

Memorandum of Understanding  
on the mutual recognition of certificates for the safe operation  
of traditional ships in European waters and  
of certificates of competency for crews on traditional ships

The Maritime Authorities of

Denmark  
Finland  
Germany  
the Netherlands  
Spain  
Sweden  
the United Kingdom

hereinafter referred to as "the Authorities" –

(1) noting that during the past few decades an increasing public interest in keeping historically valuable ships alive has led to a range of activities in the field of maritime heritage aiming at the preservation of such ships in active use, usually for private, social or cultural purposes but also as a commercial venture;

(2) noting further that the variety of types of vessels developed under different influences of geography, culture and economy ranges from primarily sailing vessels with an auxiliary engine to power-driven vessels, many of them with steam propulsion, former fishing boats and cargo vessels as well as coastal passenger traditional ships, tugs, icebreakers, light vessels and others. Many of them are preserved, having been well maintained in public service. Figures available indicate that around 5,000 sea-going ships of historical interest and regional character have survived until now in Europe. An overwhelming majority of them have proved to be safe and seaworthy when properly maintained, equipped and operated by experienced crews;

(3) noting also that, in several countries in Northern and Western Europe, Governments have adopted standards for traditional ships with different approaches concerning the standards applicable to the construction and equipment as well as the safe operation and the certification of crews for such ships, which causes problems during port state control;

(4) noting with appreciation the progress achieved in this field by the Common European Maritime Heritage Congress (CEMHC);

(5) recognizing that the preservation of historically valuable ships in their traditional condition and their operation as a common living maritime heritage is of public interest;

(6) stating that a possible lack of modern technology on traditional ships should be compensated for by operational measures to provide an equivalent level of safety without destroying the historical character of the ships;

(7) recognizing the need to have special minimum standards different from regulations governing commercial ships, which will enable the traditional ships to comply with a level of safety that is equivalent to the safety level of modern ships subject to generally accepted international conventions, regulations, procedures and practices as well as to national law and, as far as traditional ships flying a flag of a Member State of the European Union are concerned, to binding provisions based on the EC Treaty such as Directive 98/18/EC;

(8) recognizing also that where IMO Conventions are applicable to all ships, for instance with respect to environmental issues, traditional ships have to comply with these regulations and therefore the subject will not be dealt with in this Memorandum;

(9) recognizing further, that a traditional ship as such must not be used for transport on a profit base;

(10) convinced of the necessity, for these purposes, of mutual recognition of national certificates for the safe operation of traditional ships in European waters and of certificates of competency of crews on such traditional ships on the basis of a minimum standard adopted by the Common European Maritime Heritage Congress (CEMHC) as well as of national safety certificates for traditional ships concerning construction, equipment and radio requirements;

(11) convinced further that minimum safety standards for traditional ships would enhance the safety and the unhindered navigation and strengthen the co-operation and exchange of information among owners of such ships and the Authorities -

have reached the following understanding:

#### Section 1 - Compliance

- 1.1 Each Authority is prepared to comply with the guidelines provided for by the present Memorandum.
- 1.2 Each Authority confirms that the national certificates listed in Annex I comply as notified by the Authority with the requirements of its national legislation for the operation of traditional ships flying the flag of the state of that Authority and meet the guidelines provided for by the present Memorandum and its Annex II. The models of the certificates are shown in Annex I.

Each Authority is willing to recognize:

- national certificates for the safe operation of traditional ships;
- national certificates of competency of crews of traditional ships;
- national safety certificates for traditional ships concerning construction, equipment, and radio requirements under the provision of mutual acceptance with the understanding that the requirements serve as a basis for the certification for the safe operation of traditional ships;

for traditional ships under the flag of a state whose Authority is a signatory to this Memorandum, when calling at a port or participating in races, parades and festivals in its waters, provided that the certificates for safety, the safe operation and the competency of crews are issued under the guidelines of the present Memorandum and its Annex II thereto as guidance to minimum standards subject to the amendment procedure in section 3.3 and to the generally accepted international conventions, regulations, procedures and practices as well as to national law and, as far as traditional ships flying the

flag of a Member State of the European Union are concerned, to binding provisions based on the EC Treaty such as Directive 98/18/EC.

- 1.3 The Authorities might carry out port state control inspections, which would consist in a visit on board a traditional ship in order to check whether the ship has valid certificates as referred to in section 1.2 above. Furthermore, the Authorities might satisfy themselves that the crew and the overall condition of the traditional ship including the engine room meets the generally accepted minimum standards reproduced in Annex II hereto.

In the absence of valid certificates, or if there are clear grounds for believing that the condition of a traditional ship or of its equipment or its crew does not substantially meet the requirements of the Annexes hereto, the flag state would be informed.

In the case of deficiencies which are clearly and immediately hazardous to safety, health or the environment, the Authority would ensure, except as provided for in section 1.4 below, that the hazard is removed before the traditional ship is allowed to proceed to sea. For this purpose, appropriate action would be taken, which might include detention or formal prohibition of a traditional ship to continue operating on grounds of established deficiencies which, individually or together, would render the continued operation hazardous.

- 1.4 Where deficiencies which have caused a detention as referred to in section 1.3 above cannot be rectified in the port of inspection, the Authority might allow the traditional ship concerned to proceed to the nearest appropriate repair yard available as chosen by the master and the Authority, provided that the conditions determined by the competent authority of the flag state and agreed by the Authority are complied with. Such conditions would be aimed to ensure that the traditional ship can proceed without risk to the safety and health of the crew or risk to other ships or without being an unreasonable threat of harm to the marine environment.

- 1.5 In the case of a detention, the Authority would immediately notify the flag state Administration in writing, which includes the report of inspection.

## Section 2 - Definition

For the purposes of the present Memorandum of Understanding, “traditional ships” can be all kinds of historical ships and their replicas including those designed to encourage and promote traditional skills and seamanship, that together serve as living cultural monuments, operated according to traditional principles of seamanship and technique, and holding the national certificates listed in Annex I.

## Section 3 - Committee

- 3.1 A committee should be established, which should be composed of a representative of each of the participating Authorities. In addition, this committee should include designated representatives of the Common European Maritime Heritage Congress (CEMHC) as observer.
- 3.2 The committee should meet on a regular basis and at such other times as it may decide under the chairmanship of an Authority, which should hand over the chairmanship to another Authority at the next meeting.
- 3.3 The committee should:
1. promote the unhindered navigation of traditional ships and resolve any major problems which might arise from port state control;
  2. develop and review procedures for the exchange of information;
  3. keep under review the present Memorandum, the Annexes thereto and other matters relating to the operation of traditional ships and the effectiveness of the Memorandum, for instance the legal status of persons on board, i.e. passengers, trainees etc;

4. decide on applications for membership by other interested Maritime Authorities;
5. take full account of the specialist advice available from the EMH representatives in the committee.

#### Section 4

- 4.1 The present Memorandum is without prejudice to rights and obligations under any international convention or agreement or national law.
- 4.2 A Maritime Authority of a European coastal state or of a coastal state of the North Atlantic Basin from North America to Europe, which complies with the standards reproduced at the Annexes hereto, might sign the present Memorandum of Understanding with the consent of all Authorities which are already signatories to this Memorandum.
- 4.3 Termination  
A signatory might terminate his participation in the present arrangement by announcing this intention to the other signatories 90 days in advance.

Signed in Wilhelmshaven

on the eighth day of September Two Thousand.

## Signatures

### For the Danish Maritime Authority

---

Jørgen Hammer Hansen  
Director-General  
Danish Maritime Authority

### For the Finnish Maritime Administration

---

Jukka Häkämies  
Head of Nautical Division  
Finnish Maritime Administration

### For the German Maritime Administration

---

Dr. Dietrich Steinicke  
Assistant Secretary  
Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Housing

### For the Netherlands Maritime Administration

---

H.G.H. ten Hoopen  
Head, Netherlands Shipping Inspectorate

### For the Maritime Authority of Spain

---

José Luis López-Sors González  
Director General De La Marina Mercante

### For the Swedish Maritime Administration

---

J. Franson  
Director Maritime Safety  
Swedish Maritime Administration

### For the Maritime and Coastguard Agency United Kingdom

---

David Wright  
Chief Surveyor, Maritime Safety  
and Pollution Prevention Directorate