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Creating a Nordic maritime hub

Keywords: Port of Frederikshavn, Nordic Maritime Hub project, Stena Line, EU projects, CEF 2014, LNG, TEN-T



An EU funded project called the Nordic Maritime Hub project has been initiated at the Port of Frederikshavn in Denmark.

The project consortium consists of the **Port of Frederikshavn, Kosan Crisplant and Stena Line**, and aims to meet the demands of the **modern maritime sector** by improving port access facilities, establishing shore side power supply and establishing bunkering facilities for alternative fuels.

Bo Larsen, commercial director, Kosan Crisplant, said: “At **Kosan Crisplant** we see this project as the door way to a

big potential market for LNG in the Baltic Sea area. The bunkering facility is therefore also just the first step in our broader vision, in that we already have signed an **agreement with another project consortium to establish a production facility for LNG and LBG (liquefied biogas) in Frederikshavn.**”

Kosan Crisplant has been charged with establishing a bunkering facility for **liquid natural gas (LNG) in the port area.**

The **Nordic Maritime Hub** project was awarded **TEN-T funding from EU’s Connecting Europe Facility** back in June 2015.

Besides creating new possibilities and expanding the traditional port business of the Port of Frederikshavn, it is hoped that the project will also be a first step towards strengthening the **maritime corridor between Frederikshavn and Gothenburg.**

The **Port of Frederikshavn, Port of Gothenburg and Stena Line** already entered into a strategic partnership last year, striving to achieve development, cooperation and future investments in the **infrastructure on both sides of the Kattegat.**

Nordic Maritime Hub will run until autumn 2018 and will be implemented alongside the ongoing port expansion at the Port of Frederikshavn.

Source: Green Port

Link: <http://bit.ly/1qEZSr4>

Kitack Lim makes case for IMO as shipping's environmental regulator

Keywords: *IMO, environment, regulation, shipping, MEPC*



Kicking off the start of crucial talks at the IMO's 69th Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) meeting yesterday, secretary general Kitack Lim reiterated his keenness to ensure proper **environmental regulations** for the industry.

"I see the promotion of **sustainable shipping and maritime development** as one of the major priorities of my tenure," said Lim, who took on the role at the UN body on January 1.

Lim said the **UN climate change discussions in Paris** last December had shown a "*clear imperative for*

development to be truly sustainable".

Despite shipping not being included in the final text from Paris, Lim said IMO still had a "*strong commitment*" as "**the global regulator of the shipping industry** to continue its work to address **greenhouse gases** from shipping engaged in international trade".

The IMO is still the right body to handle **shipping environmental regulations**, Lim argued.

MEPC 69 continues through to Friday.

Source: Splash 247

Link: <http://bit.ly/1YIILzD>

Helsinki-Tallinn rail tunnel: a future European link?

Keywords: Helsinki-Tallinn, rail, tunnel, TEN-T, European Investment Bank and the Nordic Investment Bank, EU New Transportation Infrastructure Policy, North Sea Baltic Sea corridor



Plans for a **rail tunnel between Helsinki and Tallinn accelerated after the Estonian and Finnish ministers signed a memorandum of understanding** promising to push ahead. The undersea tunnel could treble travel and boost trade between the two cities significantly in its first decade of operation. While concrete decisions are still some time away, what would the tunnel bring to these two Nordic countries?

An undersea rail tunnel linking **Helsinki and Tallinn** has been on the cards for almost a decade, with multiple studies assessing its potential for **socio-economic development for the two capital cities**.

This vision moved one step closer to reality in **January 2016** when the Finnish and Estonian ministers signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) binding the two partner states to further investigate the **viability and economic impact of the tunnel's delivery**.

According to a pre-feasibility study financed by European Union EUBSR Seed Money Facility published in February 2015, the project is already a strong contender for success. If constructed, the tunnel will be one of the **longest underwater railway tunnels** ever built and it will directly serve over four million people living in a **200km radius of both Helsinki and Tallinn**. It will also carry about half of future cargo traffic in the area.

Promising improved accessibility and reduced commuting times via links to a wide-spanning network of transport modes, the tunnel is expected to rack up to **25,000 daily commuter trips** in the first ten years after its opening. The revenue generated by **passenger traffic would amount to €67bn by 2080**.

Adding to its potential, the tunnel would also be connected with a planned **€3.6bn Rail Baltica high-speed train line** which is supposed to link Finland, the **Baltic States and Poland and improve the connection between Central and Northern Europe**.

While further assessments are in the pipeline, early evaluations hint at how the ambitious project could be built, financed and just how much it would change **both passenger and cargo transportation in Northern Europe**.

The key infrastructure details

Finland and Estonia's economies are **tightly interconnected**, forming a hub of trade, tourism and diverse economic activity that holds every promise of growth in the decades to come. The **50-mile underwater railway aims to boost trade and further increase the gross domestic product (GDP) of the two countries**.

The pre-feasibility study TALSINKIFIX recommends the construction of a railway tunnel with two separate rock tunnels. Inside, trains could reach speeds of 250km/h, significantly cutting the commuting time from the current two and a half hours by ferry down to only 30 minutes per journey.

A European-standard track width would be used in order to establish an easy link with **Rail Baltica**. To achieve the required speed, the rolling stock of tunnel transportation would be of speed shuttle type, with a basic unit comprised of **two locomotives and eight carriages**, plus other possible loading and unloading carriages.

The tunnel will be able to host both high-speed trains carrying **800 passengers** each and cargo trains with a **total capacity of 96 units/TEU**.

Construction of the tunnel could start anytime **between 2025 and 2030**, with work lasting between eight to ten years, while the total cost of the project is estimated to be between €9bn and €13bn.

The railway would be integrated into the local public transport systems of both countries, with intermodal links to Finland's Central Railway station and Helsinki airport and Estonia's traffic network at Ülemiste.

An uncertain financing model

The study warns that the project will not be sustainable without considerable support from the public sector. In order for it to become a reality in the first place, funding in proportion of 30-40% would be required from the state budgets of Estonia and Finland, as well as from the **EU budget**.

In keeping with similar projects in the **Nordic region**, multilateral financing institutions, such as the **European Investment Bank and the Nordic Investment Bank**, were identified as potential sources of debt funding.

However its location as a fast cross-border link between two of Europe's strongest economies make it an attractive option for **EU investment**.

The Helsinki-Tallinn growth zone is **part of the Trans-European transport network supported by the EU**. Given that the railway aims to close an **80km gap traversable only by ferry**, it falls within one of the **key priority areas of the EU New Transportation Infrastructure Policy**, which specifies: "Missing links, in particular at cross-border sections, are the major obstacle to the free movement of goods and passengers within and between the Member States and with its neighbours."

Despite this, the EU financing for the project at its different stages will undoubtedly be a big risk, the study warns.

This is because **TALSINKIFIX faces strong competition from Rail Baltica**, the most important project within **North Sea Baltic Sea corridor** and one set to attract the lion's share of the €26bn EU budget between 2014 and 2020.

"The risk that the project would not be among the priorities of the EU should be taken into account," the report reads. **"TALSINKI is linked to the implementation of the Rail Baltica project.** There are risks that Rail Baltica does not involve. Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia are hesitating, because the intended grant from the EU is not at the desirable level."

The possibility of organizing the construction, funding and operating of the tunnel through a corporation-based model is also to be explored. Once operational, income from the tunnel could cover the operating and maintenance costs as well as part of the investment costs.

The socio-economic impact on Northern Europe

The decisive factor in the tunnel's construction is its projected ability not only to serve, but also boost economic activity within **the Nordic region**.

Primed to become one of the significant centres in Northern Europe, the Tallinn-Helsinki region houses more than 2.5 million inhabitants and sees over 7.5 million passengers travel annually by ferry between the two capitals, both for business or tourism purposes. The total volume of passengers between the two cities is expected to reach 41 million by 2080.

Although the railway will elevate transportation within both states, it will "almost exclusively have an impact on Finland", due to country's better connections to the central, eastern and southern Europe.

While transport via the new link is expected to bring a 1-3% increase to Finland's GDP within the first 20 years in operation, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania do not benefit as much, with up to 0.5% rise in GDP.

Cargo traffic in Finland, currently solely dependent on marine transport, is bound to "significantly increase" and the tunnel's expected gross market share of the gulf cargo traffic is assumed to be 60% by the 22th year after opening.

However, seeing that Finland is the second biggest trade partner for Estonia today, both countries are expected to reap the benefits of the wider consumer market and shared labour market that the tunnel would open up.

"The figures also show that direct and indirect benefits during the construction and operation period to the economy of both countries are remarkable. The competitiveness of the twin-city area will be strengthened by improved accessibility, new companies and business, better image and a variety in living options," the study concludes.

Overcoming the risks

The project poses a **number of risks in the construction and execution phases, as well as other economic, political, and technological challenges.**

In its preliminary stage, the main problems associated with the tunnel are connected to geology at the exit locations on the Estonian side, where an important source of water supply for the Tallinn city area is located.

Apart from the uncertainty surrounding its funding, the study further cautions that "globally, the political risk for the project progress could be a culmination of the crisis between East and West."

At a national level, **tensions might arise due to the different process and culture surrounding the decision-making process.**

"The political success of the tunnel project will depend on the wideness of its impact area and how it is combined with the whole transport system of both countries," the study says.



Going forward, it is still early days for any clear conclusions. According to Hannes Virkus, an adviser at the Estonian ministry of economic affairs, real decisions regarding the tunnel shouldn't be expected before 2018.

Following the recent signing of the MOU, the founding of a Finnish-Estonian project organisation is a potential next step, followed by a full feasibility study painting a clearer picture of exactly when a Helsinki-Tallinn link is to be expected.

Source: Railway – Technology.com

Link: <http://bit.ly/1Sdr2Qm>

Class societies: Going for gold

Keywords: IACS, maritime safety, Quality System Certification Scheme, IMO's RO Code, European Maritime Safety Agency, European Commission



New IACS secretary-general defends its quality system certification scheme, which marks its 25th anniversary this year

Appointed as its first secretary-general, Robert Ashdown is on a mission to raise the profile and understanding of IACS. Here he defends the gold standard of IACS members — the self-managed Quality System Certification Scheme, which goes back 25 years, to which all its members have to adhere, and which links back to the notion of goal-based standards and the strengthening of the IMO's RO

Code.

THE entry into force of the IMO Member State Audit Scheme on January 1 this year is a reminder to the maritime industry of the importance attached to demonstrating safety and quality in shipping.

Coming a year after the entry into force of the Code for Recognised Organisations (the RO Code), it reinforces the need for flag administrations to practise effective oversight of their ROs.

At a time of a growing global fleet and the emergence of new ship types and technologies, the need for effective management of organisational and operational performance factors is as important as ever.

This year the International Association of Classification Societies celebrates the 25th anniversary of the IACS Quality System Certification Scheme, a programme put in place to benchmark the work of IACS members, including their actions as ROs.

This quality scheme has its roots in the spate of serious casualties at the end of the 1980s and in the early 1990s. While many of these casualties were the consequence of operational failings, the high casualty rate of bulk carriers in particular was of enough concern to prompt the IMO in 1993 to adopt guidelines on the enhanced programme of inspections during surveys of bulk carriers and oil tankers, known as ESP.

The IACS response was the creation in 1991 of QSCS, which forms the 10 criteria of membership — it remains central to the IACS ethos and compliance is mandatory for members.

Its scope is comprehensive, covering the classification of ships and mobile offshore installations in respect of new buildings and in-service assets, including statutory work carried out on behalf of nominating flag administrations.

The development, maintenance and continuous improvement of QSCS represents a significant effort by IACS and its members. QSCS embraces the entire 'class cycle' of rule development, design approval, survey during construction, survey during service, research and development, and feedback gained from experience in the practical implementation of rules and regulations, as well as industry feedback, incidents and casualties.

QSCS has evolved into what the current IACS chairman, ABS's Chris Wiernicki, recently referred to as the 'gold standard' for classification societies. This reflects the widely held credibility QSCS enjoys within the shipping industry generally, but especially from flag states when recognising a classification society to act on its behalf as an RO. This recognition of QSCS, which was the basis for the RO Code, should come as no surprise given IACS's role as the IMO's principal technical adviser as well as the author and owner of QSCS.

The basis of the **IACS Quality Management System Requirements (IQMSR)** is ISO 9001, itself subject to major revision in the 2015 version. As in other industries IACS has supplemented ISO 9001 with further requirements specific to the work of classification societies and ROs.

Consequently, **IQMSR includes compliance with all IACS procedural requirements**, unified interpretations of statutory requirements and unified (classification) requirements, including the common structural rules for bulk carriers and oil tankers.

In 2014, IACS completed a comprehensive review of the IQMSR, as a result of which IACS considers it to be aligned with the provisions of the RO Code.

Since 2010, the **audit of IACS members against IQMSR has been conducted by independent accredited certification bodies (ACBs) that comply with the ISO/IEC 17021 standard on requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems**. Consequently the certification of IACS members against the requirements of IQMSR is entirely independent of IACS itself.

Since the scheme's inception, IACS has recognised that industry input is crucial to the ability of QSCS to address expectations of the stakeholders that classification societies serve. To that end, IACS Council established the Advisory Committee, comprised of senior industry representatives and major flag and port state administrations tasked to provide feedback.

IACS also organises an annual end user workshop with ACBs involved with the scheme for the benefit of IACS members as well as other classification societies interested in QSCS, or that have voluntarily adopted IQMSR. Interested parties are welcome to attend: **several flag administrations, the European Maritime Safety Agency, and the European Commission have all previously participated**.

As this industry 'gold standard' celebrates its silver anniversary, QSCS remains a powerful and relevant tool to ensure high standards for classification societies **with respect to safety and environmental protection** — and IACS remains committed to ensuring that it meets the **needs of the shipping industry**.

Source: Lloyd's list

Link: <http://bit.ly/1VmKhJR>

Europe debates shipping emissions ahead of MEPC

Keywords: *European Parliament, European Commission, emissions, shipping, targets, IMO, EU climate policies, European Community Shipowners' Associations, global CO2 agenda, International Chamber of Shipping*



The **European Parliament** today called on **EU governments** to align the **2030 EU climate target with the Paris Agreement** and **introduce EU measures to cut emissions from aviation and shipping**. In a letter sent to Europe's ministers of transport and environment, the heads of **seven political groups of the parliament's environment committee** also demanded greater climate ambition at both IMO and its sister organisation governing aviation.

The **environment heads of all the main political groups** in the parliament wrote: *"There is no reasonable excuse to continue exempting aviation and shipping from the*

international and EU climate policies."

Next week the **IMO will convene its Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC)** to debate new measures.

Yesterday the **European Community Shipowners' Associations (ECSA)** called upon EU member states to support a **global CO2 agenda for shipping**

"The shipping industry endorses the Paris agreement on climate change and we are committed to **ambitious CO2 emission reductions across** the world merchant fleet," said ECSA President Niels Smedegaard.

Next week's MEPC will feature a discussion on a global data collection system that will provide information on the emissions from maritime shipping on an annual basis. *"We believe that this system should have mandatory application"*, ECSA secretary general **Patrick Verhoeven** said yesterday. *"A decision in IMO should come forward in 2016 so that ships can provide the required data as soon as possible."*

ECSA also supports the proposal of its international partner ICS (International Chamber of Shipping) for IMO member states to adopt an intended IMO determined contribution. This would make IMO member states and the shipping industry answerable to the international community, in the same way that **governments committed to intended national determined contributions (INDCs)**.

"The development of an **Intended IMO Determined Contribution** should be part of a clear work plan and timetable, to be elaborated as of this year," said Verhoeven.

Source: Splash 247

www.onthemosway.eu



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Link: <http://bit.ly/1VI9hLn>

Dublin Port Hosting 2016 ESPO Conference In June

Keywords: 2016 ESPO Conference, maritime transport, port, 2017 European Commission Agenda,



#ESPO2016 - The European Sea Ports Organisation (ESPO) is inviting its members, policy makers and stakeholders to join in the 13th edition of its annual conference, which will be hosted by the Dublin Port Company at The Printworks in Dublin Castle on 2-3 June 2016.

The **2016 ESPO Conference**, moderated by broadcaster **Claire Byrne**, will look into ways to improve the **efficiency of maritime transport and ports from different angles**.

The first session will focus on the **different barriers to the internal market for maritime transport**. As maritime policy is at the top of the **2017 European Commission agenda**, the ESPO conference aims at **preparing the ground for this important year for the maritime and port sector and at feeding further discussions**.

Is there a digital agenda for ports? Is there a role for policy? How can ports utilise '**big data**' to their benefit? Are we ready to open up the flow of data? How to protect ports against risks of cybercrime? All these questions will be tackled in the second session.

The third session will address the issue of '**game changers**' and possible '**game stoppers**' when it comes to easing trade. The conference will investigate how TTIP, the trade agreement under negotiation with the US, could possibly benefit ports, on both sides of the Atlantic.

The conference will further zoom into the Chinese 'One Belt, One Road' policy and assess how it might affect European port-hinterland dynamics, as well as the possible impact of a '**Brexit**' for **UK and neighbouring ports, and how temporary border controls are impacting the European transport and logistics chain**.

As usual the conference will close with a policy debate where high-level EU policy makers will present their views on the issues discussed during the conference and enter into a final debate with port authorities.

DG MOVE's director general Henrik Hololei; Mark Frequin, representing the **Dutch Presidency of the Council of Europe; and Pat Cox**, former president of the European Parliament and TEN-T coordinator for the Scan-Med Corridor are getting prepared for this session. **MEP Knut Fleckenstein** will address the conference at the end of day one.

On 3 June, American top economist and influential thinker Jeremy Rifkin will give a keynote address on the theme of 'a Third Industrial Revolution and a Zero Marginal Cost Society'.

The first day's conference sessions will be followed by the Admiral's Ball, a gala black tie evening celebrating the Lord Mayor of Dublin's honorary Admiralty of Dublin Port.



The **event also launches the Dublin Port Riverfest** with a sophisticated evening of fine dining and premium entertainment promised for a guest list of Dublin's premier business hub and international conference delegates.

Source: Afloat

Link: <http://bit.ly/22Qj5lR>

The impact of the conclusions of COP21 on European transport policy

Keywords: *European transport policy, Paris COP21, greenhouse gas emissions, TRAN Committee of the European Parliament, European Economic and Social Committee*

The Paris COP21 (December 2015) resulted in a historic agreement. However, significant efforts will need to be made in the coming years to translate the ambitious commitments into concrete action. Implementation will affect many sectors, particularly transport, which is responsible for a large proportion of greenhouse gas emissions.

The COP21 agreement is the **first ever to commit all the UN Member States** to accelerating the **reduction in greenhouse gas emissions**. As transport is one of the sectors producing the most greenhouse gases, the COP21 agreement will have a substantial impact on the transport sector and people working in it. The sector will experience radical change, affecting all areas of life.

As a key aspect of a **modern society, transport** is not only vital to the smooth running of the **European economy** but also has a direct impact on the quality of life of millions of European citizens. In order to listen to their voice and allow civil society to contribute fully to the general discussion, the **European Economic and Social Committee**, in cooperation with the **TRAN Committee of the European Parliament**, decided to organise a high-level public hearing in which ideas on how to steer the ongoing radical change in the transport sector were discussed.

The hearing, bringing together representatives of the EU institutions, civil society organisations, experts and other stakeholders, took place on **Monday 4 April 2016 at the European Economic and Social Committee**.

Source: European Economic and Social Committee

Link: <http://bit.ly/1Sdsd2t>

Transport Is “Major Dimension” Of A Green Economy: Pierre Guislain, World Bank

Keywords: *environment, EU Transport, CO2 emissions, lower carbon, green economy, Climate Week NYC, Economic Co-operation and Development*



Today **EU ministers are meeting in the Netherlands to discuss the future of European transport.** The sector accounts for about a quarter of the continent’s CO2 emissions and 23% of the **world’s energy-related CO2 emissions** – and so presents a huge opportunity for low carbon growth, according to Pierre Guislain, **World Bank**, speaking on **Climate TV**.

Europe has a target of reducing emissions by **60% by 2050** – from **800 megatons (Mt) of CO2 in 1990 to 320 Mt**, particularly from road transport. But to achieve such a bold target, we need structural change that develops and implements coordinated low carbon transport policies across the globe.

“Until now we haven’t really see the major presence of transport issues on the climate change agenda,” **Pierre Guislain, Senior Director for the Transport and ICT Global Practice, World Bank**, said in a Climate TV interview during COP21. “If no aggressive measures are taken”, the Director says, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the sector would account for a third of the global total by 2050.

Pierre Guislain explains in his interview that the transport sector is fundamental in the fight against climate change because “most of the big transport investments are structural investments, which affect a lot of aspects of society and life”.

Moving from private vehicles to public transport in the city environment in particular would contribute significantly to GHG emission reductions, “but it will also contribute to a cleaner and less polluted environment, less road casualties and crashes and it will increase also physical fitness by increasing personal mobility and non-motorized mobility. By taking a little bit more [of a] holistic view, transport can be a major dimension of a lower carbon and green economy.”

INTEGRATED, BOLD POLICIES

The informal meeting of the EU ministers of transport and **environment which began today in Amsterdam in the Netherlands** aims to further decarbonize mobility, in a bid to accelerate low carbon growth. After all, research by the European Climate Foundation has found reducing emissions in the car sector alone would generate about 700,000 additional jobs **by 2025 in Europe**.

However, to fully develop such a complex net of low carbon transport and fuels in cities, inter-urban transport, freight and logistics would require “*inter-modal solutions, it will require more integrated policies*,” says Pierre Guislain. “We have a whole set of policies that need to be thought of differently, upfront, to

promote a greener economy – one where transport can be a critical dimension of this lower greenhouse gas emissions.”

At the same time, all policies need to be consistent. In a Climate TV interview during **Climate Week NYC 2015**, **Ángel Gurría, Secretary-General** of the Organisation for **Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)**, pointed out that governments must stop subsidizing fossil fuels because it is the “greatest misallocation of resources” and a “brutal example of policy contradictions”

“We’ve discussed carbon pricing quite a bit here at COP21,” underlines Pierre Guislain in the interview. “It has been a big topic with major endorsements for strong carbon pricing approach.” In particular, for the transport sector it is immediately necessary to phase out fossil fuel subsidies “and to tax fuels adequately to represent the true externalities that transport represents,” he says, in order to incentivize the right type of transport – which is “shared, public and not the individual motorized transport of the Fifties and Sixties.”

TRANSPORT ROADMAP

After the historic Paris Agreement, which has set the foundations for a greener, safer and more prosperous future, much remains to be done in terms of implementation – and even more so for the transport community.

“We’re not particularly well organized,” says Pierre Guislain, so it is necessary to come up with “a framework to follow up on the multiple commitments that have been made [during COP21], whereas in the voluntary commitments over 20 different alliances in the national commitments of the INDCs related to transport.”

The World Bank “**intends to play a critical role, both to support our client countries and implement their transport and all the commitments, but also in providing some support to a broader framework of follow-ups.**”

“There’s a long road ahead,” concludes Pierre Guislain. “In particular to put transport at the forefront of efforts to create a greener economy, a decarbonized economy – and [that] works for lots of people globally as well as at country level.”

Source: The climate Group

Link: <http://bit.ly/1r1S7vl>

SOLAS Requirements for Weighing of containers: European organizations call on National Authorities to take action in coordination to preserve level playing field

Keywords: *IMO, vessel, SOLAS, Member States, Certification of Weighing Equipment and Methods, logistics chain, supply chain*



In November 2014, the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) agreed upon rules for the mandatory weighing of all sea-bound containers to be loaded on a vessel. The above mentioned organisations accept these rules and are committed to working towards the successful implementation of the new legal obligation.

The amended SOLAS convention comes into force from 01 July 2016, after which date all “shippers” (that is the party named in the ocean carrier’s bill of lading) must declare to the carrier in advance the verified weight of packed containers. To ensure that the logistics chain can continue to function in a proper manner as of 01 July, the above mentioned organisations call on national authorities to take urgent, coordinated action along the lines indicated below. The absence of such action will lead to competition distortion and significant interruption to the functioning of the logistics chain.

Commitment to level playing field

To ensure that the implementation of the new legal requirements does not create competition distortion through a patchwork of varying national measures, **Member States should pursue a coordinated European approach, taking into consideration the national guidelines of other Member States when deciding on national rules.** Supply chain actors and national authorities should work towards commonly accepted guidelines in order to minimise distortion of competition and ensure smooth functioning of **the SOLAS requirements.** Cooperation in drafting of guidelines must **focus on two main elements: tolerances applying to weighing equipment and the certification of those shippers** approved to issue VGM certificates using Method 2 based upon common standards and programmes (such as AEO, ISO 9001, ISO 28000) or other existing obligations or recommendations to provide the container weight.

Certification of Weighing Equipment and Methods

Regarding the accuracy of **weighing equipment**, it is currently the **responsibility of the implementing State** to define the appropriate standards and this is particularly important in relation to both methods of weighing. National authorities need to be aware that excessive requirements can have an adverse impact on the **logistics chain.** For example, an over-reliance on weighbridges for Method 1 weighing **may create unnecessary**

bottlenecks which could be avoided by using other devices, such as spreader mounted weighing devices. Similarly an over-complicated system for the regulation of Method 1 and 2 users could lead to delays in their authorisation in the short time left before implementation deadline of the SOLAS amendments.

In order to avoid market distortions, it is important that countries around Europe adopt similar standards on certification which are not overly restrictive and do not have an adverse impact on the functioning of the logistics chain. So as to **ensure transparency and certainty for all actors in the supply chain**, evidence should be available when required of the shipper's authorisation to provide a VGM.

Acceptable Tolerances for Weighing Equipment

It is important that national authorities communicate the accepted tolerance level **for weighing equipment used to issue, and where necessary verify a declared VGM** (for example; 5% or an acceptable variation from the declared VGM) in advance of 01 July 2016. It should be borne in mind that variations in implementation may lead to a distortion in competition between Member States. We encourage this coordination to pursue a level of tolerance which allows **sufficient flexibility to take into account variations which may occur through natural weight variations**, inaccurate tare weight on official plates, or through the use of different equipment, **so as to not create blockages to the supply chain by unduly refusing carriage, while also not jeopardising safety and therefore the purpose of the rules.**

Chain of Communication

The verified gross mass (VGM), and any other relevant information, shall always be communicated by the shipper to the carrier and subsequently to the terminal operator, unless otherwise agreed. The shipper remains responsible for communicating via the **agreed chain of communication** and in accordance with an agreed timetable.

It is recommended to communicate the VGM at the earliest opportunity, and if possible before the delivery of the packed container to a port terminal facility, in order to avoid complications. If the VGM has not already been communicated, or if no contractual agreement has been agreed to obtain the VGM at **arrival at the terminal**, it is possible that the terminal will refuse entry of the container.

Confirmation of VGM

The carrier and terminal operator are not responsible for ensuring the accuracy of the VGM provided by the shipper. All actors in the logistics chain are entitled to rely on the VGM declared by the original shipper as being accurate. If no VGM has been established, a container cannot be loaded on a vessel.

Source: Hellenic Shipping News

Link: <http://bit.ly/1TI4rAv>