

LUNCH BRIEFING WITH COMMISSIONER BORG

EU MARITIME POLICY: THE “BLUE PAPER”

5 December 2007, 13:00-15:00,
European Parliament, Brussels

Dirk STERCKX, MEP, Chairman of the Subgroup on “Maritime Affairs” of the Intergroup on Sustainable Development, welcomed the Commissioner and the speakers, stating that an exchange of different points of view should assist in defining the way forward with the future Maritime Policy for the EU.

Alan GAVIN, International Association of Classification Societies (IACS)

- Called for International solutions for an international industry through the IMO. The fact that the maritime industry is international by its nature cannot be overemphasised. For classification societies which serve 90% of the world fleet tonnage, maritime safety and marine environmental protection must be regulated at an international level.
- IACS would support the formulation of European standards, based on the IACS members’ unmatched experience of practical application of regulations on ships. The involvement of the industry as technical advisors in support of legislative developments is paramount and should include all sectors related to shipping.
- Education of the public and the next generation in the vital importance of maritime transport to their everyday lives is paramount if change is to be realised, and income, jobs, protection of the environment, and safety of life at sea, are to be achieved. Efforts such as Sea Vision and the work of Helmepea should be extended throughout Europe.
- IACS welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Maritime Research Strategy and encourages a direct dialog between IACS and the Commission on the different ways of implementing the Action Plan.

Kristian FUGLESANG, Assistant Director of INTERTANKO raised the following topics:

- The need for international regulation of shipping and continuous improvement in high and consistent standards in flag, class, insurers, charterers, Port State Control etc.
- Swift ratification and uniform implementation of measures adopted relating to safety, environmental considerations, liability and compensation conventions.
- Emphasised the strategic importance of tankers in Europe’s security of energy supply compared to the solution of pipelines.

Main points and challenges within the Blue Paper that were highlighted include:

- Minimisation of accidents, were a plethora of initiatives by Intertanko were identified, ranging from tanker maintenance, to crew education and reception facilities.

- Concerns over the threat of unilateral EU action if Commission finds that the IMO does not deliver in time, regarding Greenhouse Gas Emissions from ships.
- The tanker industry supports EU initiatives to attract and retain European seafarers. It is well known that the industry is concerned over unjust criminalisation of seafarers.
- the Poseidon Challenge was highlighted, a vision that involves the continuous improvement of individual, company and industry performance and cooperation with all of the relevant partners in striving to achieve the goals of zero fatalities, zero pollution, and zero detentions.

Commissioner Joe BORG:

- The European Parliament has played a seminal role in the process regarding the EU future Maritime Policy and MEPs and the Intergroup should aim to keep this emerging European policy high on the agenda of the Parliament.
- Specific examples, identifying the central role of sustainability in this policy, included:
 - Better use of planning tools, data networks and horizontal coordination to support decision-making for marine spaces and coastal areas and to ensure international compliance with rules
 - A European Strategy for Marine Research and a commitment to excellence in marine scientific research, technology and innovation
 - Deploying Europe's strengths to combat climate change, through research and innovation
 - Ensuring that all forms of development take account of the environmental impact, by fostering more environmentally-friendly shipping, reducing polluting emissions and promoting ecosystem-based fisheries.
- Examples of actions that have already been launched were highlighted (communications on ports policy, coastal and maritime tourism, a revision of the state of play of maritime clusters and energy issues and others).
- In conclusion, the Commission needs the involvement and support of its partners, particularly the European Parliament, to fully implement the Integrated Maritime Policy. It will need this support both now and in the future as well as that of the European Council.

Sir Robert COLEMAN, BIMCO:

- In the context of the action plan, the BIMCO initiative on Quality Coastal States (QCS), providing background to the QCS concept and its objectives to ensure quality, safe and environmentally shipping, was raised.
- The basic concept has been discussed with a number of stakeholder organisations and relevant institutions, including the IMO secretariat and European Commission departments. The response has been positive. A pilot study is under way to test the scope of the exercise, the assessment criteria to be used and the information that will need to be gathered and how that can be done. A decision will be taken as to launching a larger scale exercise concerning all coastal States, once the results are available. This would clearly be an ambitious undertaking and would have to be conducted in stages, expanding in scope and depth over a number of years.
- BIMCO will not be able to do this alone and is actively seeking partners who wish to cooperate. He called for the engagement and support from relevant institutions, including those of the EU, especially the Parliament and the Commission. The positive references to the QCS concept in several speeches by the Commissioner prior to the publication of the blue paper were praised. However, in conclusion, it was pointed out that only a passing reference had been made to the QCS concept and called for the Commissioner's comments as to how the Commission now regards the initiative and whether and how he intends to support it.

Simon BENNETT, International Chamber of Shipping:

- ICS and ISF welcome the impact of the Green Paper consultation that highlighted the importance of maritime issues and of the shipping industry in particular.
- ICS and ISF are encouraged by the emphasis in the Blue Paper given to the importance of international maritime regulation and support for finding solutions to regulatory challenges at international bodies, such as IMO and welcomed the Commission's recognition of the necessity for global rules for a global industry.
- However possible unilateral EU action could take place in the future, on issues such as classical air emissions, Green House Gases, and ship recycling if IMO proves unable to deliver, in a timely fashion. ICS is working to ensure that IMO does indeed successfully deliver global solutions on these issues and to thus avoid regional regulatory actions.
- The importance of continuing consultation and dialogue with ICS and ISF was highlighted, and the shipping industry in general, especially with respect to the

Communication on EU Maritime Transport Policy for the following 10 years, which DG TREN will be issuing in October 2008.

- Regarding the support of ICS to EU initiatives, references were made to various including: the 'European Space for Maritime Transport without barriers', the ILO Maritime Labour Convention, wishing to see the worldwide implementation of maritime labour standards in accordance with the ILO MLC as soon as possible, Action Plan on the qualification of EU seafarers, EU maritime surveillance activities, Protecting the environment in 'Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction' etc.
- ICS and ISF look forward to being consulted together with industry colleagues, as the Action Plan is developed.

Reinhard LÜKEN, Secretary General, Community of European Shipyards Association

- Welcome the title "Blue Book", which the public could also see as a sign for a balanced treatment of competitiveness and environmental objectives. While recognising that there is substantial scope for the improvement of the environmental performance of ships, the European Maritime Policy is not dominated by a green agenda.
- European innovation is the driving force to progress on safer and less polluting ships.
- The often cited holistic approach is particularly important with regard to conflicting environmental targets. Improvements must be achieved on a total balance not by pursuing each target separately. The global aspect is essential in this respect because it does not make sense to drive relatively clean European companies out of business with too demanding requirements, eventually shifting the respective economic activities to other parts of the world, which have far lower standards and higher pollution. At the same time, industry may not appear to be hiding behind global rules either.
- Tremendous, often state funded or supported investments in additional shipbuilding capacities threaten to create significant over-capacities. The resulting threat of market distortion and unfair competition is likely to create significant challenges to European Manufacturers. As a response, Europe has put a comprehensive strategy in place with LeaderSHIP 2015. During the Council Presidency Shipbuilding Conference in June all stakeholders decided to accelerate the implementation and to elevate the commitment to the initiative.
- Innovation is the single most important element in LeaderSHIP. However, concerns are raised about some worrying developments both with regard to the Framework Programme, where support for the WATERBORNE Technology Platform has faced some problems, as well as with regard to the expiry of the Shipbuilding Framework end of 2008, which needs to be prolonged in order to ensure continued availability of support to innovation.

Alfons GUINIER, European Community Shipowner's Association

- One of the key action points for the shipping industry is the announced White Paper on Maritime Transport Policy 2008-2018. ECSA appreciates this initiative since long term planning is essential for investments in shipping. Many of the views and suggestions brought forward by ECSA in its submissions to the Green Paper are also valid for the White Paper on a Maritime Transport Policy.
- The de facto global character of shipping is the main theme that should be taken into account on all fronts particularly on safety and environment issues, the global labour market in which shipping operates and the competitive position of European shipping in the global market. ECSA appreciates that this philosophy has been acknowledged in the Blue Paper.
- ECSA notes that some of its practical suggestions have been taken on board such as the enhancement of ratification of IMO Conventions by EU Member States as well as internationally. The vital role of European shipping for European and international trade and for the daily life of European citizens has also been recognised. This should be a fundamental premise in the search for the right balance between economic, social and environmental dimensions of a sustainable overall maritime policy.
- ECSA will actively contribute to the different Commission Papers that have been issued following the Blue Paper notably on a European port policy, motorways of the sea, a European maritime transport space without barriers and the freight transport logistics action plan as well as the incorporation of the ILO Maritime Labour Convention in EU regulations.
- Finally, the five underlying themes for a Future Maritime Policy that were brought forward in its first submission in 2005, were stated:
 - Ensuring the potential for growth in Europe through adequate transport capacity.
 - Ensuring a stable and competitive environment for EU shipping.
 - Keeping regulation global.
 - Supporting a positive development of shipping in the EU.
 - Taking an environmental approach with a global perspective.

Jorge LEONARDO, Portuguese Permanent Representation

- The Portuguese Presidency recalled the work made by the German Presidency and the Ministerial Conference in Lisbon, on the 22nd of October, which allowed Member States to exchange views on this new subject and was consensual regarding the need for an integrated maritime policy for the European Union. The European Council should confirm this commitment.
- The Portuguese Presidency welcomes the Commission Communication on an integrated maritime policy for the European Union as well as the proposed Action Plan which sets out the first concrete steps in developing an integrated approach to maritime affairs. The broad input into the Green Paper consultation and the debates at the Lisbon Ministerial Conference reflect the interest which stakeholders showed for the development of such a policy.
- The future integrated maritime policy should ensure synergies and coherence between sectoral policies, bring added value and fully respect the principle of subsidiarity. Furthermore, it should be developed as a tool to address the challenges facing Europe's sustainable development and competitiveness. It should take particularly account of the different specificities of Member States and specific maritime regions, which should call for increased cooperation, including islands, archipelagos and outermost regions as well as of the international dimension and cooperation with neighbouring countries.

DISCUSSION

Commissioner Joe BORG: The fact that the Action plan does not dwell on the coastal states issue does not mean that these are not important. There is no doubt that the integrated maritime policy will promote coastal states and shipping as well as their regulation.

Regarding shipping, there is enormous potential for the development for sea transport. This will be further promoted through initiatives such as the “The motorways of the Sea”. Concerning issues relating to environmental standards, further improvement can be made by using the appropriate instrument. For example, the withdrawal of taxation from shore side electricity and its application to the use of oil, whilst ships are in ports, will improve the air quality in these areas.

Elisa FERREIRA, MEP (ALDE) raised the issue of Europe's vs. Korea's competitiveness with respect to shipping.

Willy PIECYK, MEP (PSE) pointed out that new technologies should be identified in the shipping sector to address climate change and air pollution issues. Furthermore, the various

sectors have to take responsibility for their emissions, referring to the agricultural sector, which has to be brought into the equation.

Dirk STERCKX, MEP (ALDE): Progress has been made between the regulators and the industry and a lot of issues are up for discussion. Strong foundations have been laid which lead can ultimately lead to sustainability.

Peter SWIFT, Intertanko: The industry has recognised that it must address environmental issues in existing ships. New ships however pose better opportunities, where the industry can make quantum steps forward in this field.