

2nd Roundtable of the European Maritime Cluster Organisations



4 November 2005

Institut Français de la Mer, 47 Rue de Monceau, Paris 75008

Draft

Minutes of Meeting

The Conference Dinner on November 3 was not only in pleasant surroundings, floating on the River Seine, but also pleasant for the quality of the food and drinks, and for the pleasant company.

For a list of participants, see *Annex 1*.

Opening

The Chairman, Francis Vallat, opened the Roundtable at 09.00 hrs. After welcoming everyone and outlined the structure of the agenda (*Annex 2*). He also stressed the ambitions of this meeting in relation to the creation of national maritime cluster organisations, as well as a European Network of Maritime Clusters.

Cluster Presentations

Cluster presentations from Spain, Italy (*Annex 3*), Netherlands (*Annex 4*), Germany (*Annex 5*), Finland (*Annex 6*), Portugal, Poland (*Annex 7*), Denmark (*Annex 8 and 9*), France (*Annex 10*), and the United Kingdom (*Annex 11*) were made and discussed. Every country has a different approach, suited to its national, regional and even local needs. Most of the organisations have been successful in creating a high profile for the maritime sectors and the cluster as a whole. Some countries are in the process of creating a cluster organisation, others are well established. The discussions were stimulating in the sense that everyone noted that “there are many ways that lead to Rome”, a sentiment that was underlined by Renato Sicurezza, when he suggested (to Niko Wijjolst) to organize the 3rd Roundtable in Rome.

Shipbuilding Update

Renato gave a very up-to-date picture of the world and European shipbuilding industry, which provided an important insights into the comparative strength of the European shipyards and its importance for the maritime cluster (*Annex 12*). This encouraged the appetite of the gathering, which was immediately satisfied by the Chairman who offered us an excellent aperitif and delicious buffet. Everybody agreed that the French cuisine is as good a reason to come to Paris!

European Maritime Policy

After lunch Ronald Vopel and Jacques Michaux of the European Commission informed us about the latest thinking and developments within the Commission on the Maritime Policy Task Force, which prepares the Green Paper (*Annex 13*).

Niko Wijnolst introduced the European Maritime Policy Conference Programme of 17 November 2005 in Brussels, and invited everyone to attend the conference on behalf of the Dutch Maritime Network, co-organiser with Mare Forum of the event (*Annex 14*).

An extensive discussion took place in which the importance of the maritime sectors was stressed, and the need for clustering among the many maritime sectors and clustering at the policy level. In October 2006, a new Maritime Industries Forum is scheduled in Oslo. It was suggested by the Commission that the European maritime clusters would make presentations at this meeting.

European Network of Maritime Clusters

The Working Paper (*Annex 15*) was discussed. The need for uniform definitions of maritime sectors and clusters was underlined, as well as the update of the very old statistical data on the European clusters. It is estimated that the value added of the European maritime cluster is twice as high as the number used from 1997.

The Dutch Maritime Network will take the initiative to produce a paper with an overview of the various definitions in each country, on which basis a standard definition for Europe will be proposed. This discussion paper will be prepared with the help of a consultant, at no cost to the participants.

The Chairman stressed the importance of representative cluster organisations which take part in the debate and speak on behalf of the entire national cluster. Everybody agrees that cluster organisations have to be representative for their country. Given the different nature of the cluster organisations a flexible approach will be required. It is proposed to draw up some guidelines, or even charter or articles of association, for national organisations, as well as a European Network.

The participants agreed to formalize the current network, and accepted the offer of the Dutch Maritime Network to handle the secretariat. No administrative costs will be charged. Thus, the European Network of Maritime Clusters was created, and Francis Vallat proposed Niko Wijnolst as its first chairman. His candidacy was unanimously accepted, and Niko asked Francis Vallat to become vice-chairman. So it was said and so it was done! The meeting also agreed on the logo (*Annex 16*).

Closing

As there were no more items on the agenda, the Roundtable chairman thanked everyone for their constructive and stimulating contributions, closed the meeting at 16.15 hrs and offered a farewell drink.

A number of pictures were taken during the meeting (*Annex 17*).

Press release and coverage

Over the weekend a press release (*Annex 18*) was made and distributed on Monday 7 November. A nice article appeared in Lloyd's List (*Annex 19*).

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