

Intergroup lunch, 5 December 2007
Blue paper and Quality Coastal State initiative

1. General introduction; blue paper in general

First, as regards the **blue paper and action plan as a whole**, its measured approach is welcome, as its focus on initiatives which the shipping industry considers important to a future integrated maritime policy for the Union. We particularly welcome its emphasis on the need for new initiatives to offer attractive maritime careers, at sea and on shore, to young Europeans. As regards the review of the employment law derogations, we have noted, and fully endorse, the need for thorough analysis of the impact of possible changes, especially on the future competitiveness of European shipping.

I would like now to focus in the context of the action plan on the **BIMCO initiative on Quality Coastal States**.

2. The basic QCS concept and its objectives

Much has been made over recent years of the need for quality shipping and the responsibilities of those directly involved to provide efficient, safe and environmentally friendly transport and ancillary services. Emphasis has also been given to the roles and responsibilities of flag States and port State control authorities.

The QCS concept is designed to develop a new, complementary perspective by benchmarking the performance of coastal States on which the shipping industry, and indeed society as a whole, depend to ensure that maritime transport can perform its essential economic function in an acceptable way. The interface between coastal States and shipping raises a host of issues which need to be addressed if a more integrated maritime policy is really to be achieved.

3. Some key issues

To give just a few examples, in the environmental area, one can cite the availability in practice of usable waste reception facilities and the capacity and willingness of States to respond appropriately to emergencies. In the safety field, how well are States providing and managing navigation aids and services and adapting controls in port to the risks really presented? And, in the human relations area, what

arrangements are made concerning the treatment of seafarers or stowaways?

4. Bases for assessment

Issues like these can be assessed at a number of levels, including adherence to relevant international instruments, legally binding or not; coverage of regional instruments, like those of the EU; formal application of relevant instruments; and, probably most important of all, performance in practice. Obviously, some of these are easier to accomplish than others. But it is worth noting that the shipping industry itself is in a position to provide information which is not readily available from any other source.

5. Current approach

The basic concept has been discussed with a number of stakeholder organisations and relevant institutions, including the IMO secretariat and Commission departments. The response has been positive, in some cases even enthusiastic. So, at present, 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. Funding has been obtained from the Danish Maritime Fund to secure the involvement of the University of Southern Denmark in this exercise which should be concluded early next year. Once the results are available, a decision will be taken as to launching a larger scale exercise concerning all coastal States. 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.

6. Participation and support

BIMCO will not be able to do this alone and is actively seeking partners who wish to cooperate. For example, initial discussions are under way with stakeholder organisations and also with the WMU in Malmo to see if it can become involved. While it has not yet made a formal commitment, it has expressed a strong interest in the possibility.

Engagement and support from relevant institutions, including those of the EU, especially the Parliament and Commission, will also be of great importance. The same applies to the IMO where the secretariat has already shown its support and steps will be taken to introduce the initiative formally in the light of the results of the pilot study.

For this reason, we were very pleased by the positive references to the QCS concept in several speeches by the Commissioner prior to the publication of the blue paper. And, to be frank, we were equally somewhat disappointed to see it omitted from the blue paper itself, with only a passing reference to it in the air pollution section of the accompanying staff working paper. So we would be very interested to hear from the Commissioner as to how the Commission now regards the initiative and whether and how he intends to support it.