



Press release – 9th yearly meeting of the ENMC

A PROMISING NEW STEP FOR MARITIME EUROPE...

The ninth yearly meeting of the ENMC was held on September 26th and 27th in Lisbon. This was also the occasion for 25 representatives from all over Europe to celebrate the 2013 World Maritime Day together with the International Maritime Organization.

Aside the Portuguese organizers and the French-Luxembourg presidium, most of the 17 ENMC member countries participated. The maritime clusters of Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Poland, Spain and the United Kingdom delegated their representatives in order to discuss an extensive agenda. Additionally, the European Commission (Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs) and the Cape Verdean Maritime attended as observers.

The attendees were welcomed by Mr. Bruno Bobone, host and FEEM Chairman (Forum Empresarial da Economia do Mar) and Mr. Francis Vallat, ENMC Chairman. Mr. Manuel Pinto de Abreu, the Portuguese Secretary of State of Sea also delivered a speech about the maritime strategy of the Portuguese Government.

During the meeting, the participants commented the last developments of their respective national maritime sectors and gave an overview of the activities undertaken by their organizations in the past year. The French-Luxembourg presidium gave an account of the follow-up of the decisions made at Schengen last year. One of the dearest wishes breathed then by the ENMC members and the most important action to them was, and remains more than ever, the set-up of a thorough European Commission survey on the European maritime sector with the ENMC in an advisory role. ENMC Chairman said: *“This study should work out the real weight of the European Maritime sector and be the starting point of all credible actions. Indeed the European Commission partly relies on estimations and often not sufficiently accurate figures when drafting new policies. Even the figures which were given to support the excellent concept of “Blue growth” at Limassol were not totally reliable or appropriate.”*

In 2013, the ENMC put pressure on the European Commission and made first steps towards the accomplishment of this survey. For instance, the ENMC raised a little bit money for that purpose and began last year to collect turnover and employment figures from each national cluster. Not all the data is accurate but this groundwork will surely facilitate and pave the way for the real survey that ENMC claims from the Commission, at least by helping to build a clear framework, a scope of analysis. But it is obviously not enough and what is needed on the long run is a real deep study, made by professional statistician experts (appointed by the Commission) taking the time necessary to define the most appropriate methods, to “fix” which figures (direct? indirect? with criteria...) should be adopted homogeneously by all, to gather/crosscheck all data within all European

countries, and then to combine them in a reliable way (through a matrix possibly updated every two or three years). Still, we insist on the advisory role of the ENMC.

Mr. Vallat added: *“I met several EC representatives on September 3rd and I urged this survey once again. I also proposed a reasonable timeframe, taking into account the renewal of the Commission in 2014. Although the EC has shown great interest in it, the ENMC has no commitment, whilst such a study obviously requires a long period of time (probably 2 or 3 years) and a fair amount of money!”*

Furthermore the French-Luxembourg presidium presented the results of the other actions started in 2012, for instance the impressive figures with regards to the visitors of the reshaped website, , the participation in the 12th FEMIP conference in Athens, and more recently in the Black Sea region conference (about Blue growth) held in Varna.

The members of the European Network of Maritime Clusters discussed the road map for 2014 and exchanged views with the EC representative. Several members committed themselves to participate in the next edition of Euomaritime in 2015. As a matter of fact, the first edition of this European maritime trade fair under ENMC patronage was a success in many respects: 180 exhibitors, 5000 professionals visiting, 140 speakers and an overwhelmingly satisfaction score of 90%.

The next meeting will take place in Sofia. All maritime clusters of the European Economic Area which have not taken part yet are invited to make themselves known to the European Network of Maritime Clusters by then.

Press contact :

contact@enmc.eu