

CESA / EMEC New Year's Reception 2007
Brussels, 7 February 2007

Pim van Gulpen
EMEC Chairman

Dear Mrs. Wöhrl and distinguished guests

I would like to say that we did chose the Goethe Institute especially because of you but that would not be the truth, we have used this location before but a good location it. If I try to visualize a civil servant of your rank, I tend to think of old and ugly man, I am glad there are exemptions, in your case in more than one respect.

First of all let me thank each and every one of you for attending this EMEC and CESA reception. This annual reception is a clear sign of the excellent co-operation between the shipyards, the supply industry and the institutions of the European Community. It is our common goal to achieve the best possible results for our industry in the rapidly changing world, and it is our challenge to invest in employment, sustainability, exports, education and the well functioning of industry structure.

But you could also have the impression that the cooperation seems to have a rather "nationalistic" character.

Ladies and gentleman, if you see in what way a number of board functions in a number of organisations that are part of the European Maritime Cluster are being occupied you could come to the conclusion that it is a perfect example of power politics of the Dutch.

Kommer Damen, the next speaker, being vice chairman of CESA, will take over the chairmanship in November. Willem Laros, shortly appointed as vice chairman of CORREDES, is meant to become chairman also later this year. And also the chairman of EMEC is, as you will have noticed, a Dutchman.

Is it unlimited ambition or is it overrating the Dutch importance within the European Maritime Cluster? Ladies and gentleman, it is just **coincidence** . And I am convinced that you will believe me.

Thanks to the Green Paper and its related activities and updated studies, the marine equipment industry is emerging as one of the most important industries in the European maritime cluster for turnover, employment and leading edge technology. This understanding can only be further improved by generating reliable data on the marine supply industries. It is of the utmost importance to have these data, and together with the commission we can make a big step towards an encompassing view on the real size of the industry. But even despite the lack of data, a true essence of the sector is now becoming apparent:

1) European Marine Suppliers are leading technology drivers for the world wide shipbuilding sector. The European suppliers are the ones that introduce the majority of new innovations in shipbuilding and the European suppliers are the ones that provide solutions for environmental issues and safety standards;

2) European Marine Equipment (and Systems) has more to offer than propellers alone: With all due respect to a major part of our industry, which is well represented here today *as you can see from the poster*, European equipment industries are not only world leaders in propulsion. Cargo handling, communication, automation and environmental systems are also of major importance;

3) European Marine Equipment (and Systems) offers complex integrated solutions. Marine equipment is ahead in the production of integrated processes and technologies. Integrated technologies are part of this industry and its main asset for the future. As access to technology becomes widespread, it is the intellectual ability to use and integrate technology that will enhance the competitiveness of the sector.

Integrating solutions and technologies imply an '**open innovation**'. **And that does mean** cooperation among different companies within the marine equipment sector but mostly within the overall maritime cluster. Open innovation means sharing knowledge which in turn generates multiplication of knowledge. Sharing and multiplying knowledge allows the sector to stay competitive – which is a necessity to survive. We should invest in open

innovation, without investing in the creation of foreign competition. The pace of innovation should be such, that we will always be five years ahead of Asia.

Conditio sine qua non for sharing knowledge is **TRUST within the European industry**. Unfortunately, this essential ingredient is difficult to establish because of its fragile nature. It is like a fall of fresh snow which can easily be spoiled by just a drop of mud. EMEC firmly believes it is worthwhile to pursue and strive for trust and cooperation. The results will benefit the entire European maritime cluster.

With this in mind, EMEC is challenging several aspects of the maritime sector that need to evolve and improve when it comes to cooperation. An example is the way we are providing support to Classification societies towards achieving a new and more effective and efficient certification system. This will ultimately benefit the entire maritime industry.

In addition to the players in the maritime sector, EMEC is also ready to engage and willing to support the building up of this TRUST with policy decision makers. European policies related to maritime, manufacturing, research and the like need to include a coherent approach to the maritime sector and introduce the appropriate changes.

Such policies will ensure that the European Marine Equipment Industry maintains its preeminence and leadership. At the end of the day, this means both the European Shipbuilding Industry and the entire European maritime industry will be more competitive.

This is why we are here today together with my colleague from CESA in a joint reception. And this underlines our willingness to cooperate and combine our efforts not only to maintain but also to support growth in the shipbuilding industry in Europe.

I would like to present to Mrs. Wöhrl a symbolic remembrance of the equipment industry. It is a small size propeller, normally the item that is responsible for the propulsion of the ship, now more to symbolize the propelling influence of the maritime equipment industry on the economic welfare of the EU.

Thank you for your attention