Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

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PRESS RELEASE

MEUSAC CORE GROUP DISCUSSES EUROPEAN MARITIME TRANSPORT

The Core Group of the Malta-EU Steering and Action Committee (MEUSAC) met again today under the chairmanship of the Hon. Dr. Chris Said, Parliamentary Secretary for Public Dialogue and Information.

The main topic on the Agenda was the EU's Maritime Transport Policy in view of the Commission's recent proposals on:

1. **Strategic goals and recommendations for the EU's maritime transport policy until 2018;**

2. **A Communication and action plan with a view to establishing a European maritime transport space without barriers; and**

3. **Reporting formalities for ships arriving in and/or departing from ports of the EU Member States.**

Following presentations by Mr Julian Micallef, Acting Head Consultation at MEUSAC, and by Mr Charles Abela, Deputy Executive Director (Ports) at the Malta Maritime Authority (MMA), various members raised a number of points in relation to these proposals.

The Communication on the strategic goals and recommendations for the EU's maritime transport policy is intended to address pressures from globalisation and competition in particular with regard to quality shipping relocating overseas, as well as to address economic and energy-related crises.

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In relation to the Communication and action plan with regard to establishing a European maritime transport space without frontiers, much of the discussion centred on the need to enhance the reputation of the Maltese flag. Among the issues raised by Core Group members were:

- the repercussions of the Commission's communication on EU seafarers and port workers;
- passenger rights for users of ferry and cruise services,;
- better links between islands;
- the need to ensure a level playing field for Maltese manufacturers' competitivity in particular with regard to maritime transport between Malta and the UK;
- the lack of border controls on merchandise imported on ferries; and
- a better synergy between local authorites with regard to imported goods.

Mr Charles Abela explained that the EU recognises the need for greater visibility within the International Maritime Organisation as well as the need to establish a maritime transport space without borders through simplified customs procedures. He re-assured Core Group members that consultations are currently being held in order to ascetain how port and pilot workers will be affected by the Communication, and that Malta Enterprise is conducting studies on transport between islands, including between Malta and the UK. Mr Abela said that the Communication is not pertinent to a discussion on flag registration issues.

Concluding the discussion, Parliamentary Secretary Dr. Said suggested that the maritime transport presentations delivered to the members of the Core Group should also be presented to members of the MCESD in view of the possible economic and social impact locally.

Civil Society Fund

Members of the Core Group discussed the Civil Society Fund which is aimed at offering financial support to constituted bodies and representative organisations for EU related activities. The discussion centred on whether the CSF should be retained in

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its present form or transformed into a co-financing fund for EU projects, or be modified to have elements of both.

As a result of the discussion, it was agreed that bilateral meetings between MEUSAC and Core Group member organisations would be held and that a proposal would be drawn up that would take into consideration the views expressed.

Sectoral Committees

The Parliamentary Secretary, the Hon. Chris Said, informed Core Group members that the Sectoral Committees' secretaries have been recruited and that the Committees will be meeting between the 12th March and the 9th April. He also noted that by the next meeting of the Core Group, three NGO representatives will have been elected to represent the voluntary sector organisations on the Core Group.

Members in attendance

Present for the meeting of the Core Group were: Parliamentary Secretary The Hon. Dr. Chris Said (*Chairperson*), Dr. Vanni Xuereb (Head MEUSAC), Dr. Godwin Grima (Principal Permanent Secretary), Mr. Richard Cachia Caruana (Permanent Representative to the EU), Mr. Julian Micallef (Acting Head of Consultation, MEUSAC and Secretary of the Core Group), Ms. Graziella Pullicino (Acting Head of the EU Secretariat - OPM), Dr. Gabriella Pace (Head of Information MEUSAC), Dr. Josette Grech, Mr. Carmel Cacopardo (Alternattiva Demokratika), Mr. Arthur Rossi (Confederation of Malta Trade Unions), Mr. Vince Farrugia (GRTU), Mr. Tony Zarb (General Workers' Union), Mr. Joe Grech (Gozo Business Chamber), Mr. Kevin Bonello and Eng. Ray Muscat (Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry), Dr. Paul De Battista (Malta Emplyers' Association), Mr. Alexander Bonello (Malta Hotel and Restaurants Association), The Hon. Dr. Luciano Busuttil (Partit Laburista), Dr. Paul Borg Olivier (Partit Nazzjonalista), Mr. Jesmond Bonello (Union Ħaddiema Magħqudin) as well as substitute members, MMA and Customs Department officials, members of staff of MEUSAC and of the EU Secretariat (OPM).

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STQARRIJA GĦALL-ISTAMPA

IL-*CORE GROUP* TAL-MEUSAC JIDDISKUTI T-TRASPORT MARITTIMU EWROPEW

Illum, f'Dar il-Mediterran għall-Konferenzi, iltaqa' l-*Core Group* tal-*Malta-EU Steering and Action Committee* (MEUSAC) taħt il-presidenza tas-Segretarju Parlamentari għall-Konsultazzjoni Pubblika u Informazzjoni, Dott. Chris Said.

Fuq l-aġenda kien hemm għad-diskussjoni l-Politika għat-Trasport Marittimu tal-Unjoni Ewropea minħabba li fil-21 ta' Jannar il-Kummissjoni Ewropea ħarġet bi proposti dwar:

1. Miri strateġiċi u rakkomandazzjonijiet għall-politika tat-trasport marittimu tal-UE sal-2018;

2. Komunikazzjoni u pjan ta'azzjoni bil-ħsieb li tiġi stabbilita żona Ewropea tat-trasport marittimu mingħajr fruntieri; u

3. Formalitajiet tar-rappurtar għal bastimenti li jaslu fi jew jitilqu minn portijiet tal-Istati Membri tal-Komunità.

Wara l-preżentazzjonijiet li taw is-Sur Julian Micallef, Aġent Kap tal-Konsultazzjoni fi ħdan il-MEUSAC, u s-Sur Charles Abela, *Deputy Executive Director (Ports)* fi ħan l-Awtorità Marittima ta' Malta (MMA), diversi membri qajmu punti għad-diskussjoni dwar dawn il-proposti.

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Il-Komunikazzjoni fuq l-għanijiet strateġiċi u r-rakkomandazzjonijiet għall-politika tat-trasport marittimu tal-UE hija maħsuba li tindirizza sfidi marbuta mal-globalizzazzjoni u l-kompetizzjoni rigward il-kwalità ta' vjaġġar bil-vapuri rilokati barra, kif ukoll biex tindirizza kriżijiet marbuta mal-ekonomija u l-enerġija.

Dwar il-Komunikazzjoni u l-pjan ta' azzjoni bil-ħsieb li tiġi stabbilita żona Ewropea tat-trasport marittimu mingħajr fruntieri, il-membri tal-*Core Group* saħqu dwar il-ħtieġa li tittejjeb ir-reputazzjoni tal-bandiera Maltija. Diversi punti kienu mqanqla fosthom:

- ir-riperkussjonijiet tal-Komunikazzjoni tal-Kummissjoni fuq il-baħħara fl-UE u l-ħaddiema tal-portijiet;
- drittijiet tal-passiġieri li jużaw il-vapur u l-*cruise liners*.
- titjieb fil-mezzi ta' trasport bejn il-gżejjer;
- il-ħtieġa li jkun hemm assigurazzjoni ta' livell ekwu tal-kompettività tal-manifatturi Maltin, partikolarment rigward it-trasport marittimu bejn Malta u r-Renju Unit;
- in-nuqqas ta' kontrolli mal-fruntieri fuq merkanzija impurtati fuq vapuri li ma jġorrux merkanzija; u
- sinerġija aħjar bejn l-awtoritajiet lokali dwar kontrolli tal-merkanzija

Is-Sur Charles Abela spjega li l-UE tirrikonoxxi l-bżonn ta' iktar viżibilità fi ħdan l-Organizzazzjoni Internazzjonali Marittima kif ukoll il-bżonn li tiġi stabbilita żona Ewropea tat-trasport marittimu mingħajr fruntieri permezz ta' proċeduri tad-dwana aktar simplifikati. Huwa assigura l-membri tal-*Core Group* li l-MMA qegħda twettaq serje ta' konsultazzjonijiet biex tistabbilixxi kif jistgħu jintlaqtu l-ħaddiema tal-port u dawk li jsuqu l-*pilot boats*, u qal li l-*Malta Enterprise* qegħda tagħmel studji dwar l-impatt tat-trasport bejn il-gżejjer, inkluż bejn Malta u r-Renju Unit. Is-Sur Abela qal li l-Komunikazzjoni għad-diskussjoni ma tirrelatax ma' kwistjonijiet dwar ir-reġistrazzjoni tal-vapuri.

Fi tmiem id-diskussjoni dwar il-Politika għat-Trasport Marittimu tal-UE, is-Segretarju Parlamentari, Dott. Said issuġġerixxa li l-preżentazzjonijiet li ngħataw lill-membri tal-

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Core Group għandhom ikunu ppreżentati wkoll lill-membri tal-MCESD minħabba l-impatt ekonomiku u soċjali li din il-politika jista' jkollha f' pajjiżna.

Fond għas-Soċjetà Ċivili

Il-Membri tal-*Core Group* iddiskutew il-Fond għas-Soċjetà Ċivili. Dan il-fond huwa mmirat biex jagħti sostenn finanzjarju lill-korpi kostitwiti u organizzazzjonijiet rappreżentattivi biex jorganizzaw attivitajiet relatati mal-politika tal-Unjoni Ewropea. Id-diskussjoni ffukat fuq jekk il-Fond għandux iżomm l-istess format li ntuża għal dawn l-aħħar snin, jew jekk għandux jinbidel f'fond għall-ko-finanzjament ta' proġetti tal-UE, jew inkella jiġi mmodifikat b' tali mod li jgawdi taħlita tat-tnejn.

Ġie deċiż li għandhom isiru laqgħat bilaterali bejn il-MEUSAC u l-organizzazzjonijiet rappreżentati fil-*Core Group* u li titfassal proposta li tieħu in konsiderazzjoni l-opinjonijiet espressi.

Kumitati Settorjali

Is-Segretarju Parlamentari, l-Onor. Chris Said, informa l-membri tal-*Core Group* li s-segretarji tal-Kumitati Settorjali ġew reklutati u li l-Kumitati Settorjali se jiltaqgħu bejn it-12 ta' Marzu u d-9 ta' April. Huwa tenna li sal-laqgħa li jmiss tal-*Core Group* għandhom ikunu magħżula t-tliet rappreżentanti tal-għaqdiet mhux governattivi biex jirrappreżentaw lill-organizzazzjoniet tas-settur volontarju fi ħdan il-*Core Group*.

Membri preżenti

Preżenti għall-laqgħa tal-*Core Group* kien hemm: Is-Segretarju Parlamentari, l-Onor Dott. Chris Said (*Chairperson*), Dott. Vanni Xuereb (Kap, MEUSAC), Dott. Godwin Grima (Segretarju Permanenti Ewlieni), Richard Cachia Caruana (Rappreżentant Permanenti għall-UE), Julian Micallef (Aġent Kap tal-Konsultazzjoni, MEUSAC u Segretarju tal-*Core Group*), Graziella Pullicino (A/Kap, Segretarjat UE), Dott. Gabriella Pace (Kap tal-Informazzjoni, MEUSAC), Dott. Josette Grech, Carmel

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