

IMO and European bodies' joint actions continue to shape shipping

Letters To The Editor - Monday 12 March 2007

Dr Rosalie P Balkin

SIR, With reference to the article and editorial (Lloyd's List March 8, 2007) on the present status of the European Commission and European Union within the International Maritime Organization.

While encouraging all efforts towards ensuring that Europe and Europe's maritime industries — and, for that matter, those of other regions, too — do continue to play "an active role to support the common efforts of IMO" (as proposed by Mr J Barrot, vice president of the Commission and Commissioner for Transport), your readers may wish to note the following information:

- The commission has had observer status at IMO since 1974 and, through that status, it is, therefore, factually incorrect to suggest that the Organization does not recognise the existence of the EU;
- The commission, like all other entities enjoying observer status at IMO, is entitled to submit documents to all IMO bodies and has done so on many occasions.

Such documents are, accordingly, circulated among IMO members and observers; are considered by IMO bodies; and their contribution to attaining the organization's objectives is appreciated;

- The EU has, to date, not sought observer status in its own right, as have other regional intergovernmental entities (the African Union and the Organization of American States); and
- With respect to full EU membership of IMO, this is a matter, on one hand, for the EU members to take appropriate necessary action and, on the other, for the IMO members, upon receiving a relevant request, to act in accordance with the applicable provisions of IMO's constitutive Convention.

Finally, I would also underline IMO's excellent record in shaping the global regulatory framework with due speed, as witnessed by the introduction of significant maritime safety, security and marine environment protection measures — such as SOLAS chapter XI-2 and the ISPS Code, or those following the Estonia , Erika , Prestige and Star Princess incidents — all of which were adopted under the maximum speed allowed by the provisions of the relevant IMO treaties concerning the adoption of amendments thereto.

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