

EUROMED WORKING GROUP ON MARITIME TRANSPORT

Third meeting of the Sub-Group on "Maritime Policy, Ports and Short Sea Shipping"

Brussels, 27 October 2004

OFFICIAL REPORT

The third meeting of the Euromed Sub-Group on "Maritime Policy, Ports and Short Sea Shipping" was held in Brussels on 27 October 2004, at the level of Senior officials for maritime transport and port managers. The list of participants is attached.

Three essential points were dealt with at this meeting:

- 1) Maritime policy, security, ports, short sea shipping and motorways of the sea: exchange of information;
- 2) Euromed Transport Project: presentation of the maritime volet of the diagnostic in the course of finalization;
- 3) Short and mid-term prospects for cooperation under MEDA.

This official report appears as a statement of the conclusions of the meeting and does not show the interventions of participants.

A. Maritime policy, security, ports, short sea shipping and motorways of the sea

Maritime policy

The Commission presented the main developments of the EU maritime policy for the last year, in particular the main orientations of the new Community guidelines on State aid which were adopted in early 2004, the various alternatives for the revision of Regulation 14/56 on Liner conferences, the state of play of transport services liberalization in the framework of GATS (WTO) and the social dimension (adoption of the Directive on mutual recognition of STCW certificates and EU support to ILO ongoing works on a consolidated document which would be the first sectorial convention on maritime transport to be agreed at world level). As regards maritime transport services, the EU promotes the non discrimination principle both at international level (GATS negotiations) and at bilateral level (conclusion of a maritime agreement with China, launching of negotiations with India, Euro-Mediterranean Association agreements with Mediterranean Partners).

The Mediterranean Partners informed the Commission on the main developments in their maritime policies, which are gearing towards a greater opening of maritime transport services and activities (demonopolization, separating public service missions and commercial activities, implementation of the non discrimination principle vis-à-vis all flags, etc). Some Partners (Egypt, Tunisia) emphasized the need to modernize and to renew their national fleet.

Security

The Commission presented the latest developments which have occurred, and those under preparation, in the field of maritime security. The related presentation is annexed.

The Commission also informed the members of the working group of a training seminar on maritime security which will be held in Malta at the end of January 2005. This seminar will be organised in the framework of the Euromed Transport Project. The training coordinator of the Euromed Transport Project presented the objectives and contents of this 4 day seminar.

Malta and Italy proposed that this seminar be opened to the participation of EU Member States. The Commission was not opposed to such a proposal provided that Member States cover the travelling and accommodation expenses of their participants.

Tunisia, Algeria and Malta suggested that the seminar focus more on practical problems and the implementation of the ISPS code, rather than on the contents of the code. In this respect, it was proposed to include a module on border control issues and one on port co-operation in the field of security. As concerns participation, it was suggested to target as a priority the authorities which are involved in security control, in particular custom officers and other operational agents.

Short Sea Shipping and Motorways of the sea

The Commission presented EC policy and measures for the promotion of short sea shipping, including the concept of Sea Motorways and the Marco Polo programme (Cf. presentation in annex).

The Mediterranean Partners showed strong interest for the Motorways of the sea concept and the way the EU intends to support the development of such projects with Mediterranean Partners. The Commission stressed that the High Level Group on the interconnection of the Trans-European Transport Network with neighbouring regions which held its first meeting in Brussels on 18-19 October 2004 will be in a position to identify Sea Motorways projects involving Mediterranean Partners and to make recommendations on the financing of these projects. The Commission also informed the participants that the MEDA neighbouring programme 2004-2006 which was approved by Member States on 13 October 2004 foresees the possibility to grant financial support to Motorways of the sea projects involving the Mediterranean Partners.

Ports

The Commission presented the main features of its new proposal for a Directive on access to port market services.

In the Mediterranean Partners, significant progress is taking place concerning the opening of port services, but there are still many disparities from one country to another.

The members of the group supported the Commission proposal to organise a training action on port issues in the second semester 2005, in particular on port management, introduction of new technologies in ports and ports-customs co-operation.

B. Euromed Transport Project: presentation of the maritime volet of the diagnostic under finalization

The European Commission reminded the participants of the main guidelines of the project, which started in spring 2003. The diagnostic on the transport situation in the region, which

is envisaged under the first phase of the project, should provide a clear picture of the situation of each individual country and the overall region with respect to the opening of transports markets, competition, infrastructure as well as vis-à-vis international standards and the 'acquis communautaire' in the field of transport. This diagnostic, which includes a maritime module, is in the course of being finalised and will be presented and discussed during the 5th Euro-Mediterranean Transport Forum in December in Brussels.

The expert of the Euromed Transport Project made a short presentation of the contents and main conclusions of the maritime module of the diagnostic. This presentation is annexed.

Some Mediterranean Partners (Algeria, Lebanon, Turkey) indicated that certain data presented by the consultant were inexact or needed to be updated. It was agreed that the consultant would be in touch with the members of the group with a view to correct or update these data.

C. Short and mid-term prospects for co-operation under MEDA

Short-term perspectives:

- Training seminar on maritime security (Malta, January 2005)
- Training initiative on port issues (second semester 2005)

Mid-term perspectives:

- MEDA Neighbourhood Programme 2004-2006: this programme which was approved by the EU Member States on 13 October 2004 foresees a budgetary allocation of 17 million Euros for transport, of which 7 million for maritime transport. The maritime volet of this programming includes the financing of initiatives related to maritime safety (follow-up of SAFEMED), maritime security and the promotion of short sea shipping, including Sea Motorways.
- High Level Group II: this group which will conclude its work in October 2005 will have the possibility to identify Motorways of the Sea projects as priority projects, but also to discuss horizontal issues (safety, security, interoperability, etc) and to make recommendations in the field of financing.

D. Next steps

- *Seminar on maritime security:* the letters inviting the Mediterranean Partners authorities to nominate their participants to the seminar will be sent out in the course of December.
- *Training initiative on port issues:* the members of the group can forward their suggestions by fax or e-mail to the Secretariat of the Euromed Transport Forum by 30 November 2004.
- *Finalisation of the maritime module of the Euromed Transport Project diagnostic:* the members of the group can forward to Mr Kostianis, expert of the Euromed Transport Project, any remark or modification relating to the presentation made during the meeting. These contributions have to be forwarded to Mr Kostianis by 30 November 2004. The final version of the diagnostic will be presented and discussed on the occasion of the 5th Euro-Mediterranean Transport Forum which will take place in Brussels in December 2004.

