Condensed Minutes of the 9th Meeting of work groups ‘shipbuilding survey’, ‘qualification’, ‘image’, and ‘tool box’ of the Shipbuilding Social Dialogue Committee (SSDC)

Date: 21st September 2006
Venue: EMF Offices, Boulevard du Roi Albert II, 5 (10 Floor), 1210 Brussels
Participants: see enclosed list
Chair: The SDC meeting was chaired by Mr François Billet.

1) The meeting was chaired by SSDC President, Mr François Billet, who welcomed the participants and thanked EMF for hosting the meeting. The chairman introduced a change into the agenda. The EU Green Paper “Towards a future maritime policy for the European Union: A European vision of the oceans and seas” would be presented instead of the regular presentation on “Market and Policy Developments in Shipbuilding”; the topic “Qualification” would be discussed first until the arrival of the guest speakers for the Green Paper; and after lunch Mrs. Barbara Gerstenberger from the EMCC of the Dublin Foundation would attend the meeting for topic no. 5 “Tool Box”.

2) Minutes of the plenary meeting of the shipbuilding social dialogue committee on 29th May 2006.

The SSDC members took note of the minutes of 29th May 2006 without further comments.

4) “Qualification” Work Group

Mr Billet reminded the group of a proposal made by the EMF concerning the qualification and training activities of SSDC

- Transparency and comparability of qualifications, certificates and diplomas (to enable exchange and mobility)
- Anticipating skills needs (to help adjust training strategies and contents)
- Promoting lifelong learning (to enable multi-skilling and competence development)
- Ageing workforce (to enable skills and experience transfer and better adaptation to changing working environment)

and asked CESA to present their comments on this proposal and, if possible, their own proposal on follow-up activities.
Vice-Chairman Mr. Fabrice Theobald answered that the EMF proposal contained many topics which were important and also interlinked. Regarding the item “transparency” he said that it was not the difference in qualifications inhibiting greater mobility of employees but the national differences with regards to social security systems, pension and tax schemes in the EU countries. The proposal of “establishing a professional skills profile for the future European shipbuilder” he considered unrealistic. The other topics, however, were regarded interesting by CESA and worth to be followed up. For instance, education and training as well as lifelong learning (LLL) could be connected to the topics of demographic change and Tool Box. In view of the very successful Workshop for Training and Qualification organized by the SSDC in Trieste in October 2005, he therefore suggested as CESA proposal to organise another HR Workshop on the tangible subjects mentioned. Furthermore, he suggested that, like in 2005, a smaller group should take care of the detailed organisation.

Subsequently, he asked Mr. François Ziegler whether the Commission would financially support such an event. Mr Ziegler agreed that both the Trieste Workshop and the Shipyard Week in March 2006 had been very successful, however, that the Commission would hardly be willing to finance an event featuring the same topic but would expect a value added event yielding concrete results.

In the ensuing discussion Mrs Andrea Husen informed that each country had chosen its own HR topic at the conference in Trieste because the topics had not been pre-defined. The next conference should be stricter organised in terms of the topics on the basis of the EMF proposal, and the smaller working group could come up with specific thematic proposals. Mr Reinhard Lüken who shared Mrs Husen’s view added that demographic change was an important and central topic, also for the Commission, and that this could be combined with skills and qualifications. However, he also considered the item “Anticipating skills and thus establish a future skills profile” proposed by EMF too difficult. He agreed that a smaller group should prepare some topics for a HR workshop as well as a relevant timetable. Mr Heino Bade added that demographic change also included topics such as age-based working as well as ergonomic work-places, and “anticipating skills” also referred to succession planning, the image change of the ship yards and attracting young people. He supported the idea of another HR workshop but pointed out the concrete added value to be achieved by such an event should be defined in advance.
Mr Ziegler said the Commission carefully observed the development in the sectoral work groups; therefore the group should select topics which were specific to the sector and look for concrete and practical solutions. **It was concluded** that the topics, such as ageing, training, image, succession planning and LLL, were very important and should be followed up. Mr Theobald agreed to contact Mr. Christophe Mabit regarding continued work in a smaller HR work group which should come up with specific proposals as regards themes and a time schedule for an HR workshop.

3) “Green Paper”

The Chairman opened the next topic by welcoming Mr. Paul Nemitz, Deputy Head of the Maritime Policy Task Force, and Patrick O’Riordan of DG Enterprise, who kindly agreed to attend the SDC meeting and give a short presentation on the EU Green Paper (GP) “Towards a future maritime policy for the European Union: A European vision of the oceans and seas” which was published in May 2006 by the Commission and is now in the consultation process. Mr. Billet briefly presented the SSDC and its objectives and gave floor to Mr. Nemitz.

Mr Nemitz introduced himself and said he would try to focus on the topics interesting for the group. After a short presentation, he said that in order to yield concrete results the GP depended on the contributions made. He informed that a steering group of 10 Commissioners had been set up who also wanted to learn from the shipbuilding expertise. Therefore he was asking the sectors to overcome diplomatic language and come forward with their issues because otherwise nobody would know about them. He recommended leaving the sector-focused view in favour of a combined more global view; i.e. issues of different sectors such as shipping, shipbuilding, environment, etc. should be combined for more fruitful and successful results. Mr O’Riordan said the Commission, and especially Commissioner Verheugen, paid a great deal of attention to shipbuilding. He added that LeaderSHIP2010 still presented the basis of the work and that the members of the SSDC were welcome to contribute to the update report on LeaderSHIP 2015 which has to be presented to the German Presidency in 2007.

In the following discussion Mr Theobald drew the attention to the Waterborne Technology Platform as a strong policy signal already made by the shipbuilding industry. He added that regulations in short sea shipping should be reformed and expressed his concern about an existing negligence in terms of where ships are built. Mr
Lüken thanked Mr Nemitz for his presentation but pointed out that time and again the Commission’s interest was focused rather on the shipping sector than on shipbuilding which was unfortunate. He agreed with Mr Nemitz that the image of the shipbuilding and ship repair industry had to be improved but added that, unfortunately, shipbuilding only became the title story in combination with negative catch lines. With reference to the very successful LeaderSHIP2010 he said the sector had already worked with 7 Commissioners in 2003 on this. He mentioned the Waterborne Technology Platform and informed Mr Nemitz that the sector would very much welcome any efforts by the Commission to advocate the WTP.

In view of stricter regulations resulting in higher competitiveness mentioned earlier, Mr Lüken said the sector was involved in regulatory commitments and that it was making efforts here. He concluded that although the shipbuilding sector was small in volume, its activities in the field of design, R&D, innovation, production and maintenance were having many spill-over effects for other sectors.

Mr Bade added the shipbuilding sector was not to be equated with a crisis-ridden area. He suggested an approach in line with industrial policy bringing representatives from various sectors together to develop, for instance, a short-sea-shipping concept. Furthermore, he said the Commission should also follow a holistic approach with regard to qualification and not only focus on seafarers. In addition to that, other important issues such as the Protection of Intellectual Property, regulations of classification societies and stricter international rules for sub-standard ships were mentioned. Mr Nemitz thanked the group for the stimulating comments and repeated that the Commission depended on constructive input from the sectors. He invited the SSDC participants to come forward with topics and proposals specific to shipbuilding.

It was concluded that EMF and CESA would like to contribute to the consultation process which might include a joint written opinion on topics important to the shipbuilding and ship repair industry to the Commission. The Chairman thanked Mr Nemitz and Mr O’Riordan for their interesting presentation and kind attendance of the meeting.

5) “Tool Box”
After the lunch break the Chairman welcomed Mrs Barbara Gerstenberger and Mr Xabier Irastorza from EMCC of the Dublin Foundation for joining the meeting. Subsequently, Mr. Irastorza gave a brief presentation of the results of the Tool Box study “Managing cyclical changes in the European shipbuilding and ship repair industries.” in which he focussed on the measures found to
deal with cyclical changes in demand, the effectiveness of these measures and the main conclusions. He reminded the participants that the national reports had been written by national experts and the consolidated version by EMCC; he also announced that the reports could be published on the EMCC website in October 2006 and a printed version in January 2007.

In the ensuing discussion Mr Theobald expressed his disappointment with the results of the reports, especially some country reports, e.g. Italy and France. He claimed that they were considered partly out-of-scope, partly contained wrong data, were partly irrelevant (Danish report) and/or too one-sided. He added the country reports could not be accepted like this by CESA and that there might have been a fundamental misunderstanding as to the objectives of the study.

Mr Heino Bade recognized the difficult task to draw up a consolidated version from all country reports and suggested to establish a matrix on the basis of the different country reports which should contain all instruments found, as well as a special “fingerpost” indicating where to look for more detailed information. He added the SSDC was approaching more sensitive fields of work and that these results should be considered as a basis for further discussion. He then advised against applying the term *flexicurity* to EU level which had been used several times during the meeting since it was a predefined Danish term.

Mr Henk van Beers welcomed the idea of a matrix and expressed his disappointment that the information from Finland was missing. In answer to this Mr Antti Jokinen said that due to a lack of time and money and a relevant institute in Finland, the survey could not be established. However, he promised to contact the employer side in Finland in order to be able to deliver some data.

Mrs Husen remarked that the SSDC had commissioned the study on the basis of pre-defined parameters drawn up by the tool box project group of the SSDC consisting of Mr Granger and Mr Bade. In the project specifications the EMCC was requested to provide an evaluation of the instruments in use. The analysis that the EMCC delivered was therefore within the scope of the project specifications. She said even though CESA and EMF might not share a joint position with regard to the results, the study could be considered as a stimulation for further discussion. Mr Granger confirmed this and affirmed that the EMCC had delivered what had been requested of them. He said the study was a fundamentally good document in spite of the critical comments, and that if EMCC established the matrix this would be a good supplement to the study.

Mrs Gerstenberger thanked the group for the feedback and informed that EMCC had agreed to do the study because the results were also interesting for other sectors, however, that a comparative
report could not go into much detail. She stressed that the study did not reflect the opinion of the EMCC but that the mainly used tools had been collected which were then discussed with experts from the sector. Including case studies might have made the study more detailed but it would have made its transferability to other sectors impossible. It was now up to the SSDC to decide what to do with the results. She said a matrix could be established but its exact structure had to be agreed by the group in advance. She assured that any mistakes would be corrected and called on the participants to revise the country reports, to inform the EMCC about any corrections and amendments, and to name the sources of anything they wanted to be added. Furthermore, she affirmed that the copyright was with the Dublin foundation which would only published the report when everybody was content with it.

Mr Ziegler expressed his surprise about the critical comments since the study had been commissioned and was delivered on the basis of predefined parameters. He also reminded that the work group had not yet decided what to do with this document or how to follow up this study. He suggested that the group used it as a working document even if there was no consensus on the results.

The Chairman concluded this topic by stating that

a) the EMCC would propose a matrix which then would be agreed upon by the SSDC

b) the SSDC members were asked to check the country reports for accuracy and send their comments to the EMF and CESA secretariats. He asked Mr. Tartarelli to submit precise data and numbers.

c) the EMCC could finally validate everything and establish a matrix.

It was agreed that the members would send their comments to the secretariats (Mrs Husen, EMF, and Mrs Thomsen; CESA) who would forward a consolidated version to the EMCC.

6) “Image” Work Group

The chairman presented the English version of the report of the European Shipyard Week in March 2006. He explained that accidentally there was a misprint in the French and German version, therefore these language versions had to be reprinted. 250 English, 125 French and 125 German versions in all were available for EMF and CESA together. A list for the distribution of copies was handed round.
Mr Theobald expressed his disappointment that in France no activities had taken place during the shipyard week. He stressed that the image of the maritime sector needed improvement in France as well, and informed about the recent establishment of a Maritime Cluster consisting of 14 working groups in France which had started work right away. The working group on Employment, Education and Training had already discussed to organise a week promoting training, however, final decisions had not been taken. Mr Billet pointed out the trade unions should be involved in these activities otherwise it would not be part of the Social Dialogue but only a purely French action. Mr Billet and Mr Theobald agreed to discuss this matter bilaterally at a later point.

Shipyard Week. Since the Shipyard Week in March had been a great success and was even taken up by other sectors, the participants agreed that it should be organised again in 2008.

7) A.O.B.

Future work priorities: The chairman summarised the future work priorities of the SSDC:

- Finalising the work on the “Tool Box” report and decide on follow-up activities
- Come forward with topics and a time schedule for a HR workshop within the “Qualification” Work Group
- Work on image improvement

Flexicurity: Mr Ziegler informed that the sectoral social dialogue committees had been asked to participate in the debate on flexicurity initiated by the European Commission, a topic on which the Commission had sent out a paper in July. He expressed his concern that the SSDC had not received the documents since the Commission urgently waited for an answer. In the ensuing discussion it was expressed by EMF and CESA that it was considered difficult for the SSDC to submit a joint opinion on Flexicurity at short notice, which the earlier discussion on the Tool Box results had shown.

Mrs Husen said that this topic was dealt with at present in the relevant EMF working structures and that the EMF could not make any comments for the time being about discussing this topic in the social dialogue committee.

In result to EMF’s proposal to put Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) on the list of future work priorities, Mr Theobald suggested to combine this topic with Flexicurity. He pointed out that the SSDC
was given an opportunity here to have an impact on a Commission’s decision.
Mr Christensen proposed to ask a person from the Working Group on Flexicurity to do a presentation on this topic at the next SSDC on 8 November. Mr Ziegler replied he would be glad to invite a relevant person to the next meeting.

The chairman concluded there would be a presentation at the next meeting, and the documents on Flexicurity would be sent out which he asked everybody to read for the next meeting.

Shipbuilding Survey: Mrs Thomsen informed that thanks to the Commission the shipbuilding survey was now available in Danish, German, Italian Polish, Portuguese and Spanish translation. The French final consolidated version, however, was still missing.

Mr Theobald informed about the Polish EUROSTER project acting within the European EQUAL Community Initiative which deals with topics like ageing, training, flexible employment, etc. in the shipbuilding sector with different partners. Marek Buksinski of Euroster approached CESA to offer a presentation on their work. Mr. Theobald suggested a presentation on 14 December. Mr Kraszewski agreed to invite Mr Buksinski on this date.

Dates of the next meetings

The next working group meetings will take place on:
• 8th November
The next plenary meeting will take place on 14th December.

Mr Ziegler informed that the next meeting would be at Centre Borchette again. He added that in the subsequent week he would send out an email to EMF and CESA asking for date proposals for the SSDC sessions in 2007.

The chairman Mr Billet informed the participants that due to other matters he had to attend to he would not be able to participate in the SSDC meeting on 8 November. Thanking the interpreters for their work he closed the meeting.

LIST OF PRESENCE

BADE Heino (DE)
BILLET François (FR)
BUGEJA Paul (MT)
CHRISTENSEN Thorkil (DK)
GERSTENBERGER Barbara (IR) – Dublin Foundation
GRANGER Nick (UK)
HUSEN-BRADLEY Andrea (BE)
IRASTORZA XABIER (IR) – Dublin Foundation
JOKINEN Antti (FIN)
KRASZEWSKI Jakub (PL)
LÜKEN Reinhard (BE)
MALVEIRO Ricardo (PT)
MASIEVIC Alicja (BE)
MOREL Christophe (FR)
NEMITZ Paul Commission
O’Riordan Patrick Commission
SCHOTTE Dick (NL)
TARTARELLI Pierfrancesco (IT)
THEOBALD Fabrice (FR)
THOMSEN Heike (BE)
VAN BEERS Henk (NL)
ZIEGLER François Commission