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ECASBA NEWSFLASH

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COMMISSION HOLDS FIRST PORT WORKSHOP

THE first European Commission port policy workshop was held in Antwerp on November 14th/15th.

As ECASBA members will be aware, the Commission is holding a series of six workshops over the period November 2006 to May 2007 to allow stakeholders the opportunity of exchanging views on the issues they wish to see — or equally do not wish to see — in any

future EU port policy.

The calendar for the workshops is as follows:

November 14/15 Antwerp: Port Services (fair competition / concessions/role of port authorities)

January 18/19 Hamburg: Port Financing (state aid/transparency)

February 14/15 Lisbon: Sustainable Development (environmental

issues/general port development)

March 8/9 Valencia: Internal Bottlenecks (cargo handling/technical nautical services/labour issues)

April 19/20 Naples: External Bottlenecks (customs/hinterland connections/logistics)

May 9/10 Tallinn/Helsinki: Competition from non-EU ports

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2007 ECASBA SEMINAR DATES SET

THE 2007 ECASBA Brussels Seminar will be held on May 22nd/23rd at the Silken Berlaymont Hotel — the same venue as last year.

Following feedback from delegates to the 2006 seminar, this event will start at noon on May 22nd and finish at noon 23rd.

There will be fewer speakers, to allow more detailed discussion of the main issues and the dinner will be held at a restaurant within close walking distance of the hotel.

It is hoped that a visit to the European Parliament will be offered following the seminar.

Further information will be made available in early 2007 and with a total of 90 places available for delegates, the Chairman of ECASBA, Gunnar J. Heinonen, hopes that the attendance at the 2007 event will exceed that of 2006.

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ECASBA will be represented, at all the seminars following which it will prepare a submission to the Commission on its views on future EU port policy.

ECASBA members will be invited to put forward their own views during the 2007 Brussels seminar (see page 1), following which the final position paper will be drafted.

The Commission had made it clear that the workshops are only one part of a three stage consultation process, the others being formal consultation with Member States and direct discussions with stakeholders. ECASBA will, therefore, continue its close dialogue with Jean Trestour, Head of Unit G1 and responsible for port policy, in the coming months.

For the Antwerp seminar,

ECASBA was represented by Diego Teurlinx of FEPORT/ECASBA and Leo Werkers of NAVES in Antwerp. The workshop was well-attended with representatives of ECSA, ESPO, the European Shippers Council, CLECAT, boatmen, tug and pilots associations and labour unions being present.

From the presentations made by invited speakers (representing port operators, shipping lines and the Antwerp pilots association) and the interventions from delegates, it became clear that most organisations present wished to avoid the need for new legislation on access to the port services market, although ESPO felt that some safeguards for port authorities in the area of concessions, perhaps through the development of Commission guidelines, would be beneficial. Other organisations, however,

felt that any issues relating to concessions could be resolved through the use of existing EU competition law.

For its part the Commission did not commit itself on any specific issues. It is expected that the Commission will not take a stance on any issues until the consultation processes have been completed, at which time it will be possible for DG-TREN to take a view on the levels of support from stakeholders.

ECASBA's decision to withhold making any formal statement on the various issues is one that is shared by the majority of other major European maritime industry organisations.

A report on the Hamburg workshop will follow in the New Year.

NEW ECASBA ADVISORY PANEL APPOINTED

ECASBA Chairman Gunnar J. Heinonen has made a number of changes in the Advisory Panel.

Antonio Belmar da Costa, of AGEPOR in Lisbon, has been appointed Vice Chairman whilst his predecessor, Klaus Bültjer of ZVDS in Hamburg, moves to Coordinator of the Marine Safety & Environment (MS&E) Working Group.

Announcing these changes, Gunnar Heinonen thanked Menno Duin, previously Coordinator of the MS&E WG for his sterling

efforts in setting up the group and for carrying it through its formative years. Following this reorganisation Menno has stepped down from the ECASBA Advisory Panel but remains Vice Chairman of the FONASBA Liner & Port Agency Committee.

For the next two years, the members of the Advisory Panel are:

Chairman – Gunnar J. Heinonen, Finland

Vice Chairman — Antonio Bel-

mar da Costa, Portugal

Working Group Coordinators:

Customs & Transit — John Stolk, Netherlands

Education & Training — Philip Wood, Great Britain

Marine Safety & Environment — Klaus Bültjer, Germany
Port Policy — Roberto Corrias, Italy

Panel Members;

Peter Demeter, Hungary

John Foord, Great Britain

John Hunter, Belgium

ECASBA CONTRIBUTIONS TO COMMISSION CONSULTATIONS

ECASBA members will be aware from the papers circulated ahead of the Annual Meeting that input is being sought from member associations in order to develop an association position on both the Maritime Policy Green Paper and the proposal to develop a port policy.

Information on the first port policy workshop is provided on page 1 and we will update members following each subsequent workshop.

With respect to the Maritime Policy Green Paper, members will have received a copy of the first submission sent on July 8th 2005 and also, in the Annual Meeting papers, copies of the Green Paper itself and the Executive Summary. For reference, further copies of these documents will be circulated to ECASBA members with this newsletter.

Both of these Commission consultations could have significant bearing on our activities and so it is important that we provide the Commission with our views on all the relevant issues. We are therefore seeking the widest possible input from members in the lead up to our Brussels seminar in May 2007, where our draft responses on both consultations will be discussed and finalised.

Of particular interest to ECASBA members is the concept of the Common EU Maritime Space, which was touched on during the ECASBA Plenary

Meeting in Marrakech — see the latest issue of the FONASBA Newsletter.

This concept proposes that ships trading between EU ports be treated for customs and other purposes as remaining at all times on EU territory and therefore benefiting from reduced documentation obligations in the same way as cargo shipped by road or on rail.

Although the Commission has not provided much detail in the Green Paper, we expect that this facility will only apply to EU flagged vessels but even so this would be a major boost to short sea shipping and ECASBA has already given guarded support to the Commission on this issue.

As may be expected, much of the Green Paper is dedicated to environmental issues such as the need to balance industry development against protection of coastal zones such as wetlands and other habitats. Ship-generated emissions are another issue, as is the sustainable development of seabed resources.

Going hand in hand with environmental concerns is the need for further research in a number of areas — including environment, transport, aquaculture, food, biotechnology and energy — to ensure that any developments are based on sound foundations and the Commission proposes pooling its research initiatives with others in

the private sector to ensure that Europe retains its innovative edge over the rest of the world.

The value of the marine economy — in its widest sense — to Europe is also acknowledged, with sections of the Green Paper dedicated to shipping employment (although almost exclusively related to seafarers), the economic value of the coastal regions in terms of tourism, fishing, planning and leisure activities as well as the need to plan appropriate coastal defences.

It is also clear that the Commission still harbours a desire to establish an EU flag, an EU Coastguard and to get EU membership of IMO, three proposals which ECASBA has spoken out against.

It is clear that there is much work to be done between now and May and we hope ECASBA members will play their part by contributing to the development of ECASBA's position.

AN APOLOGY

In the last ECASBA Newsflash we erroneously referred to Mr. Eugène Vanfleteren as President of our Belgian association, NAVES.

In fact, Mr. Vanfleteren is President of the Antwerp Shipping Federation ASV, and John Hunter is President of NAVES, which we are pleased to acknowledge and we apologise for the error.