

SECTORAL SOCIAL DIALOGUE COMMITTEE FOR MARITIME TRANSPORT

PLENARY MEETING, 4 DECEMBER 2020

MINUTES

A. Approval of the draft agenda

The agenda was approved without changes.

B. Approval of the minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were approved.

C. Election of the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson

The committee elected Mr Kenny Reinhold of the Swedish union for Service and Communications Employees (SEKO) as Chair and Ms Hilde Peeters of the Royal Belgian Shipowners Association as co-Chair.

1. MATTERS ARISING

1.1. COVID-19 pandemic and shipping: update, state of play and lessons learnt - exchange of views

Com (MOVE.D2) presented the latest state of play. Com referred to the protocols on the safe crew changes approved by IMO MSC 102 and the adoption of the UN Resolution on seafarers. The social partners discussed the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on shipping and agreed that maritime workers should have priority vaccination against the virus. In this regard, the social partners announced that on the day of the meeting they published a joint open letter to the EU Ministers calling on EU Ministers to support the call of the European Commission and the industry for seafarers as key workers to be considered one of the priority categories for Covid-19 vaccination. They also discussed the implications of Covid-19 on future recruitment and training of seafarers, further highlighting the negative effects of the pandemic.

ETF highlighted a number of issues, from fundamental governance and structural failings that Covid-19 has exposed to the denial of seafarers' rights and the vital importance of effective enforcement through Port State Control.

Regarding the call that seafarers should be officially recognized as key workers, the ETF had prepared a document for discussion which sought to give meaning to the concept of key worker designation. ECSA confirmed it would provide input into the document.

1.2. Functioning of maritime social dialogue against background of recommendation in the Report on Social Aspects in Shipping

The social partners discussed the functioning of social dialogue against the background of the Report on Social Aspects in Shipping. ECSA expressed their satisfaction with the work of the committee, their participation in projects and their belief that the social partners managed to sufficiently influence policies to benefit the sector and their openness to hear ETF's suggestions. ETF agreed that social dialogue in the SSDC is of good value and generates positive industrial relations, but would welcome less formality in the exchanges and less focus on "low hanging fruit" and attention to some of the more pressing and systemic matters affecting the training and employment of European seafarers.

Com (EMPL.A2) encouraged dialogue and acknowledged the committee's performance, which has produced very good results. Com (EMPL.A2) further reminded that the future Action Plan implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights will include actions on social dialogue in relation to Principle 8 on social dialogue.

The social partners agreed to continue this discussion and will review the action plan once made available.

2. SHIPBOARD LIVING AND WORKING CONDITIONS:

Update from Commission followed by exchange of views on:

2.1. EU strategy for sustainable and smart mobility

2.2. New initiatives, REFIT measures (including the directives enforcing the MLC) and expected measures mentioned in Commission legislative work programme for 2021 (including amendments to Visa and Schengen Border code) affecting shipping

Com (MOVE.D2) made a general update on transport policy. The discussions on the EU strategy for sustainable and smart mobility were postponed to the next meeting due to the fact that the strategy was going to be published the week following the meeting.

Com (MOVE.D2) presented the state of play on the REFIT measures (including the EU Directives enforcing the Maritime safety directives). Com is in the process of launching a tender for a study to support their assessment (estimated time until results – 18 months to two years).

The social partners indicated their eagerness to take part in the ensuing discussions.

Update from the Social Dialogue projects:

2.3. WESS (“Contributing to an Attractive, Smart and Sustainable Working Environment in the Shipping Sector”)

Pillar 1: Communications on Board

Pillar 2: Women in Shipping

2.4. MapMar (“Mapping of Maritime Professionals: Towards a full-scale European data collection system”)

The social partners updated the committee on the projects: WESS (“Contributing to an Attractive, Smart and Sustainable Working Environment in the Shipping Sector”, with two pillars Communications on Board and Women in Shipping) and MapMar (“Mapping of Maritime Professionals: Towards a full-scale European data collection system”).

2.5. Health and Safety - Update from Commission in reaction to joint request by ETF, ECSA and Europêche, further to the amendments of the technical annexes to the Council Directive on the minimum safety and health requirements for improved medical treatment on board vessels (Directive 92/29/EC), to consider the need to comprehensively review the whole of the Directive

The social partners noted that so far there are no new developments in this regard. Com (EMPL.A2) indicated the intention to hold an OSH dedicated Liaison Forum meeting in spring 2021 when more information should be available. **The** social partners indicated their interest in monitoring developments in the field of OSH.

3. TRAINING AND SKILLS

3.1. Update of the project “Futureproof Skills for the Maritime Transport Sector” (SkillSea) – presentation of first deliverables by SkillSea and ongoing work, and reactions

The project coordinator, Job de Groen, updated the committee on the progress made so far. It is expected to deliver results as set out in the planning. The social partners welcomed the presentation and underlined the long-term positive impact that it is expected to have in the sector.

3.2. Implications of COVID on maritime training:

Update (including report from the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) and IAMU virtual dialogue on “Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Maritime Education and Training” held on 9th September 2020) and discussion

The social partner exchanged opinions with regard to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on training in the sector. ECSA mentioned that there are many elements that should be considered, including separating some elements of learning and using alternative delivery methods. There is a continuous debate about how to organise and fulfil requirements such as sea-going service. ETF underlined the need to reflect very carefully on a permanent change that might have dramatic effects in the future.

3.3. Update from Commission on EU Skills Agenda: Pact for Skills

Com (DG EMPL.E.2) presented the Pact for Skills. The social partners expressed the need to consider whether they have enough resources available and finalise first their previous Blueprint Erasmus+ skills project (SkillSea) before engaging into another sizeable initiative.

3.4. EU submission on the comprehensive review of STCW

Com (MOVE.D2) updated the committee on the state of play of a the EU submission to the IMO MSC, on the comprehensive review of STCW International Convention, which has been submitted to the Council.

With regard to UK seafarers certificates after the end of the transition period, Com explained that in line with the new status of the UK as a third country, the recognition by an EU Member State of certificates issued to seafarers by UK will be subject to the conditions set out for third countries in Article 19 of Directive 2008/106/EC. Under this provision, EU MS will need to submit to Com a request for recognition of the training certificates issues by the UK and then Com will decide on the initiation of the assessment of the UK STCW system.

3.5. Outcome of Study on Social Impact on digitalisation in transport and any follow up expected

3.6. 3rd edition of Digital transport days (18 November 2020)

3.7. 2nd International Ship Autonomy and Sustainability Summit (30 November 2020)

ECSA mentioned that digitalisation is not expected to reduce employment opportunities. For ETF, the industry should be looking at technology to enhance jobs at sea instead of reducing manning levels even further. The growth potential for digitalisation and technology depends on the growth of the fleet in response to globalisation and global trade which may be affected by Covid-19. The committee is interested to follow the forthcoming debate at the ILO.

4. MARITIME SAFETY AND SECURITY

4.1. Migrants at Sea: update and exchange of views

The social partners described difficulties with ports refusing to take over responsibility for migrants and pleaded for ships to have the opportunity to disembark refugees safely at the earliest opportunity. ETF also raised the issue that flag States can and must also take action and have some responsibility for securing human rights on board. The social partners agreed that they would send an open letter to President von der Leyen reiterating the need to complement the Migration Pact.

4.2. Stowaways: Recent increase in number of incidents

The social partners agreed to work together on finding possible solutions to the increase in the number of incidents related to stowaways on ships. There was a wide interest in this subject, the several interventions raising awareness on the difficult situation seafarers are faced with when stowaways are found on ships, including security concerns. In addition there is the responsibility of the crew to make sure that the stowaways stay on the ship and do not disembark without being allowed by the national authorities of the port concerned. The social partners concurred in saying that it should be the responsibility of the national authorities in the next port the ships calls at, to take over the stowaways and relieve the crew of such responsibility. The social partners agreed to work on a joint letter to the European Commission.

4.3. Cybersecurity

The social partners asked the Commission to give a report on work that is underway at the next meeting, from the skills perspective, health and safety and staff.

5. BREXIT: update and exchange on action needed

Com (EMPL.D3) gave a presentation on ongoing works regarding Brexit preparedness.

6. Presentation of priorities of the Portuguese Presidency of the Council and brief exchange of views

The transport team of the upcoming **Portuguese Presidency** of the Council of the EU presented their priorities in the field of transport. They explained that they would continue the work of the German Presidency. Their general priority in transport is rail, with some work to be expected on inland waterways transport and airways.

The social partners thanked the transport team for their input to the committee.

7. AOB

The Committee expressed their thanks and best wishes to Ms Claudia Vella Casagrande who was leaving ECSA and the committee at the end of 2020.