



European Economic and Social Committee
Section for Transport, Energy, Infrastructure and the Information Society
The President

Brussels, 9 February 2010

Sent by e-mail

Dear Sir/Madam,

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) has been following the situation in the maritime sector over the long term and has recently adopted an opinion on the European Commission's Communication on *Strategic goals and recommendations for the EU's maritime transport policy until 2018*. The EESC opinion, drafted by Dr Anna Bredima (Employers' Group, Greece), was adopted at the plenary session on 17 December 2009 by a very large majority.

As part of the process of following up this opinion I would like to invite you to a high-level conference entitled "Enhancing the attractiveness of the maritime professions", which the EESC will be holding at the Committee building in Brussels on 11 March 2010. It will look into: 1) the needs of operators and seafarers; 2) education and maritime training; and 3) the measures which need to be taken to promote employment and competitiveness in the maritime sector.

This interactive conference aims at bringing together all interested parties to help the maritime sector address the problem of recruiting and retaining sufficient numbers of the quality professionals needed to ensure competitiveness and safety. In addition this event is very timely as the European Commission will propose a social package in the maritime transport sector by the end of 2011.

The provisional programme is attached to this invitation. If you plan to attend, please fill in the registration form enclosed and send it to maritimeconference@eesc.europa.eu by 1 March 2010. Updated information will be available at: www.eesc.europa.eu/maritimeconference. Please note that the EESC is unable to cover any expenses arising from attendance.

I very much hope that you will be able to join us at this major event.

Yours sincerely,

János Tóth