Ministerial Conference on the Motorway of the Sea
Ljubljana, Slovenia, 24 January 2006

THE MOTORWAYS OF THE SEA
« PREPARING THE FUTURE »

CONCLUSIONS ADOPTED BY THE CONFERENCE
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Conclusions adopted by the Conference

- Maritime transport is the backbone of international trade and it offers a great potential to enhance intra-community commercial exchanges. Our economies need reliable and efficient maritime links. Any policy for enhancing them has to be in line with the needs of industry. The European maritime industry already successfully operates a number of such links based upon market demand.

- “Motorways of the Sea” is a new concept in European transport policy which will build upon this experience. They are set up in order to combine the efforts to promote modal shift and cohesion and improve maritime links, taking into account initiatives by Member States and by the Commission.

- The ambitious objectives of high quality Motorways of the Sea to concentrate the flow of goods in maritime-based logistic links requires very good preparation that should include the following elements:

  - the identification of maritime links that have the potential to become Motorways of the Sea, on the basis of the analysis of existing or new and viable maritime links, that are regular and frequent, to reduce road bottlenecks and/or improve the access to insular or peripheral regions and States. This must take account of traffic demand and corresponding market studies as well as the social and environmental impacts;

  - a systematic analysis of the needs of social and economic actors that should be made aware of the advantages offered by these new maritime links which can only become viable where there is a commitment to use them;

  - the identification of the criteria and needs for the implementation of the Motorways of the Sea, essential for the identification of ports to be integrated into the logistic chain of the Motorways of the Sea, taking into account the characteristics of each Motorway of the Sea corridor;

  - measures that should lead to a concentration in the traffic on the Motorways of the Sea ports or port regions and links which are, very important for the viability of the Motorways of the Sea. These include the selection of Motorways of the Sea links in conformity with the TEN-T Regulation and by using quality criteria. Here, the impact on competition requires close attention, in particular for existing maritime links. Therefore any selection made should be open and transparent;

  - the in-depth analysis of the Motorways of the Sea projects from a financial, legal and technical point of view and coordination of community, national, regional and private sector investments for financing the implementation of the Motorways of the Sea;

  - the removal of the remaining obstacles that hinder the development of Motorways of the Sea, e.g. by reducing administrative burdens for customs and inspections and by developing electronic one stop shops;

  - the use where appropriate of the existing possibility of alternative security agreements for short sea shipping as provided for in Regulation (EC) N° 725/2004, guaranteeing an adequate level of protection, while decreasing the administrative burden;
• The Motorways of the Sea should preferably also include inland rail and/or inland waterways freight transport services thereby contributing to more sustainable and integrated door-to-door services;

• Quality Motorways of the Sea require new state of the art technology which, if included and promoted accordingly, will attract young people to the maritime profession;

• The cooperation between the Member States concerned by the Motorways of the Sea corridors should be developed for instance through Memoranda of Understanding or through master plans for these corridors. It is also important to ensure a good exchange of information between actors involved in the preparation of the different Motorways of the Sea corridors in order to maintain coherence of the overall approach;

• Member States are urged to give a clear priority to the Motorways of the Sea in the framework of the TEN-T programming and to involve the private sector in order to turn the concept of the Motorways of the Sea into concrete initiatives The Commission will present in 2007 the first list of specific Motorways of the Sea projects of common interest, resulting from the selection of projects submitted by the Member States in the framework of the TEN-T programme;

• It is desirable to organise in due course an event at Ministerial level in order to evaluate the progress made with the preparation and the implementation of the Motorways of the Sea and to ensure adequate EU funding for the implementation of the Motorways of the Sea;

• Given the importance of the Motorways of the Sea and the complexity of implementation, the nomination is welcome of a European co-ordinator to act as a facilitator and to help with the development of a coherent strategy for the implementation of the Motorways of the Sea;

• The national and regional public authorities should support the extension of the mandate of the national centres for the promotion of short Sea shipping to include the aspects of intermodality and become also centres for the promotion of intermodal transport and contribute in this context to the Motorways of the Sea;

• The Commission, for its part, will take concrete initiatives to enable exchange of information, to identify and promote good practise and to regularly take stock of progress made;

• The Member States and the Commission reiterate the importance of the Presidency Conclusions of the Informal Transport Council, Amsterdam, 10 July 2004 on short Sea shipping in the enlarged European Union as a determinant factor for the success of the Motorways of the Sea.
Background to the Conference


- Decision n° 884/2004/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 amending Decision No 1692/96/EC on Community guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network,


- The Presidency Conclusions of the Informal Transport Council, Amsterdam, 10 July 2004 on short Sea shipping in the enlarged European Union, which cover inter alia the Motorways of the Sea;

- The high profile of the Motorways of the Sea initiative, its capacity to become a true complement to road transport, to promote intermodal transport based upon short Sea shipping, and to improve the links between the European Union’s outlying regions and its central markets are now widely recognised;

- The Motorways of the Sea will be at the forefront of intermodal transport and which implies a high quality affecting at the same time the frequency, punctuality, efficiency of transport services, respect of the environment, the exchange of information, the speed of the administrative and customs procedures, the efficiency of the equipment in ports and the accessibility of ports to good intermodal links with the hinterland, in particular with the rest of the Trans-European Network;

- The Motorways of the Sea should improve the existing maritime links or establish new viable, regular and sufficiently frequent maritime links for the transport of goods between Member States; resulting in the concentration of transport flows on a selection of ports or port regions and maritime links which are integrated with other transport modes in a door-to-door logistic chain, in order to become comparable to road-only transport in terms of frequency, price and reliability;

- The important economic impacts of the Motorways of the Sea for the regions concerned, for instance through the creation of employment resulting from the development of logistic activity zones, the reduction of congestion on the large land freight transport corridors and the consequent improvement in competitiveness;

- The implementation of the Motorways of the Sea will lead to less traffic jams, less noise, less atmospheric emissions of pollutants and less energy consumption and, consequently, will contribute to sustainable development in all aspects: economic, social and environmental;

- The Motorways of the Sea should allow the combination of interests of the public and the private sector; hence good cooperation between the Member States, the maritime industry, the land transport and logistic industry is paramount to allow key users such as the freight forwarders to become fully involved in the development of the Motorways of the Sea; the Commission has an important role to play as a catalyst by creating conditions that are favourable to their implementation;

- The short Sea shipping policy provides an important contribution to the Motorways of the Sea. The useful contribution made by the National Centres for the promotion of short Sea shipping whose means are however still too limited and whose activities should be extended;

- The start of the studies in the Member States with the objective of identifying Motorways of the Sea projects and the preparation of their implementation, such as the PORTMOS project funded in the framework of TEN T;

- The intensifying exchanges between certain Member States for the preparation of the Motorways of the Sea, such as the French-Spanish initiative to sign a declaration of intent to put in place a Motorway of the Sea service in the Atlantic in 2007; and the agreement signed in spring 2005 between Greece, Italy and Cyprus, extended to Malta and Slovenia, with the objective of developing the Motorways of the Sea in the east Mediterranean;

- The report of the High Level Group on the extensions of the trans-European network to the neighbouring countries and regions with respect to the proposed extensions of the Motorways of the Sea to the neighbouring countries of the European Union.