

SECTORAL SOCIAL DIALOGUE COMMITTEE FOR MARITIME TRANSPORT

Working Group meeting

23 September 2021

Minutes

Chair: Mr Kenny Reinhold, Swedish union for Service and Communications Employees (SEKO),

Spokespersons:

- Mr Tim Springett –ECSA for the employers
- Mr Mark Dickinson –ETF for the employees

A) Approval of the draft agenda

The agenda was approved.

B) Approval of the minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 16 April 2021 were approved.

Matters arising – Update of the Committee on outstanding issues from last meeting

On digitalization of visas, point discussed at the previous meeting, the committee was informed that the preparation process is ongoing (referring at the impact assessment) and the preparation of the legislative proposal, while the adoption of the initiative by the Commission is estimated for January 2022.

1. Maritime labour issues and COVID-19

1.1 COVID-19 pandemic and shipping: update, state of play and exchange of views on crew changes and vaccination strategy (DG MOVE and EU HEALTHY GATEWAYS to give update from discussion with MS and TC and EC efforts).

COM (MOVE) updated the Committee with regard to the most recent measures taken in the field. COM is working together with EU Healthy Gateways on guidelines (non-binding document) to facilitate crew changes in ports, with the involvement of social partners. COM hopes to finalise the guidelines as soon as possible and remains committed to working together on possible changes to the Maritime Labour Convention and further work at IMO and ILO.

ETF questioned why the EU guidance was necessary and insisted that the new guidance, if it was needed, must be aligned with international guidelines and felt that the rights of seafarers were ignored in the proposed guidelines. With regard to MLC discussions, ETF called upon COM to take duly into account the opinions of social partners when preparing the EU coordination on the MLC file. The social partners were preparing several amendments to the MLC, such as on access to medical treatment, to be submitted (at international level) directly at the ILO by the deadline of 11 October.

ECSA stressed that the insufficient collaboration and coordination between national authorities causes difficulties on the ground. Whilst the vaccination programmes for visiting seafarers that were in operation in several EU Member States were most welcome, seafarers needed to be provided with internationally-recognised documentation confirming their vaccination status. Otherwise, seafarers might be forced to seek multiple vaccinations in order to comply with the various national rules (e.g. some countries do not recognize certain vaccines while others do). ECSA supported ETF's insistence that the guidance should be consistent with internationally-agreed protocols. The consultation should

have allowed the social partners to provide examples with regard to quarantine, vaccines, isolation, testing and vaccination. Seafarers did not receive priority to vaccination despite being essential workers.

COM (DG EMPL) is coordinating the MLC amendments exercise at EU level and has reached out to the social partners at EU level to discuss their respective views.

2. Maritime Safety and Security

2.1. Revision of the Maritime Directives – update by DG MOVE and exchange of views

COM (DG MOVE) updated the Committee on the **revision of the maritime safety related directives** (flag state requirements, port state controls and accidents investigations). COM is undertaking an assessment of existing directives in this sector, in light of recent developments, including horizontal matters related to the Green Deal, and planning an impact assessment. There would be no public consultation but targeted meetings will be organised with the social partners should they be interested.

The social partners expressed interest in the subject. ETF suggested to take into account a report of the World Maritime University (Culture of Adjustment) and another report of ITF (Beyond the limit) that underlines Covid risks for the shipping industry and the importance of the enforcement of hours of work and rest regulations to tackle fatigue.

2.2. Stowaways and migrants at sea: current context of incidents- Update by DG HOME from the 1st meeting of the contact group on Search & Rescue - Presentation of ETF Statement on stowaways: Preliminary Discussion.

COM (DG HOME) presented the work of the Contact group on search and rescue, launched at the beginning of 2021 and based on the Pact for Migration and Asylum. The Group is formed by Member States and Schengen associated countries and is aimed at enhancing cooperation among them and with other stakeholders in the field of search and rescue. The Group aims to contribute to developing a common understanding and practices in this area, and held already two meetings in 2021

The social partners welcomed the presentation and asked COM to keep them informed of further progress. They called on the Commission to strive for a swift response, given that the migration crisis has started a few years ago. Dealing with stowaways and in particular the quick disembarkation of persons illegally boarding the ship or rescued at sea is a pressing issue for the social partners.

Additionally, ETF presented their Statement on Stowaways incidents, calling for better rules and guidelines both at EU and IMO level.

ECSA expressed openness to work together with ETF on this subject, outside of the SSDC.

3. Commission presentation on new proposals – followed by Q&A session

3.1 'Fit for 55' climate package

DG MOVE also spoke about the **Fit for 55 initiative** (FuelEU, maritime sector and ETS, covering all intra-EU and half of extra-EU voyages). Decarbonizing the economy includes all sectors. For the maritime sector, it proves to be very complex and requires a thorough assessment, taking into account impact on the sector and the cost-benefit relationship towards reaching objectives. Relevant initiatives concern for example decarbonizing half of intra and extra EU voyages, different types of carbon pricing (including maritime in the EU emission trading scheme), etc. COM welcomes local

initiatives from the ground towards greener transport. The social partners were very interested in the subject and insisted to be involved in future work (expressing interest in attending future dedicated consultations or hearings). They also called on the Commission to find ways to ensure upskilling of seafarers in this direction. COM reminded that the calls for proposals organized in the framework of EU social dialogue could provide funding for such a project, if all conditions of the call are fulfilled.

4. Update from the Social Dialogue projects

Updates were provided on the following projects:

- 4.1. WESS** (“Contributing to an Attractive, Smart, and sustainable Working Environment in the Shipping Sector”):
 - Pillar 1: Communications on Board (Pillar 1a); and research report on the increased usage of digitalization on board and the possible improvements/benefits to shipboard safety and welfare (Pillar 1b)

 - Pillar 2: Women in shipping
Project ongoing.
- 4.2. MapMar** (“Mapping of Maritime Professionals: towards a full-scale European data collection system”)
Final Conference next week.
- 4.3. SkillSea** (Future-proof skills for the maritime sector)

The social partners continue to oversee these projects and look forward to presenting the findings at future meetings of the SSDC-MT.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The next meeting of the SSDC is scheduled for 16 December 2021. ETF expressed the hope that the Plenary meeting is held, if possible, physically.