



**MINUTES OF THE 30TH ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON 16TH MAY 2025,
AT EUROPEAN MARITIME SAFETY AGENCY (EMSA) IN LISBON, PORTUGAL**

ITEM 1: OPENINGS

Note: On the 16th May was first a Seminar in the morning, followed in the afternoon by the AGA itself. Of course the openings speeches were said before the Seminar. However they are reported in the minutes of the AGA.

Welcome by Mr Peter KIROV, Head of Department 2 – Safety, Security and Surveillance.

Good morning, esteemed colleagues, captains,

It is a great honour to stand before you today at the European Maritime Safety Agency headquarters here in Lisbon and to welcome you on behalf of EMSA's executive director Ms. Maja MARKOVIC KOSTELAC. Today's agenda reflects not only our shared commitment to maritime safety but also our collective ambition to shape a safer, smarter, and more sustainable maritime future.

At the heart of EMSA's mission lies a clear and unwavering goal: to enhance maritime safety, security, and environmental protection across the European Union. EMSA's main mission has always been and will continue to be to address emerging safety and security concerns and to assist in harmonizing standards across Member States.

One of EMSA's greatest strengths is its ability to bring together technical expertise from across the EU and industry. This collaborative approach ensures that every safety issue is examined from multiple perspectives, enriching our solutions and reinforcing our resilience.

Whether it's through supporting the implementation of the Marine Equipment Directive, coordinating amendments to passenger ship safety legislation, or managing the MED Portal and its innovative e-tag system, EMSA is at the forefront of technical excellence and regulatory innovation.

As we look into the future, EMSA is embracing the challenges and opportunities presented by new technologies. Autonomous ships—commonly referred to as MASS—are no longer a distant vision. EMSA has developed a pilot risk-based assessment tool to support Member States in navigating the complexities of MASS, ensuring that safety remains paramount as we innovate. Equally important is the transition to cleaner propulsion methods. EMSA has led the way in addressing the safety challenges of battery systems, shore-side electricity, and the transport of alternative-fuelled vehicles. These efforts are not only about compliance—they are about leadership in sustainability and safety.

Through its participation in EU-funded research projects and advisory boards, EMSA continues to monitor and shape the development of new technologies, ensuring that innovation and safety go hand in hand.

However no technological is viable or doable if we do not put at its very centre the human factor. Having this in mind EMSA also supports the Member States and the Commission in the process of the comprehensive review of the STCW Convention and Code. This review is crucial for protecting the seafarers and addressing the new challenges faced by the human element on board ships. As we look to the future, it's essential to consider the findings of the EMSA studies on MASS and the alternative fuels. They provide valuable insights that can guide us in updating the STCW Convention and Code to ensure they remain relevant and effective. By incorporating these results, we can better equip our seafarers to handle the evolving demands of the maritime industry, ensuring their safety and well-being. This comprehensive review is not just about regulations; it's about safeguarding the people who are the backbone of global trade and transportation.

In today's interconnected world, maritime cyber security has become a critical pillar of our safety framework. EMSA is actively enhancing cyber security awareness and information exchange across the EU maritime domain. From supporting the MARSEC Committee to developing training through the EMSA Academy, to developing an information sharing platform for cyber security threats in the maritime domain, the Agency is supporting the Member States and the Commission with the tools and knowledge to counter cyber threats.

Moreover, EMSA's role in maritime security inspections and its support for the implementation of EU legislation ensures that our ports and vessels remain secure, resilient, and prepared for the challenges of tomorrow.

Today's agenda reflects the breadth and depth of EMSA's work. From the STEERSAFE study to the safety of alternative fuels and the digital surveillance services showcased during our visit to the Maritime Support Services Centre, we are witnessing firsthand the impact of EMSA's toolbox available to the MS authorities. The presentation by Professor Jorge ANTUNES on sailing practices and fuel efficiency will further enrich our understanding of how operational behaviour influences sustainability.

This CESMA Assembly will provide a platform for dialogue, reflection, and prospective initiatives. It is through such collaboration that we continue to build a European maritime sector that is not only safe and secure but also forward-looking and united.

Let us reaffirm our shared commitment to maritime safety, innovation, and cooperation. EMSA's work is a testament to what we can achieve when expertise, vision, and collaboration come together.

Thank you for your attention and I look forward to the fruitful discussions and insights that today's program will undoubtedly bring.

Then Capt. Antonio CANECO, Vice president of SINCOMAR:

Distinguished guests, esteemed colleagues, and dear friends,

It is a great honor and privilege to welcome you to the 30th Annual General Assembly of the Confederation of European Shipmasters Associations (CESMA°, proudly hosted this year by SINCOMAR in the historic and maritime city of Lisbon.

This gathering is a testament to the three decades of dedication, collaboration, and leadership in the European maritime industry.

Over the years, CESMA has stood as a strong and united voice for shipmasters, advocating for safety, professionalism, and the advancement of our industry in an ever-changing world.

Lisbon, a city with a rich seafaring tradition, reminds us of the pivotal role that shipmasters have played in shaping maritime history.

From the Age of Discovery to the modern era, navigation, trade, and innovation have always been at the heart of our profession.

Today, as we face new challenges and opportunities, from technological advancements to regulatory changes and environmental responsibilities, we must continue to work together to steer the course for a sustainable and secure future.

This milestone assembly provides us with a crucial platform to exchange ideas, share expertise, and strengthen the bonds between shipmasters across Europe.

I am confident that our discussion will contribute to meaningful progress in our shared mission.

And Capt. Dimitar DIMITROV, President of CESMA opened the day with following words:

Dear Mr KIROV, EMSA Deputy Executive Director, dear Capt. TEXEIRA, SINCOMAR President, dear Capt. Jim SCORER, IFSMA Secretary General, dear Capt. Erik DALEGE, EMPA President, distinguished guests, dear colleagues captains - presidents and representatives of CESMA members,

Gathering together in one of the world's most traditional for the maritime industry cities, Lisbon, we are glad to meet 30th anniversary of CESMA. CESMA was founded in 1995 and represents twenty one shipmasters' associations, as well as a number of individual members, in sixteen European Union and future EU countries. The aims are to represent EU shipmasters at the European Commission and have their opinion heard in the European Parliament.

Article 2 - AIMS (from CESMA Statutes)

The aims of the Organisation are:

- To consider, maintain and protect the professional interests and status of European shipmasters vis-à-vis professional, political, administrative and economical bodies existing in the European Union.
- To work together with the above alluded to bodies in order to improve maritime safety and protect the marine environment in European, adjacent and international waters.
- To work in the best interest of European shipmasters world-wide.
- To promote establishment of effective rules which provide high professional maritime standards and proper manning scales for vessels under a European nation flag.
- To retain and develop the highest maritime knowledge and experience by promoting an efficient and common maritime education and training in Europe.
- To inform the public in the European Union about problems in its merchant navy and those concerning shipmasters in particular.
- To keep members informed about current activities and to seek a common position on all relevant matters.
- To co-operate with all international bodies related to maritime affairs such as IMO, ILO, and IFSMA.
- To assist colleague shipmasters who encounter difficulties in ports within the reach of nations represented by CESMA member associations.

The present challenging political situation in the world with the war in Ukraine and Gaza strip, Red Sea and Gulf of Aden actions of Yemen's Houtis and attacks on shipping, tensions between India and Pakistan, commenced trade war with the rising duties and taxes between countries and regions, restored piracy attacks and robberies in Southeast Asia, Africa and other sensitive areas are creating uncertainty in the world trade, world maritime trade and shipping industry as a whole. On the other side decline in the interest in maritime profession in traditional maritime nations is forcing the shipowners to seek manning resources in new countries without traditions in maritime education and training thus further internationalizing the people on board the ships. Together with many other factors like automation, digitalization, alternative fuels development and implementation the above mentioned trends challenge the shipmasters and their work on board the ships. At IMO there is a

process of review of STCW and we expect in coming years amendments to the convention to match the new realities in shipping with the requirements to maritime education and training. The time is coming when shipmasters will have to interact with AI on autonomous ships. The legal framework of that new interaction and responsibilities for shipmasters on board and shipmasters ashore (we believe that the ship has to have always shipmaster, not an operator of the ship equipment or any other person supervising or operating the machinery and equipment on board the ships is still in the very early stage of development and implementation but tests with autonomous ships are done everywhere in the world. And again when the things in one reason or another go beyond the control the shipmasters will be held responsible. We have yet examples of criminalization just because the masters have performed their duties. The present example of our Croatian colleague in Turkey when he himself reported the drug incident before coming to the port and then he was accused of drug trafficking is really a bad add to the maritime profession and hard time for the captain and his family. A case like that could destroy the whole life of the seafarer. Administrative burden on shipmasters, decreased number of crew on board, existing yet watch schedules six on / six off, increased number of inspections from different institutions like flag state control, port state control, environmental inspections, vetting inspections, charterers' inspections and many more turned the shipmasters onto administrators and distract them from their main duty to control and manage the safety and security on board their ships. We all know that certain tasks performed by shipmasters like manoeuvres in ports, fuel and oil transfer operations and other sensitive to the human's life and environment operations require their entire attention. At the same time the master is doing a lot of routine paperwork and he usually combines his activities in order to cope with the time thus increasing the risk of performing his main activity without proper attention.

We shall discuss during the AGA all those challenges to the shipmasters but it's our duty to express to the maritime industry stakeholders that never mind all the technology on board the ships and AI in the offices in critical situations the success of the maritime industry mainly depends upon the human decisions especially in critical situations and failure of equipment and machinery on board. In the present a lot of colleagues are afraid of using their overriding authorities not to deteriorate their performance status and image in the companies. We have the tool to decide what to do but preoccupied by many things to do we have less time to monitor and evaluate the information and to take the best decision.

I hope, we'll have fruitful discussions and at the end of the AGA we'll take our important decisions and resolutions in favour of European shipmasters and seafarers in general. Being in the heart of the European institution responsible for the safety and security of shipping in Europe we have the unique chance to discuss our problems with the experts advising EU politicians and legislators and to cooperate with them to make life of the captain on board better and to make maritime industry safer and more secure.

I declare the 30th CESMA AGA opened and I wish all the participants and guests good time in professional and personal direction.

All Council Members present yesterday for the Council are still present, plus some Portuguese captains members of SINCOMAR.

After having welcomed those present and declared opened the AGA, the President Capt. Dimitar DIMITROV thanked the Secretary General of IFSMA, Capt. Jim SCORER and the President of EMPA, Capt. Erik DALEGE for their presence at the AGA and let then to say some words.

Capt. Erik DALEGE spoke about the MASS, that is an important concern for pilots, noting that MASS do not seem yet to be enough competitive in terms of safety for manoeuvring in ports.

Capt. Jim SCORER came on the criminalisation of seafarers, and captains, that is a great concern for IFSMA as well as for CESMA.

ITEM 2: ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The Agenda is presented by the Secretary General Capt. ARDILLON, and adopted.

ITEM 3: ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES OF THE 29TH AGA (ROTTERDAM)

President Capt. DIMITROV reminds the audience that the Minutes of 29th AGA had been published in CESMA News, and agreed by the member associations. He asks for any amendments or corrections, none being issued, minutes are adopted.

ITEM 4: INTERNATIONAL MARITIME HEALTH FOUNDATION (IMHF)

Capt. Bill KAVANAGH made a Secretary General second presentation (after the one during the Council) of the IMHF and IMHF-Expert Panel (see Council minutes for full presentation).

It has to be noted that doctors being member of the IMHF are giving their time on a voluntarily base to improve the health of the seafarers. An application for mobile phones has been developed in Norway and is for free for downloading. Following Capt. KAVANAGH advice, the app is very easy to use, with simple questions and answers to proceed to diagnostic. Of course that does avoid calling a doctor for a medical advice, but it will help to be able to answer to questions when calling. It is downloadable on the app store: Mariners Medico Guide.

Information can be found on <https://imhf-portal.org>.

ITEM 5: COUCIL MEETING DECISION

A sub-committee for writing resolutions was created. After elaboration of resolutions, the sub-committee will meet (email and/or video) next week to finalize them.

ITEM 5: MATTERS DISCUSSED – RELATED WITH RESOLUTIONS

Criminalisation of seafarers and shipmasters

Galaxy Leader: Crew is now free, but it could be noted that this is the first time that we see IMO helping the families of crew members.

Capt. BEKAVAC: Capt. LAKOS came back on the subject. ZHUPK supports the family of Capt. BAKAVEC. ZHUPK had attending meetings with Croatian government on the subject. However, quite nothing could be really said, as this is also a diplomatic work. As CESMA we could have a contact, but depending of the lawyer in charge of the case.

For Capt. SCORER, IFSMA, we should have a very clear single line of attack. IFSMA is part of a group with INTERMANAGER, ILO, and ITF. ITF knows how to do, if possible of course, to have Capt. BEKAVAC returning back in Croatia.

The Croatian union are involved also and they have more power.

But the vessel is managed by a Turkish company, and we cannot forget the diplomatic side.

Capt. LETTICH, CNPC-Italy, gave a short report on the JOLLY NERO case.

In August 2024, the reasons for the Supreme Court's ruling in the second trial regarding the Jolly Nero incident were made public, which acquitted all defendants. The accusation was, as the employer, for not having foreseen the incident. The incident was not foreseeable. Among the defendants were the harbour master, the chief pilot, and the designers of the tower. The first trial concerned the manoeuvre of the ship and concluded on October 4, 2023, with the conviction of the Captain to 7 years in prison, the Chief Engineer to 4 years in prison, and the First Officer to 5 years in prison. All other defendants, including the Pilot, were acquitted. The verdict is enforceable. The

Captain, a member and insured for many years with Collegio Capitani, will serve his sentence under house arrest for health and age reasons. The Chief Engineer will also serve his sentence at home, as under Italian law a sentence of less than 4 years does not require imprisonment.

The first officer received a 5-year sentence and is serving his sentence in the prison of Cagliari. The third trial has started and concerns the incorrect certificates issued by the Maritime Authority and the Classification Register for the ship, following inadequate inspections. After the two trials concerning the ship and the port, further investigations can be conducted on manoeuvring and responsibilities aboard the ship. It is noted once again that the reconstruction of incidents is carried out through instrumentation, which is increasingly sophisticated and precise today, such as VDR and AIS. It will be necessary for the Category of captains to deepen these issues.

Capt. LETTICH, CNPN-Italy, Spoke also about an incident occurred aboard Italian ferry AF CLAUDIA.

On April 24, 2025, in the port of Patras aboard the Italian ferry AF CLAUDIA, an incident occurred resulting in the death of a crew member of Greek nationality. A crew member, a Greek stewardess, was walking on the ramp outside the lane reserved for people while talking on her mobile phone with earphones. She paused on the ramp just as a rolling vehicle was backing up, which struck her and caused her death. The Italian captain who was in the cabin at the time of the incident, as well as the first officer, and the sailor, all of Italian nationality, were immediately taken by the Greek police, handcuffed, and taken to jail. After 5 days, the three crew members were released; the trial will take place in a few months. An important document was the video footage from the garage at the time of the incident, which clearly showed the dynamics of the situation and the complete innocence of the captain and crew members.

The commander is a member of Collegio Capitani who immediately assisted him. The commander is insured with Collegio Capitani under an insurance policy from Collegio Capitani and immediately had a lawyer and a translator available. This was also done in accordance of 'resolution 6' of the AGA of the Cesma in May 2024 to address this: "CESMA recommends that captain obtain their own legal insurance to protect themselves in case of any incidents while serving on ships. Additionally, CESMA recommends shipowners and/or operators to always provide legal assistance to shipmasters who are detained by local authorities due to an incident, until a final verdict is reached. The Assembly is also aware of the growing commercial pressures faced by shipmasters".

Capt. PELS, KBZ-Belgium remarked that only shipmasters are put in jail immediately, never an airplane pilot or a train driver.

Red Sea and Gulf of Aden

The resolution slightly modified (wording) from last year is adopted.

Container Stowage

New resolution on the subject was adopted. It is on the floor at IMO actually.

Shore Leave

New resolution on the subject was adopted. It is noted that companies do not prohibit shore leaves that could be contrary to MLC. But following the testimonies from active captains, it is often made reference that if crew members were on vessel at a time, the duties could have been done faster.

Maritime Single Window (MSW)

New resolution also on MSW that does not work efficiently as it should be. There are still too many small differences between European countries, or even between ports from a same country that increase considerably the administrative work for captains.

ITEM 6: OTHER MATTERS

It could be foreseen to come back to EMSA, Lisbon, on a two-year base in order to discuss of one or two topics that could be defined before by the Council.

President Capt. Dimitar DIMITROV informed the participants that IMO Goodwill Maritime Ambassadors' Scheme for promotion of the maritime profession at IMO had been terminated. He proposed CESMA to initiate in EU Commission and EU Parliament similar scheme for EU Goodwill Maritime Ambassadors as the IMO scheme was successful and thus maritime profession could be promoted among young Europeans.

NEXT AGA INVITATION

It is reminded to all Members that in 2026, the idea is to organize the 31st AGA in Slovenia. Deputy President, Capt. Giorgio RIBARIC, ZPU-Slovenia, will investigate. And a final decision will be taken very soon with exact place and dates.

CLOSURE BY THE PRESIDENT

President Capt. Dimitar DIMITROV closed the 30th CESMA Annual General Assembly and thanks again EMSA and SINCOMAR-Portugal, especially Ms. Radina RUSSEVA, EMSA Policy Adviser and Capt. Antonio CANECO, SINCOMAR Vice president, for the organisation and the hospitality.

Captain Dimitar Dimitrov
President

Captain Hubert Ardillon
Secretary General