

Mid Term Review of the EU Maritime Transport Strategy

Background Information - Preparatory Work and Next Steps

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- Why an EU strategy for maritime transport?

In an ever globalized world, fierce competition and difficult economic times, the EU's general strategic aim remains its continued ability to benefit from quality maritime transport services adapted to its needs. With more than 75% of EU trade (by weight) being carried by sea, shipping and related maritime transport services represent a fundamental component of the European economy. Efficient shipping and related services are essential for European competitiveness and an essential part of the multimodal European transport system, providing an effective solution to relieve congested land routes.

The 2009 Communication on the Maritime Transport Strategy and its focus areas

- The European Commission presented in January 2009 a Communication on the Strategic goals and recommendations for the EU's maritime transport policy until 2018. The said Communication defines the main strategic objectives of the European maritime transport policy until 2018 and recommends actions to increase the competitiveness and sustainability of the maritime transport sector. It was set in the broader context of the EU Transport Policy and the EU Integrated Maritime Policy aiming also to support other relevant policies such as the EU's energy and environmental policies. It was the result of continuous dialogue with the experts of Member States, the independent advice of a group of senior shipping professionals and an analytical study examining trends and signals of change in seaborne transport.

The Communication focused on the following areas whilst identifying key initiatives and actions towards strengthening the competitiveness of the sector while enhancing its environmental performance:

- **European shipping in globalized markets:** Achieve and maintain stable and predictable global competitive conditions for shipping and other maritime industries; support fair and liberal maritime trade in international fora and dialogue/agreements with key trade and shipping partners.
- **Human resources:** Address all human resources, training and employment related issues in maritime transport; attract and maintain European seafarers.
- **Quality shipping:** Implement the 3rd maritime safety package; enhance / improve EMSA's mandate and functioning; ensure Member States' compliance with relevant

international conventions; improve the framework for maritime security; tackle the environmental issues in maritime transport and reduce emissions (esp. CO₂, SO_x, NO_x); promote alternative fuels.

- **International scene:** Increase the effectiveness of EU involvement in IMO, ILO and WTO and reinforce international cooperation with EU trading and shipping partners, promote a shared maritime safety culture and respective common efforts.
- **Short Sea Shipping:** Remove administrative barriers (duplicated cross-border controls, lack of harmonised documents etc.); promote the creation of an integrated platform to ensure the convergence of sea-, land- and space-based surveillance technologies; develop interfaces with e-Freight, e-Customs etc. allowing users to track and trace cargo across transport modes; reinforce EU funding programmes such as the TEN-T/MoS, Marco Polo or the Regional Policy and other economic instruments; promote better connectivity of islands and long-distance intra-EU passenger transport; ensure better port services (fair competition, financial transparency, non-discrimination and cost-efficiency).
- **Research and innovation:** Foster development of new ship designs, structures, materials and equipment to improve safety and environmental performance; protect knowledge and intellectual property; develop advanced logistics conceptions for the overall transport chain; develop adequate ICT inspection and monitoring tools (esp. remote control of vessels' status).

Since 2009 a number of actions and initiatives (legislative and non-legislative) under the above areas were executed whereas a number of actions are still ongoing.

Preparatory work and next steps

The mid-term review of the EU Maritime Strategy was raised under the Greek Presidency of the Council. In an informal meeting of the Transport Ministers which took place in Greece on 7 May 2014, the Athens Declaration was adopted which sets out the EU's shipping policy priorities for the years to come. The Declaration formed the basis for the adoption of Council Conclusions by the Transport Council in June 2014.

The Council, through the said Conclusions, invites the Commission to present a mid-term review of the EU's Maritime Transport Policy until 2018 and outlook to 2020 whilst taking the Athens Declaration as a basis to further develop and implement the EU's Maritime Transport Policy up to 2020.

On the basis of the recent Council Conclusions, the Commission is currently evaluating what has been achieved since the adoption of the Maritime transport Strategy in 2009 (state of play).

The review exercise of the EU Maritime Transport Strategy will also take into account the findings and recommendations of the following two ongoing studies:

- **EU and International study** which aims to provide an analysis of the recent trends in global maritime transport and policy support to strengthen the position of the EU maritime transport internationally.
- **Short Sea Shipping study** which aims (a) to provide an analysis of the trends in EU shipping and Short Sea Shipping at a regional, national and local level (b) to analyse the main factors affecting the development and evolution of Short Sea Shipping in the EU and propose appropriate policy actions and (c) to address obstacles that today are still hampering the exploitation of the full potential of Short Sea Shipping.