



European Community Shipowners' Associations

BLUE PAPER ON A MARITIME POLICY FOR THE UNION Initial ECSA Comments

ECSA appreciates the unique consultation process that has taken place on the Green Paper on a Future Maritime Policy and has actively contributed to it through various submissions. The Blue Paper that has been presented on 10 October needs of course detailed analysis particularly taking into account the many action points that have been proposed.

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. It is evident that 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.

In this respect 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 will of course contribute to the development of the White Paper on Maritime Transport Policy 2008-2018 and hopes that it will create an appropriate and stable framework attracting further investments in shipping and contributing to further enhance the global leadership of European shipping and its catalyst role for the whole maritime cluster.

Whilst the different action points brought forward in the Blue Paper will need further analysis and discussion, 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.

In this respect the need for improving the efficiency of existing port capacity and services and for more port capacity and better hinterland connections has to be reiterated. 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.

The Blue Paper also stresses the importance of the human factor within the maritime cluster. ECSA is pleased that an agreement has been reached between the social partners ETF and ECSA to incorporate certain provisions of the ILO Maritime Labour Convention into Community law. The MLC ensures a global level playing field on labour standards for all seafarers.

During the consultation process all stakeholders expressed support for an integrated approach to maritime policy. ECSA believes that the Blue Paper offers the basis towards such a policy. It is also encouraging that the Lisbon Policy – making Europe the most competitive and knowledge based economy – has been taken into account in this process.

ECSA wishes to reiterate the five underlying themes for a Future Maritime Policy that were brought forward in its first submission in 2005:

- 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.