

SECTORAL SOCIAL DIALOGUE COMMITTEE FOR MARITIME TRANSPORT
WORKING GROUP MEETING HELD ON 6th DECEMBER 2010 IN BRUSSELS
DRAFT MINUTES

1. RECORD OF LAST MEETING (6/5/09)

Members **agreed** to the record as circulated and submitted to DGEMPL

2. ECSA AND ETF PROJECTS: REPORTS AND DISCUSSION ON OUTCOMES

The **Chairman** invited ETF and ECSA to introduce the main outcomes of their projects on enhancing training and recruitment.

ECSA summarised in ten action points the results of the ECSA survey on training and recruitment practices in Europe carried out by an external consultant. A copy of this survey was distributed and the conclusions are annexed to this document. ECSA advised that it would send a copy of its survey to the European Commission by latest end December 2010, marking the end of the project for ECSA. ECSA expressed the wish that the results of its inquiry to be a basis for a constructive and useful contribution for future initiatives in the Social Dialogue Committee.

ETF presented the main conclusions of each of the three thematic workshops and the final conference organised in the framework of the ETF project on training and recruitment and the investigation undertaken by the team of academics. In particular, it was underlined that the report presented at the final conference in Genoa in November 2010 was not the ultimate version of the document. This report would be subject to further changes and improvement, although the main findings presented in Genoa gave a clear indication on what the final outcomes would be. The ETF also explained that the Commission approved an extension of the project's period of one month and that the final report was expected to be published sometime in February 2011.

It was emphasised that both ETF and ECSA should be able to identify some common issues from the conclusions of their respective projects. However, it became clear from the presentation of the key conclusions of the respective projects that the revision of the State Aid Guidelines to maritime transport would remain a crucial point of disagreement between ECSA and ETF since the former is asking for a continuation of these Guidelines as they are, whilst the latter is advocating the granting of the aid to be conditional upon training and employment of European seafarers. Another point of disagreement is whether there should be a regulatory framework to prevent – according to ETF – social dumping practices in European waters or not.

ETF made clear that in the absence of common ground on these two points, and given the importance it attached to the need for a solid regulatory framework for

protecting European seafarers and preserving the maritime know how, the ETF would pursue independently its lobbying activity in these fields.

The Chairman underlined that the goal of this meeting was to find common areas so as to possibly build joint activities in the future. He explained that the discussion in the working group would be reported on the following day at the plenary meeting and that the areas of common ground should form part of the Working Programme for 2011.

The WG then spent some time on discussing or clarifying some conclusions of the respective projects in more detail These points were as follows:

Image or perception of the industry / Harassment of bullying

ECSA underlined that, when talking about the image problem, they intended to analyse more specifically the perception that seafarers have of the job they do and the industry they work for. Perception was interpreted as a narrower concept than the image. Spreading the word about the industry and the excellent working conditions that many ship companies are able to offer could help changing the perception of the seafaring profession, e.g. amongst youngsters, and it could help improving the attractiveness of the industry for women. **ECSA**, furthermore, suggested reviewing and updating the joint ETF/ECSA study and brochure on harassment and bullying. ETF agreed it was a proper time to discuss this matter again and thus to put it on the agenda of the plenary meeting.

Skills' enhancement / Career mapping exercise

ECSA advised that its study had confirmed that maritime employment ashore is far exceeding employment on board ships in many Member States with officers very often spending only a few years at sea and that the possibility of shore side employment is an important factor in attracting youngsters into a seafaring career. The concept of the maritime cluster is one of the most important aids to recruitment in almost all EEA member countries, shipping being the core industry. In many EEA countries, both the recruitment campaigns and the structure of training courses take account of the opportunities for a maritime career both at sea and ashore. Where necessary this should be enhanced, with exchanges of national practices being of assistance to this end. **ECSA**, furthermore, advised that its study had demonstrated that the administrative burdens imposed upon masters have increased significantly over the years also and that there is a need for greater flexibility onboard ships, resulting in a division of responsibilities and in sharing the tasks amongst all seafarers.

ETF stressed that the issue of skills' enhancement should be further looked at. In particular, the need to have education and training systems that provide the skills needed for today's shipping industry and provide career progression from ratings to officers and for officers to move into the maritime cluster should be considered. ETF emphasised that enhancing training could mean increasing seafarers' employability.

ECSA suggested that a follow up of the study on career mapping could help identifying ways of enhancing skills and apply more flexible training schemes.

ETF shared the views of ECSA with regard to career mapping and could envisage an update study provided that the career progression for ratings in the cluster would also be further investigated. ETF talked about the role of maritime academies in coordinating maritime education and training in Europe and facilitating the progression to a career in the cluster. The ETF project on training and recruitment also highlighted the idea of having a network of maritime academies in Europe to promote better education and training schemes which, *inter alia*, supported employment in the maritime cluster.

ECSA underlined that funding opportunities through structural and social funds should be further explored.

ILO MLC

ETF emphasised how important it was for Member States to ratify the MLC 2006 and criticised the poor rate of ratification within the EU despite the Council's deadline. ETF further underlined that there was a role for Social Partners to play in encouraging and promoting a speedy ratification and a correct and effective implementation of the Convention through the awaited Enforcement Directive.

ECSA acknowledged the need to ensure consistent social conditions worldwide and to have a level playing field and it therefore stressed the importance of a prompt ratification of the ILO MLC by all EU Member States as well as of an effective and carefully enforced transposition of the relevant parts of the ECSA/ETF Agreement into EU legislation.

3. Follow up Work Programme

ECSA pointed out that there were issues in the Work Programme for 2009, which had been extended to 2010 that had not yet been covered. Those issues, such as the promotion of the image of the industry and the need to preserve the maritime know-how, should be looked at more carefully and should be included for discussion in the 2011 Work Programme.

ETF stressed that statistics on seafarers' employment in ETF and ECSA studies were not sufficient or consistent and that a study should be carried out at European level to fill this "statistics" gap.

ECSA pointed out that obtaining statistics has always been a difficult task and that it was more the responsibility of national administrations to collect and maintain reliable data.

4. AOB

No other items were raised.

5. Dates of next meetings

Since some of the dates proposed by the Commission could not be agreed by both social partners, the **Chairman** invited ETF and ECSA to look into their Agendas and to find alternative dates to be suggested the following day at the plenary meeting .

Finally, on the basis of the discussion, ETF and ECSA identified a list of common areas on the issue of training and recruitment that could possibly be discussed in future working group meetings.

The ETF and ECSA Secretariats gathered in a smaller group and drew the list in writing (see document attached as **Annex 2**). This would be presented as part of the Work Programme for 2011 the following day.

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ECSA WORKSHOP, BRUSSELS, 28th SEPTEMBER 2010

CONCLUSIONS

Background

The EEA controlled fleet is currently some 41% of the world fleet in terms of gross tonnage. It operates in a genuine, intensively competitive global industry, with a global labour market, mobile “production facilities” and a comprehensive international regulatory regime. It is in this context that maintaining a competitive shipping industry in high cost European countries is a major challenge. This challenge is not unique to shipping but is a key economic and social issue for a wide range of European industries. While some might think that an option is to look for Europe to introduce protectionist measures to address this reality, the shipping industry knows from experience that this will lead to a reduction in competitiveness and size of the EU fleet, and consequently to fewer European jobs.

Conclusions/Action points

The Role of the Maritime Cluster

1. There is a shared view of all stakeholders on the importance of maintaining and developing high quality maritime know how in Europe. As fully recognised in the Commission’s 2009/18 Maritime Transport Strategy, the concept of the maritime cluster is a vital element, maritime employment ashore far exceeding employment on board ship in many Member States. To a greater or lesser degree within Europe, officers very often expect to spend only a small proportion of their working lives at sea and the availability of shore side employment is an important factor in attracting young persons into a seafaring career.
2. The concept of the maritime cluster is one of the most important aids to recruitment in almost all EEA member countries, shipping being the core industry. In many such countries, both the **recruitment campaigns and the structure of training courses take account of the opportunities for a maritime career both at sea and ashore. Where necessary, this should be enhanced, with exchanges of national practices being of assistance to this end.**
3. **ECSA and ETF should discuss whether the social partners’ 2005 Career Mapping project can be usefully built on**, while noting the conclusion of the earlier study that a ‘one size fits all’ approach within Europe is not workable. It

is important though not to lose sight of the fact that shipping needs highly qualified officers to serve on board for sufficient time to ensure the sustainability of the industry.

Barriers and Opportunities in Maritime Recruitment and Training

4. There are extensive and innovative recruitment campaigns throughout Europe, rightly tailored to meet the particular national characteristics of the shipping sector and the exact needs in terms of recruitment by shipowners. Moreover, studies from both sides of industry indicate that the shipping industry generally matches the aspirations of young persons, notably in respect of good pay and employment conditions, an international environment, a challenging job, good training and a clear career path. Encouragingly, this is reflected in the fact that, overall, the number of EEA/EU officers and officer trainees has increased over the last few years, particularly in those Member States which have made use of the State Aid Guidelines. It is also encouraging that the wastage rates during officer and rating training are low compared with shore based industries.
5. However, it remains the case that in many instances the existence of shipping as a career option is often not as well known as it could be; whilst where young persons are aware of shipping, **the image – or rather the perception –of the sector could also be improved.** These shortcomings in some countries have to be addressed in the national recruitment and campaign initiatives.
6. Notwithstanding the positive elements of a seafaring career, absence from family and friends for relatively long periods is an inherent characteristic of the profession. As a consequence – and particularly bearing in mind what is expected by young persons as a basic facility – **the provision of internet communication on board is an area urgently requiring examination and improvement.**
7. A further area meriting analysis is the existing structure of the on board organisation of work and respective areas of responsibilities whereby there are compartmentalised and hierarchical arrangements as between deck, engine and catering. Such structures have generally existed in the shipping industry for decades. There is a good case for examining whether the needs and aspirations of both companies and seafarers alike would be better served by a **more flexible training provision** in this context. In this regard, the ever **increasing administrative burdens onboard are recognised by all sides of industry and should be reduced.** There could well be scope for the responsibilities for many such tasks to be shared more widely among the crew.

8. Against the background of the requirements of shore-based cluster employers, it is clearly unfair to expect shipowners to bear the full high cost burden of training. The emphasis on shore-based opportunities provides a strong argument for **100% public funding of maritime training and/or cluster industries making a contribution to the training of seafarers.** Furthermore, the possibility of **greater use by Member States of European Social and Structural Funds** to support the management of structural changes in the manning and operation of ships must be explored.

'Regulatory' Issues

9. It is clear that the application of the current State Aid Guidelines have played an important role in the increasing number of European officers and trainee officers over recent years. The terms are such that they can be interpreted nationally with sufficient flexibility to contribute significantly to the employment of EU nationals. **A continuation of the State Aid Guidelines is consequently vital.** The introduction of new terms or restrictions to the system could well endanger the present increase in officers and maintenance of openings for ratings.
10. To ensure consistent social conditions worldwide and a level playing field, it is important that the **ILO Maritime Labour Convention be ratified by all EU Member States as soon as possible and that the ECSA/ETF Agreement transposing relevant parts into EU legislation is effectively and carefully enforced.**

Follow Up

11. The prime goal of the ECSA project is to take forward the ideas and conclusions coming out of the Survey and Workshop in further discussions with ETF and as a contribution to the work of the Task Force. It is believed that the ECSA initiative will make a constructive contribution to the debate.

ISSUES FOR THE 2011 WORK PROGRAMME

1. PERCEPTION/IMAGE/KNOWLEDGE
 - Improving knowledge and perception of the industry e.g. amongst young people
 - Improvement of the attractiveness of the industry for women
 - Follow up of the SP project on harassment and bullying
 - Promoting the environmental credential of shipping
 - Promoting shipping international dimension
 - Responding to criminalization, fatigue and piracy

2. IMPROVING SHIPBOARD LIVING AND WORKING CONDITIONS
 - Onboard communication facilities
 - Managing the administrative burden
 - MLC ratification and enforcement

3. SKILLS AND TRAINING ENHANCEMENT
 - Transferability of skills
 - Career mapping/career progression
 - Examination of opportunities under Structural and social funds
 - More state support for training and education
 - Maritime cluster (network/contributions)