



## 2ND EUROPEAN MARITIME CLUSTER ORGANISATIONS ROUNDTABLE

### The start of a EUROPEAN NETWORK OF MARITIME CLUSTERS

Maritime cluster organisations from 10 European countries have strengthened their ties at a roundtable meeting in Paris on the 4th of November 2005. Representatives of maritime cluster organisations from Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, and the United Kingdom met at the headquarters of the Institut Français de la Mer. Also observers from Spain and Portugal participated in the meeting in which national experiences were exchanged and European developments discussed. Two representatives from the European Commission were invited to present their views on European maritime policy and the role of maritime clusters and its sectors.

The international attention for clusters and clusterpolicy was welcomed but the need for proper definitions of clusters equally underlined. The meeting decided that a formal network of maritime cluster organisations should be set up to also coordinate the maritime cluster discussion in Europe. The new EUROPEAN NETWORK OF MARITIME CLUSTERS will support the Forum discussion with the European Commission on the New European Maritime Policy, to be held in Brussels, 17 November 2005.

### Growing Momentum

Following the 1st European Maritime Cluster Organisations Roundtable in Wassenaar, the Netherlands, April 2004, and the joint and individual cluster presentations at the Maritime Industries Forum in Bremen, Germany, 26 January 2005, the organisations met in Paris, at the invitation of their French partner, the Institut Français de la Mer. All participants presented recent cluster developments in their own country. The representatives from the European Commission highlighted some of the developments in sectorial and cluster policy making in Brussels and they also stressed the importance of an integral approach towards European maritime policy.

It became absolutely clear that the interest in a maritime cluster approach - in a national and European context - was growing quickly. At the same time proper cluster-definition of maritime clusters, maritime sectors and maritime cluster organisations were considered essential to prevent confusion on an aggregated European level.

## Proper Definitions

In the many countries engaged in forms of maritime cluster approach various definitions of maritime clusters are being used, each reflecting national or regional circumstances and opinions. Whilst this is very well for local situations it prevents figures to be used on an aggregate level, and hence impairs the cluster discussion on a European platform.

Agreed definitions - e.g. which sectors are maritime and in how far related economic activities are maritime - have been extensively debated with a view to arrive at a mutual agreed position. The network of cluster organisations will initiate an study of sector and cluster definitions and will propose a European standard to be used in future economic impact studies. On this basis the European Community will be advised to fund a statistical survey as to the importance and sectorial interrelationships of the European Maritime Cluster. It is expected that the economic value of the European maritime cluster is far greater than currently assumed. Similarly, some agreed definition, or rather common criteria, will have to be adopted for a national organisation to informally qualify as representing its national cluster of maritime activities.

## Join Hands

As the European Commission moves more to policy making on a cluster level (in addition to the present sectoral approach) it is important that the maritime industry offers a counterpart with a comparable holistic view. The roundtable participants agreed to set up a maritime cluster network to link all individual cluster organisations corresponding with the abovementioned criteria in a joint communication with European institutions: The **EUROPEAN NETWORK OF MARITIME CLUSTERS (ENMC)**. This network aims to promote and strengthen the European Maritime Cluster, in addition to the existing Europeans trade organisations. For the time being the network is of a virtual character and sectorial support will be provided for by the Dutch Maritime Network. The European Network will refrain from lobbying activities, but will strive to improve the understanding of cluster at the European level as well as policy measures that strengthen the unique Europe maritime cluster.

"This all is very exiting" says Francis Vallat, President of the Institut Français de la Mer and host and chairman of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Roundtable, just before proposing, with unanimous support, Niko Wijnolst, to become the co-ordinator and first chairman of the ENMC. "Given the growing interest in cluster oriented policy making, today is an excellent time window to react jointly in positive action. We will not let this opportunity slip and we will get it right first time", said the new chairman. Francis Vallat has accepted to become vice-chairman.

Participants at the 2<sup>nd</sup> European Maritime Cluster Organisations Roundtable were:

<b>Denmark</b>	- Steen Sabinsky, Mogens Schrøder Bech
<b>Finland</b>	- Mikko Niini
<b>France</b>	- Francis Vallat, Fabrice Théobald
<b>Germany</b>	- Volker Mund, Thomas Knaus
<b>Italy</b>	- Corrado Antonini, Renato Sicurezza
<b>The Netherlands</b>	- Niko Wijnolst, Henk Janssens, Marianne Hazelhorst
<b>Poland</b>	- Bogdan Sedler
<b>United Kingdom</b>	- Mark Brownrigg, John Murray, Bill Lines

Observers:

<b>Spain</b>	- Ramón López Eady
<b>Portugal</b>	- José Maria Albuquerque
<b>European Commission</b>	- Ronald Vopel, Jacques Michaux

Representatives from Sweden and Norway were not able to attend the 2<sup>nd</sup> Roundtable.

### More information

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