



ESPO's ROAD MAP FOR MARITIME TRADE FACILITATION

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For European port authorities, accomplishing the internal market for maritime transport is a top priority. To realise this, the main focus should lay on administrative simplification and on removing customs obstacles to EU goods transported between EU ports.

The reporting formalities when ships call EU ports are necessary to ensure the safe, secure and efficient operation of maritime transport, but there is clear scope for simplification by means of reporting electronically, reporting only when justified (no unnecessary or duplicated formalities) and sharing of data between relevant authorities (the "reporting-only-once" principle of same data requested by several authorities). At the same time, ESPO considers that reliability of data (authorities receiving source data) and resilience of any reporting system are fundamental priorities for any reporting systems.

Almost a year after the entering into force of the reporting formalities directive (RFD), ESPO agrees with the Commission and the other stakeholders that the implementation of the directive as it stands, does not achieve its main aim, that of reducing the administrative burden. ESPO sees the recently launched **REFIT evaluation** of both the RFD and the VTMIS directives as the perfect opportunity to **analyse the reasons why the RFD is not properly implemented** and therefore does not achieve its aims.

In parallel, there are voices calling for a more genuine "European Maritime Single Window" (EMSW). ESPO realises that this concept is very vague. That is why ESPO proposes to develop a roadmap towards achieving the aim of maritime trade facilitation. For European port authorities the main pillars of this roadmap are:

1. The system: electronic reporting should be done through resilient and robust yet flexible systems, that ensure the reliability of data:

- Either centralised or with multiple port entry systems, the systems developed in each Member State must respect the roles, responsibilities and liabilities of the different parties involved, often organized differently across Europe.
- Progress has to be made in interconnecting systems in view of sharing information at Member State and European level. Any European layers for interconnecting the National systems should also be respecting the differences in roles, responsibilities and liabilities.

- It is important that port authorities can continue to work with source data and, if needed, be in direct contact with the source of the information to cope with the dynamic character of maritime transport operations (delays, etc...).
 - Reporting systems should be resilient to avoid major disruptions to port operations and trade. A failure should not lead to the breakdown of the whole system.
- ⇒ **For these reasons, ESPO believes that a network of interconnected reporting systems sharing the same functional specifications would be the best solution at European level.**

2. The data/formalities: Ships calling EU ports should report the same data elements in each EU port in the same format (common data requirements) and only when justified by local circumstances, additional data.

- ESPO calls all Member States and local authorities to assess current and new reporting requirements that arise from their legislation, to evaluate and justify their relevance and to simplify them where possible. In this task, ESPO stresses that the ports need to be closely involved in what should be a bottom up exercise since there are also port operational reporting requirements that fall out of the scope of the RFD (e.g. draft of the vessel, pilotage and mooring related information,...). These data requirements necessary for the operation of the port need also when and where possible to be simplified and harmonised at EU level. When justified, additional data requirements responding to local conditions (i.e. ice, locks...) have to be required from ships.
 - ESPO invites DG TAXUD and DG MOVE to work together on the reporting of cargo related information to maritime and customs authorities and seeks clarification on how the entry in force of the Union Customs Code and the electronic customs clearance fits with the implementation of the RFD.
- ⇒ **For this reason, ESPO calls the Commission to set up an industry expert working group to contribute achieving the above exercises.**

To conclude, ESPO shares the aim of the Commission and other stakeholders to work without further delay to realise the aims of the reporting formalities directive and achieve administrative simplification. ESPO and its members are happy to assist the Commission in the next steps.