



**The European Association
for Traditional Ships
in Operation**

Avec le patronage de l'agence
européenne pour la culture
(UNESCO)

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Mr. F. Karamitsos
Director Maritime Transport
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Rue Demot 28
1040 Brussels

Andijk, 18 January 2011

Dear Mr Karamitsos,

Concerning the EU 2006/87 you will understand that our organisation EMH, acting on behalf of the traditional ships in operation, is very interested in the development of chapter 19, still empty at this point in time.

In 2006 we already offered to put our experience, on behalf of the European fleet, at the disposal of your predecessor, Mr. de Benavent, which he had kindly accepted.

The actual work on chapter 19, as is the case with many other items, is being done by the Joint Working Group (JWG). We have received their original proposals and, being concerned by various aspects of these and in an effort to move things forward, we drafted and presented an alternative version for chapter 19.

We have attended two meetings of the JWG, when we were introduced by the Dutch delegation. However we have become very concerned by the lack of real exchange of knowledge. It now appears to us that this may have resulted from a misunderstanding and that we had not been expected to attend those JWG meetings. They were, however, very useful to us but nevertheless we have never received any formal response to our proposal. As a result we very much fear that the discussions within the JWG might be leading to a perfectly legal result but which might not be in the interests of the ships concerned, whose future existence we are all trying to ensure.

The discussion about the right definition is an illustrative example: First there is already an accepted definition in EG 2002/59. Secondly the definition should serve the ships that are involved and this is wider than monuments only. From our point of view the purpose of this special chapter is that heritage ships with a cultural value for society will be able to sail in future.

We like to offer to you and the JWG to organize an inspection in practice of a few traditional ships on the basis of the final proposal of chapter 19 before the draft is finalized. This could show us the practical value of this draft.

In view of the above we would very much appreciate if you would inform us about the formal procedure in these matters (both inside JWG/your directorate and afterwards on the way to the Commission and Parliament) which perhaps we do not understand correctly. This would hopefully make clear to us where in this procedure we could most usefully intervene.

We would prefer to offer all our experience and knowledge to the European Commission and the JWG in an open discussion and are prepared to assist you in any possible way. Please be aware that our members are most concerned because, at present, as a result of the present lack of communication, it appears not only that the operation of their traditional vessels but even the existence of these vessels are threatened.

We look forward to your reaction and, we trust, your invitation to discuss these matters.

Yours truly,

Hendrik Boland, vice president EMH

cc. JWG secretary