

**EUROMED TRANSPORT FORUM
MARITIME TRANSPORT WORKING GROUP
MARITIME SAFETY SUB-GROUP**

Third Meeting

Brussels, 18 December 2006

OFFICIAL REPORT

The Third Meeting of the Maritime Safety Sub-Group of the Euromed Maritime Transport Working Group, which is also the SAFEMED Project Advisory Committee, was held in Brussels on the 18 December 2006, at the level of high-officials for maritime safety and security. The list of participants is attached. Apologies were received from the representative of the Palestinian Authority who was unable to travel.

The Meeting adopted the agenda attached to this report.

This official report reflects the main issues discussed during the meeting and does not contain the interventions of the participants.

A. Presentation of the Euromed programme for transport

The European Commission (EC) informed the Meeting of important developments in Euromed transport cooperation since the last meeting of the Maritime Safety Sub-Group highlighting the report of the High Level group on the extensions of the trans-European transport network to neighbouring countries and regions, the EU New Neighbourhood Policy, and the first Euromed Ministerial Conference for Transport held in Marrakech, Morocco in December 2005.

B. Latest developments in EU maritime safety policy

The European Commission (EC) briefed the Meeting on the latest developments in EU maritime safety policy in particular the Third Maritime Safety Legislative Package which is presently under consideration.

During the discussion on this agenda item, specific reference was made to the need to assist the Mediterranean Partners to upgrade their port State control standards and to the importance of an efficient policy for the prevention of air pollution from ships. The Meeting agreed that these two issues could be the subject of future Euromed cooperation and recommended close cooperation between the EU Member States and the Mediterranean Partners during the forthcoming revision process of MARPOL Annex VI (Prevention of Air Pollution from Ships) taking place within the framework of the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

C. SAFEMED Project: Review of activities and programme of activities for 2007

The Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC) presented the MEDA regional project “Euromed Cooperation on Maritime Safety and Prevention of Pollution from Ships – SAFEMED”, which it started implementing in ten Mediterranean Partners in 2006. REMPEC also delivered a presentation on the project activities implemented in 2006 and on the programme of activities planned for 2007. A detailed report was also circulated to all participants.

The Participants, recognizing that the SAFEMED Project will be instrumental in assisting the Mediterranean Partners in enhancing the implementation of international maritime standards, welcomed the progress made in the implementation of the project, noted the activities planned for 2007 and committed themselves to offer full cooperation in the forthcoming activities.

D. Presentation of the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA)

The European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) gave a presentation on the mandate and activities of the agency and referred to the role of EMSA in the implementation of the SAFEMED Project.

As a reply to the request of some of the participants, the European Commission (EC) explained that the European legislation establishing EMSA restricts the agency’s cooperation with non-EU Member States. Therefore, all the contact between third countries and EMSA should, for the time being, be channeled through the Commission.

E. Follow up to the SAFEMED Project

The Commission informed the Meeting that, in response to the Mediterranean Partners’ requests for further technical assistance in the fields of maritime safety and security, the EC had approved a new technical assistance project, SAFEMED II, to follow up and complement the present SAFEMED Project. The new project, which will have duration of three years and an overall budget of 5.5 Million Euro, will be divided in three components: maritime safety, maritime security, and equipment and related services for traffic monitoring systems. The objectives of the SAFEMED II Project will be:

- to promote the recipient countries’ compliance with IMO conventions and the alignment of their legislation on European standards in the areas of maritime safety and security;
- to contribute to the development of a regional vessel traffic monitoring system that could, in due course, be integrated into the EU’s SafeSeaNet system;
- to identify a network of ports of refuge in the Mediterranean partner countries;
- to promote the development, in the recipient countries’ administrations, of a body of maritime safety and security inspectors.

During the discussion, the European Commission (EC) also referred to the importance of twinning activities in the fields of maritime safety and security and invited the MEDA Partners, which have not already done so, to apply for such technical assistance from the EU.

F. Conclusions

The Meeting adopted a number of conclusions which are attached to this report.

E. Coordinates of the Forum

The Secretariat of the Forum and of its Working Group is provided by the European Commission (Directorate General Energy and Transport-DGTREN)

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Annexes: Final List of participants
Agenda of the Meeting
Conclusions of the Meeting