

SECTORAL SOCIAL DIALOGUE COMMITTEE FOR MARITIME TRANSPORT

27 JUNE 2017

DRAFT MINUTES

Chair: Mr George Koltsidopoulos

1. APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT AGENDA

The SSDC approved the draft agenda for the SSDC meeting of 27.06.2017.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE SSDC MEETING OF 13.03.2017

The minutes of the previous SSDC meeting were approved.

3. MATTERS ARISING

a. The EU maritime transport strategy: state of play and looking forward towards a 2019-2028 strategy

DG MOVE (S. Santamato) indicated that the Commission is finalising its implementation report.

DG MOVE explained that the issue of greenhouse gas emission is a big challenge and that both developments in green technology and safety issue remain critical issues.

The current EU regulatory framework seems fit for the purpose, the main priority being to keep it modern.

In terms of strategy, the Commission considers that the Valletta Declaration is good and useful and that the key priority remains to concentrate on some specific initiatives.

ECSA mentioned that competitiveness is fundamental but also that in their joint position in relation to the mid-term review, the social partners indicated that they intend to engage actively in defining the social chapter of the maritime transport policy.

The discussion also touched upon the Valletta Declaration foreseen in point 4a. In that respect, ETF pointed out that the MLC cannot be the magic wand through which all the issues of the sector can be solved.

ETF declared to be surprised by the position of shipowners at the ILO who repeatedly stated that if there was no compelling need, they do not support amendments at the MLC at ILO level. The MLC represents minimum standards only; there is clearly the need to go for much more than that, to continuously improve as the MLC acknowledges since these standards need to be brought upwards, rather than aiming at eroding the working conditions of seafarers in Europe. Commissioner BULC has to help and deliver on this.

The goal should be to focus not on costs alone but to improve the competitiveness of intra-EU Shipping by regulating market access.

DG MOVE should look at how to maintain the quality and excellence of EU shipping and not risk being dependent on third countries for the development of maritime

transport and the maritime cluster in the EU. The European maritime space should integrate a social dimension and not only concentrate on administrative burdens.

ETF has prepared an internal document in which it will assess the situation but a joint document, based on the document of the social partners of 2015, would be welcome.

ECSA reaffirmed that the competitiveness of the sector is important but that so is digitalisation.

The Commission and the Valletta Declaration are also on that line: skills need to be upgraded. In the future, probably more jobs will be on the shore.

ECSA clarified that the shipowners' views at ILO were coordinated by the ICS. It agreed with ETF that the MLC was intended to be a dynamic instrument, which is why a streamlined updating mechanism had been built into it. However, it observed that any proposal for an amendment for which no compelling need had been identified would be unlikely to gain support from the ILO Special Tripartite Committee.

ETF insisted on the fact that there is a "marketing initiative" aimed at proving that through new technologies, the problems of the sector can be addressed, and added that seafarers never shied away from new technologies and that ETF is willing to share views on this

The Chair took note of the fact that the social partners will digest this topic, since it is also part of their joint Work-Programme.

b. Administrative burdens for seafarers

DG MOVE (J. Savo) reminded the social partners that he gave already an update in the March meeting. He stressed that in relation to the Reporting Formalities Directive, harmonisation remains a big issue at EU level; in fact, a small number of Member States are doing it while several have a non-harmonized approach.

He added that the evaluation report of the Commission should be finalised in the coming months; the study is nearly finished as well, while the IA process should be launched very soon.

DG MOVE also informed the social partners about the incoming public consultation (probably launched in September, until November 2017) and encouraged them to be ready for that.

ETF said that it stands ready for the consultation and that in fact it will carry out an ETF survey that could feed into this consultation. It added that administrative burden goes beyond what member states can do and that this issue could also be addressed at company's level. Paperwork has always been there but problems occur when the crew level is being cut, or when tasks are being dumped on the ship by the management resulting in tasks being done during rest time creating safety risks. ETF confirmed that the outcomes of the survey dedicated to this subject will be shared with ECSA.

c. Projects:

i. Blueprint on Sectoral Cooperation on Skills

DG EMPL (C. Riondino) presented the state of play of the Blueprint, stressing the main drivers of the New Skills Agenda for Europe (Digital transformation; skills mismatches; EU workforce ageing and shrinking; quality of education and training varies in EU; perceptions not rooted in reality (e.g. VET) and importance of learning outside the formal system).

The Blueprint for sectoral cooperation on skills is a framework for strategic cooperation between key stakeholders, whose aim is to increase the talent pool and deliver sector-specific skills solutions.

The six pilot sectors include, for the time being, automotive; defence; space; textile, clothing, leather and footwear; tourism and **maritime technology**.

The New Erasmus+ call is foreseen for October 2017 and will likely include maritime shipping.

The presentation of DG EMPL was complemented by Vyte Ezerskiene of EACEA (the Agency dealing with this project), who gave a comprehensive view on the more technical and budgetary issues of the file.

The social partners raised some questions (in particular the issue of Brexit – until when UK social partners can take part to the project – "UK is obviously a member of the EU until it is not" and the new arrangements will depend on the outcomes of the ongoing negotiations) and said that they were eager to move on and reply to the incoming call, especially since this could present an opportunity to cover the entire chapter related to Skills & Training of the Work Programme.

ii. Follow up of the IPWP Project:

✓ i) Update of Commission consideration of the SPA on the 2014 Amendments to the MLC

DG EMPL indicated that the Commission is still in the process of analysing the text of the agreement of the social partners which was adopted by them on 5 December 2016. The Commission should be in a position to clarify its intention in relation to the joint request of the social partners (meaning, to transform their agreement into a proposal of Directive) in the incoming months.

Both ETF and ECSA made clear that this file is of primary importance to them, especially since the amendments are already in place, and that they stand ready to write to the Commission for pushing the file through.

✓ ii) Possible follow-up of Funding Guide (Pillar 2)

ECSA pointed out that may ask for changes in the Erasmus + programme; it has been in contact with DG EMPL on this topic.

ETF added that social partners could also write to Commissioner Thyssen if the proposal would not be taken up by the Erasmus+ Committee.

✓ iii) Possible follow up of Health and safety report (Pillar 3)

The social partners confirmed their willingness to disseminate the results of the study and also to encourage to make use of the existing best practices. They made it clear that they intend to contact the Unit B3 of DG EMPL (Health and safety Unit) and also the Bilbao Agency to disseminate best practices in the health and safety field in the shipping industry.

d. Work Programme for 2017-2019

✓ Presentation of the Work Programme

The social partners adopted their joint Work Programme.

✓ **Implementation and identification of priority topics**

In terms of priority items, ETF and ECSA agreed that quality shipping, administrative burdens, health and safety, and Skills & Training are the key issues.

It was decided that the two Secretariats will have ad hoc meetings in view of identifying concrete measures for each priority issue, in view of the December plenary of the SSDC.

e. Possible review and update of the compulsory list of medical supplies laid down in Directive 92/29/EC (medical assistance on board)

DG EMPL indicated that on 31 May 2017, the Advisory Committee on Safety and Health (ACSH) adopted an opinion on the Commission consultation on the health and safety strategy of 10 January 2017. As already announced in the Communication, the Commission will review 6 Directives of the health and safety sector, including the one on medical assistance. Since the annexes of Directive 92/29 are of a highly technical nature, an expert group with representatives of the Member States will be set up; it will have to report to the ACSH, which, in turn intends to prepare a further policy opinion on the possible updating of the EU OSH Directives, which could be adopted in December 2017.

ETF said that it was aware of this exercise and has made sure that two experts on ETUC's side will be in the expert group while ECSA signaled that it wants to participate to this debate as well, given that the Directive is 25 years old. ECSA also pointed out that in UK a tripartite work on this matter is taking place.

4. REPORT ITEMS

a. Digital Assembly (Valletta, 15 June 2017)

The point was basically addressed under point 3a.

b. Presentation of the priorities of the Estonian Presidency in the maritime field

The EE Presidency could not come to the meeting.

However, ECSA pointed out to some dossiers which are important and that should advance in the 4th quarter of 2017, such as the working party on the ports regulation facility, as the file of the digitalisation of transport. ECSA and ETF will also closely follow the discussions at IMO level.

It is noted that the two Secretariats will work on the topic of shipping and digitalisation in the run-up to a possible joint participation to the Digital Transport Days in November.

c. Schengen Visa Code : update on the ongoing legislative procedure

ECSA and ETF signaled that the deadlock in the trilogues continues.

Both Secretariats have expressed their wish to have a meeting with DG HOME services on this issue.

d. Commission study on the implementation of responsibilities of labour supplying countries pursuant to the MLC, 2006

DG MOVE briefly referred to the history of this reporting obligation to the European Parliament and the Council. It also reminded the Social Partners that feedback was

sought on the basis of the Hallside study not only by them, but also by the Member State authorities. This report aims to tackle some social issues which it is challenging to follow up by EU legal measures due to the extra-territoriality features they present. The social partners were reminded that most of the important labour supplying countries for the maritime sector are outside the EU. Still, the report could recommend actions at different levels (including ILO) and targeting several stakeholders from Europe and beyond.

ETF expressed the importance to follow-up on the recommendations.

e. Update on public consultation on the fitness check in the maritime sector at EU level

As regards the update on the fitness check in the maritime sector, DG MOVE clarified that the individual evaluations are being finalised in the coming weeks/months. The interaction with the stakeholders should, therefore, take place during the autumn focusing on the preliminary results. Specifically, on the STCW evaluation, it was reminded that this exercise aims to eliminate inconsistencies and gaps from the two relevant Directives (2008/106/EC and 2005/45/EC). The conclusions of the STCW evaluation report, drawing on input from the open public consultation and the targeted consultation launched previously, will form the basis for future actions, having looked at: 1) How the Directives have improved maritime education and training; 2) The effectiveness and efficiency of the centralised (EMSA-facilitated) recognition procedure of the STCW systems of 3rd countries; 3) How has the system of mutual recognition of maritime certificates worked within the EU.

As a general comment, ETF pointed out that whenever the Commission raises the issue of REFIT, it is not too reassured. In addition, ETF commented on the high costs related to the certification of third country seafarers' certificates.

AOB

DG MOVE representative, George Kirmizidis, announced that this was his last meeting with the SSDC and the social partners, since after 4 years in DG MOVE, he will now move to another DG. He made clear that it was a pleasure for him to take part to these meetings.

Both social partners thanked him for his support and professionalism and wished him well for his future assignment.

ETF expressed also its thanks to ECSA Secretary General Patrick Verhoeven for his support for social dialogue and wished him all the best in his future career.

Date of the next meeting: 21 December 2017