



EUROPEAN MARITIME PILOTS' ASSOCIATION

St. Aldegondiskaai 36-38 B-2000 ANTWERP, BELGIUM
TEL : + 32 3 205 94 36 – FAX : + 32 3 205 94 37 – e-mail : empa@skynet.be

*The Secretary General
Chris Lefevere*

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Future Maritime Policy for the European Union

Position of the European Maritime Pilots' Association

Introduction

The European Maritime Pilots' Association (EMPA) represents almost 5.000 maritime pilots from 22 European countries including the major maritime nations of the EU and Croatia, Bulgaria and Norway. Pilots navigate the ships, often in difficult circumstances, safely and speedily from sea in and out European ports. Pilotage forms an essential element in the accessibility of the European ports, the European economy and the protection of the European seas, coasts and rivers and its population.

EMPA welcomes and fully supports the initiative of EU Commissioner Borg for an overall EU Maritime Policy. To the significant importance of EU shipping and maritime transport we like to add the European ports (including some of the world largest) and especially the huge impact on the safety of the population and the environment in case of any maritime accident. Therefore we agree that there is a need for an integrated, all-embracing maritime policy.

We hope that this will not lead to a series of new legislative proposals but focus on a better coordination of international and European existing legislation and especially an EU-wide harmonised enforcement of regulations. The basic assumption of all policy measures should be the safety and protection of the environment but at the same time the efficiency and competitiveness of European shipping and ports should be safeguarded.

What EMPA expects from a new European Maritime Policy

1. Maritime Employment

As has been confirmed by IMO statistics and BIMCO manpower studies, there is a worldwide shortage of maritime officers. In Europe, fleet declines, flagging out and the replacement of European officers and masters with seafarers from low pay countries has had a major effect on the number of students in nautical colleges and consequently on the numbers of experienced officers and masters.

We suggest that the EU Maritime Policy aims at maintaining the competitiveness of EU shipping on the global market. Even more important is the competitiveness of the EU officers and masters. The maritime policy should focus on the highest possible standards for training and education, promotion of a maritime career but also re-training the officers.

*Tel. : + 32 3 205 94 36 – Fax : + 32 3 205 94 37
email : empa@skynet.be - website: www.empa-pilots.org*

Too often officers are frustrated and quit early before they meet the minimum qualifications for becoming a pilot. Therefore more emphasis should be given to the quality of life at sea, the workload, leave arrangements. Training and career mapping should be part of an integrated maritime cluster policy.

2. The role of maritime pilots

The EU maritime policy measures should take maximum advantage of the presence of a pilot on board of a vessel. He/She is first on board when a ship approaches the coast / harbour and will be the last to leave. Pilots are in a privileged position with regard to :

?? Maritime Safety

Principally the role of the maritime pilot is to advise the master and the bridge team of ships in the European coastal waters, rivers canals and ports. Pilots continuously adapt to new technologies (ship construction, navigation equipment, regulations and procedures). The EU Maritime policy should ensure that also in the future sufficient pilots will be available maintaining the highest professional standards. With the exception of ships with a master having a Pilot Exemption Certificate (PEC), all ships will still need a pilot.

?? Maritime security

Although we believe that maritime transport of large volumes of cargo should not be hampered by extra administrative burdens we are in favour of enhanced security measures dealing with the threat of terrorism.

For the implementation of the IMO “International Ship and Port Facility Security Code” pilots can cooperate with police, national- and port authorities identifying irregularities on board.

?? Port State Control

Under Art.13 of Council Directive 95/21/EC pilots have an obligation to report deficiencies on board. They can help targeting ships for Port State Control, avoiding unnecessary surveys for quality ships.

?? Places of Refuge

Pilots have already played an important role helping to identify ‘places of refuge’. Pilots can board vessels in imminent danger assisting the bridge team to reach a safe ‘place of refuge’.

?? Search and Rescue

Pilots can play an important role in SAR operations.

?? Pollution prevention

Shipowners have done a lot to avoid pollution of the seas and coasts. Intentional and operational pollution by ships has decreased. But even quality shipping cannot exclude an accident.

Today the impact of a maritime accident along the European coasts and on our rivers can be huge for the population and the environment. In the past there has been too much focus on oil tankers. Policy makers should not forget the inherent danger of other categories of ships carrying dangerous goods and the increasing size of ships. Some containerships have now bunker capacities of up to 10.000 ton, the size of a small tanker.

Pilots play a vital role in avoiding accidental pollution due to groundings or collisions. With their local knowledge and experience pilots are important for the voyage planning and form an essential part of the bridge team during the passage and manoeuvring of the ship.

?? Research & Development

Often pilots expertise is used for research and development. We invite the Task Group to provide measures encouraging the consultation of pilots at an early stage during the

development of new port infrastructure, dredging programs, development and testing of new technologies, setting up of VTMS,

EMPA is also ready to offer assistance to EMSA and the EU Commission for all pilot related matters.

3. Specific Character of Maritime Pilotage

The EU Maritime Policy should take into account the specific character of pilotage. Pilot services can not be compared with other port services that are businesses aiming in the first place at cost efficiency and profit. Indeed although pilotage is offered against payment the pilot services have public service obligations of general interest.

For reasons of safety and easy accessibility of all European ports pilotage has to be offered to all ships including even non-profitable tasks (small vessels, irregular traffic) and provisions for peak traffics.

Competent authorities must continue to set the minimum quality standards and the minimum service levels. The EU Maritime Policy should preclude the following :

- ?? Decrease of service levels due to cost reduction / economy
- ?? Uncontrolled raise of pilot dues
- ?? Cherry picking
- ?? Reduction of quality of training and continued proficiency
- ?? Loss of a minimum service in any port

4. No competition amongst pilot services

Although European pilot services are amongst the best worldwide we should not be complacent and must continue to investigate together with the customers ways of improving pilot services. This cannot be achieved by competition. A pilot should remain free of commercial pressure. Only in this environment can a pilot give priority to safety and find the right balance between the interest of one ship and the remaining traffic. Having been a seagoing master or officer he or she is well aware of the financial consequences for the ship of delays, idle time, ordering tugboats and other port services. The pilot's advice should always be based on independent judgement of risks.

7. Compulsory Pilotage

The competent authorities of the Member States may recognise the compulsory nature of pilotage. Nevertheless the EU Maritime Policy should look into possibilities to reconcile rights of innocent passage as guaranteed by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS 1982) and the need for compulsory pilotage in certain European waters (PSSA's and Straits) or for certain 'high risk' ships. The latter does not mean sub-standard ships but ships for which, due to their cargo/bunkers, the impact of a collision or grounding could be huge for the sea and coastal environment.

6. Subsidiarity / Diversity

Policy makers should understand that there are big differences between European seaports and also between pilot services. The pilot service has to be adapted to the pilotage district (sea, river, canal, port), the size of the port, the maritime traffic (number, type and size of ships), local conditions (weather, tide, ice navigation), ...

Therefore the EU Maritime Policy should include the subsidiarity principle leaving the authority to organise and/or control pilot services to the Member States and Competent Authorities.

8. European Maritime Safety Agency / European Coast Guard

EMPA suggests the further development of the European Maritime Safety Agency. EMSA could play an important role in :

- Developing and Harmonizing the EU Maritime Policy
- Offering a level playing field through a harmonized enforcement of EU regulations. in all Member States
- Co-ordinated VTS and improved traffic monitoring

While avoiding the duplication of efforts EMPA still sees possibilities for increased co-operation between member states. A European Coast Guard could enhance the efficiency of SAR, pollution prevention and control of the coasts and seas.

9. Short Sea Shipping

EMPA wishes the EU Maritime Policy to include measures that encourage short sea shipping and the use of inland waterways. In particular the administrative burden should at least be reduced to a level comparable to other modes of transport used for intra European traffic. SSS deserves a key role in the growing demand for transport capacity and in the modal shift. Too often in SSS pilots are only seen as a cost. On the other hand EMPA is convinced that pilots can also offer a solution to problems of fatigue due to short sea routes, short stays in port and tight schedules. Today, targeting SSS with regular calls in a port, some Member States provide already Pilot Exemption Certificates (PEC's) and/or frequency reductions. The EU Maritime policy might look into the possibility of reducing the minimum manning level on short sea shipping ships taking a pilot.

10. International versus European Regulation

Shipping is a global industry. Therefore the EU Maritime Policy should be as much as possible in line with the existing IMO regulations. Development of new regulations should preferably be done within the IMO. However the sovereignty of Member States and specific EU demands for higher standards of training and education, higher demands on quality and safety of shipping and port services should also be included in the legal framework of the EU Maritime Policy.

11. Future demand for pilots

The past 10 years the number of pilots has fallen sharply (e.g. Germany 920 to 800, The Netherlands 650 to 400). Through reorganisations the efficiency has increased. EMPA warns that for pilot services a critical point has been reached. Workloads can not further increase, nor can costs be further reduced without jeopardising the overall quality of the pilot services. It is time that policy makers should more focus on the consolidation of existing pilot services and the future demand for pilots due to the increase of maritime traffic.

EMPA is offering its knowledge and expertise to the Task Force for a new EU Maritime Policy.

Chris Lefevere
EMPA Secretary General

