press articles and commenting on relevant issues is also important

PARTIES INVOLVED:

- ECASBA and Member associations
- Member State and local authorities responsible for maritime transport
- The maritime press, internationally, regionally and locally

VALIDITY:

Ongoing

RESPONSIBLE ADVISORY PANEL MEMBER:

Jean Pascal Bidoire, Antonio Belmar da Costa

SECRETARIAT:

Eleonora Modde, Jonathan Williams

Date Reviewed: May 2024