



Thank you, Heike,

First Secretary General Lim, Heike, and I would like to sincerely thank Croatia, The European Commission and Council, EU States, and IMO Secretariat colleagues for working so hard to put this very important issue on the Agenda today. We would like to particularly thank Assistant Minister Olic and Branimir Farkas and their Department colleagues for such leadership. It is not easy to get issues high up on the Agenda in such an important Conference, but that is what you have achieved for an issue that really deserves to be there. That does not always happen and it takes hard work.

First, we have a short Statement from Iceland who are unable to be here.

Statement of Behalf of Government of Iceland

I would like to read a short statement on behalf of the Government of Iceland. Unfortunately the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Transport and Local Government was not able to attend the Conference due to logistical difficulties but sends her warmest regards.

"Iceland fully supports the focus on the Cape Town Agreement and believes it is hugely important to bring it into force. Iceland thanks Croatia, the European Union, and the International Maritime Organisation, for highlighting its importance today, and urges all Nations to ratify it as soon as possible."

Referring to E U Directive 97 / 70 which, of course implements much of the provisions of the Cape Town Agreement, I would like to re-emphasise what Heike has said:

For the European Union and constituent Members States, the Cape Town Agreement is so much more than just about fishing vessel and crew safety. It will help with some of the most challenging issues that face the European Union as a collective today and this is often misunderstood:

1. The CTA will of course create, finally, after 50 years, an international regime for fishing vessel safety for the protection of the world's fishers, of whom an unacceptable high number lose their lives every year. ILO statistics indicate that the figure is approximately 24,000;

2. It will create a port State mechanism to monitor IUU fishing activities in order to protect markets from illegal fish penetration. Figures suggest that such a figure (IUU fish caught worldwide) is approximately 30 billion;
3. It will help monitor the depletion of world fish stocks, and their movement. This is very much linked to Climate Change as it is well known that with the Thwaites Glacier in particular melting in the Antarctic along with the ice in the Arctic Ocean, that sea temperatures are changing, and therefore fish are on the move at unprecedent levels. So, we cannot monitor our food security if we cannot trace our fish stock. This is a huge issue for the European Union;
4. The CTA will help protect fishers from human rights abuses where it is well known that slavery of the worst kind takes place on the over 24 metres vessels on the High Seas that are subject to the CTA.
5. It will also help to reduce marine litter from international fishing vessels, an extremely significant source of marine litter in our oceans;
6. And of course, it will reduce the number of unnecessary and dangerous long-distance search and rescue call outs, of our precious rescue services, to sub-standard fishing vessels by EU State and other State SAR personnel, merchant and naval fleets, and other fishing vessels.

So, the ratification by European States would therefore mean so much for tackling these issues.

But it is, frankly hard work, and the effort to date is not good enough. We heard on the previous panel the failure to address safety for our merchant seafarers. Here we are failing our fishers. The answer is simple to start with. Implement obviously outstanding regulation.

18 / 27 EU States did not sign the Torremolinos Declaration in Spain in October. That is not good enough, nowhere near it.

And coupled with this, it is only a legislative hurdle, not an administrative one. So, it is time to step up to the mark.

I would urge you, that if you have not sought authority, just like some States did in Spain, please make a call to your lines of authority back home during the afternoon and come and see Dr Deggim or I, or indeed Secretary General Lim or our colleague Tian Bing Huang (from MED) and let us know if you can sign this

evening. And that way you can be in a nice photo this evening at the Gala dinner with Secretary General Lim! There is no time like the present.

We must, to protect merchant seafarers and fishers, in the EU work in unison, and get our regulation ratified, demonstrating that Together We Can make a Difference.

Thank You

Michael Kingston

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