

Public statement

e-Maritime initiatives in the EU maritime space

Brussels, July 1st 2010

During the European Commission's consultation period maritime stakeholders were invited to concisely express their views today. This is an opportunity for CLECAT¹ to summarise its Members' views in the following highlights:

- The objective of fostering the use of advanced information technologies for working and doing business in the maritime transport sector is welcome and Clecat Members see this in line with the more general choice of cutting red tape, whilst taking advantage of modern ICT tools to facilitate the ever increasing regulatory requirements connected with waterborne trade, by far the largest of the world.
- The best help that can come from EU institutions is to provide harmonisation of the regulatory requirements at EU level, in compliance with international regulations.
- In Customs the transition to paperless documents is underway and e-documents are returning from the back burner: CLECAT recently created an ad hoc Working Group on electronic freight, in cooperation with FIATA².
- The commercial sensitivity of data is well known and confidentiality should be ensured.
- If adequate protection is in place the re-use of publicly available data is a good approach to limit traders' burdensome requirements.
- e-Tools may give conceivable supplementary advantages in combating illicit trade.
- With regards to operational problems, Clecat Members identified:
 - Too many procedure still rely on paper;
 - There is no common ICT standard that could work as a common ICT "plug-in" for industry; some reference architecture (e.g. WCO Data Model) is still scarcely used; taking stock from what has been done in some northern rim port community systems may show a good way forward;
 - The cost of investment is immediately visible, whilst the cost of the lack of efficiency is not readily perceptible.
- Respect for private sector's entrepreneurship is necessary: some make investment to gain a competitive edge which would ill-suffer being flattened by one-size-fits-all policy choices.
- With regards to applications, Clecat Members consider the following priorities, all with a view to enhance harmonisation:

¹ **CLECAT represents the interests of freight forwarders, logistics service providers and customs agents.**

² www.fiata.com
CLECAT, aisbl (n° 0408301209)

- Supporting National Single Windows to embrace an EU-wide approach
- Improving interoperable maritime surveillance/monitoring systems
- Improving automation in ship reporting processes
- Reckoning Port Community Systems best practices
- Integration of Port Single Windows with national and international web portals
- Automated collection, management and reporting of statistics
- Establishing co-operative transport networks interoperability standards
- Integration of short-sea-shipping into logistics chains, by proving interface standards

In particular the following measures have been identified as most important:

M2 - Actions to define e-Maritime standards
M3 - Measures to require the implementation of National Single Windows
M4 - Measures to support stakeholders in implementing the necessary e-Maritime ICT infrastructure

- In conclusion:
 - the lack of e-Maritime solutions is not the main cause for the present modal split, as other factors have even greater impact, e.g. insufficient infrastructure
 - harmonisation of procedures and standards, speed in communication between actors in the supply-chain and authorities, simplification of business processes and error containment are expected benefits.
 - a funding scheme that makes investment affordable for the private sector, may be helpful.
 - high user fees for using e-maritime tools will be perceived as an obstacle: a clear cost-benefit analysis is a must and possibly providing these services free of charge for the user may contribute to their success.