



**Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee**

**Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council,  
the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions  
Strategic goals and recommendations for the EU's maritime transport policy until  
2018  
[COM (2009) 8]**

***SUMMARY***

In recent years, growth in the world economy and international merchandise trade has fuelled demand for maritime transport services. However, at the end of 2008, the impact of the financial crisis on the real economy also started being felt in the shipping sector. An appropriate policy approach was thus felt to be needed in order to ensure the continuous performance of the EU maritime transport system and its contribution to the recovery of the world economy. The main goal of this policy approach is to ensure that Europe retains a core human and technological know-how serving the sustainability and competitiveness of current and future shipping operations.

The purpose of this Communication is to present the main strategic goals for the European maritime transport system up to 2018 and to identify key areas for EU action to strengthen the competitiveness of the sector while enhancing its environmental performance.

The Commission wishes to involve Member States and industry so as to emphasise the attraction of the maritime profession, suggesting a number of Community actions that may be taken, including a framework for the education and training of crews as well as improving labour conditions.

The document also speaks of quality shipping in terms of environmental considerations, transport safety and security as conducive to competitive advantage. The Commission indicates that by 2018 an integrated information management system should be in place to ensure good maritime surveillance of all sea vessels to and from European ports as well as those in transit through or in close proximity to EU waters. In the context of the energy security concern, maritime transport is regarded as a key instrument as part of the diversification of routes.

International aspects are included, as are ways in which to exploit short-sea shipping and sea transport services for economic and social goals. Research and development in the field is also emphasised in a bid to make Europe a world leader in the field.