

## **EUROMED WORKING GROUP ON MARITIME TRANSPORT**

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

*Brussels, 20 October 2003*

### **OFFICIAL REPORT**

The second meeting of the Euromed Sub-Group on "Maritime Policy, Ports and Short Sea Shipping" was held in Brussels on 20 October 2003, at the level of Senior officials for maritime transport. The list of participants is attached.

Three essential points were dealt with at this meeting:

- 1) Euromed Transport Project: review of the implementation of the project and linkage with the sub-group activities;
- 2) Maritime policy, ports, short sea shipping and motorways of the sea: exchange of information;
- 3) 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. Euromed Transport Project: review of the implementation of the project and linkage with the sub-group activities**

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 vis-à-vis the 'acquis communautaire' in the field of transport. Once established, the diagnostic will be the basis for a regional transport action plan, which will be submitted for approval to the Euro-Mediterranean Transport Forum.

The experts of the Euromed Transport Project informed the group about the method used to establish the diagnostic, in particular on maritime issues. They informed the participants that a questionnaire would be transmitted soon to the Mediterranean Partners' authorities with a view to progress on the diagnostic, and that a series of visits would take place on the spot before the end of the year.

Several topics were mentioned by the Mediterranean Partners as deserving to be carefully considered in the framework of the diagnostic: organisation of maritime and ports' administration, ports reform, integration of short sea shipping in the multimodal transport chain, logistical platforms.

The Commission specified the role of the sub-group in relation to the Euromed Transport Project.

This role is two-fold:

- 1) contributing to the maritime volet of the diagnostic. To this end, the experts of the Euromed Transport Project will be in close touch with the members of the sub-group.
- 2) contributing to the identification of some training micro-actions of a regional nature, corresponding to priority needs, to be implemented quickly (in parallel to the diagnostic) under the Euromed Transport Project.

## **B. Maritime policy, ports, short sea shipping and motorways of the sea**

### *Maritime policy*

The Commission presented the main orientations of the EU maritime policy, in particular the new Community guidelines on State aid, the main issues as regards international relations (IMO, GATS negotiations, Euro-Mediterranean Association agreements), and the recent Commission proposals on maritime security. The presentations carried out on these subjects are annexed.

A fruitful debate took place on the security issues. The majority of the Mediterranean Partners expressed their concern regarding the entry into force on 1.07.2004 of the international provisions on security (SOLAS convention, ISPS code) and the need for EU support to help them, within this short time, to conform to these new provisions. Moreover a strengthening of port cooperation between Mediterranean Partners (mutual recognition of measures, communication between security officers in ports) would be desirable to facilitate a concerted implementation of these measures.

### *Ports*

The Commission presented the main features of the Directive proposal on access to port market services currently under discussion in the Council and the European Parliament.

Tunisia and Morocco informed of their experience as regards port reform. While Morocco is progressing towards the adoption of an independent Port Authority for the main ports of the country and the full opening of the market of port handling services, Tunisia has opted for the model of concession to a single private operator.

The members of the group gave their support for the Tunisian proposal to launch a debate on concessions, the opening to competition of port services and the respective roles of the public and private sector as regards port management.

### *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 new Marco Polo programme (Cf. presentation in annex).

In this respect, the majority of the Mediterranean Partners stressed the insufficiency of their intermodal logistical system (connection of ports to the hinterland) and stressed the need for developing logistical platforms within and close to ports.

## **C. Prospects for co-operation under MEDA**

The Commission consulted the members of the Working Party on topics which could be the subject of training micro-actions under the Euromed Transport Project.

The group decided in favour of three topics, which will be submitted for the approval of the 4<sup>th</sup> Euro-Mediterranean Transport Forum due to take place on 28 October in Brussels:

- 1) maritime security;
- 2) port reform issues (port management, opening of port market services, respective roles of public and private sectors, etc);
- 3) computerization of ports (interoperability of systems), including customs.

France gave information about various training courses which have been going on for a few years and are opened to third countries, in particular a graduating course on port management, organised in cooperation with IMO and the port of Le Havre, and a seminar on port concessions organised in cooperation with the World Bank and the port of Le Havre.

#### **D. Next steps**

Submission to the 4<sup>th</sup> Euro-Mediterranean Transport Forum of the training topics mentioned at item C: 28 October 2003.

Deadline to submit training proposals related to the three topics mentioned at item C: 15 November 2003.

Next meeting of the sub-group: Spring 2004.

#### **E. Details of the Secretariat of the Euro-Mediterranean Transport Forum**

The Secretariat of the Forum and of the Working Groups is provided by the European Commission (Directorate-General for Energy and of Transport).

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Annexes: List of participants  
Presentations made during the meeting