

MEGASHIPS

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

A REPORT FROM THE
INSTITUT FRANÇAIS DE LA MER (IFM)

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Composition of the working group

- Nearly 40 experts from the IFM and the “French Maritime Cluster” (CMF) 

- A highly qualified and diverse panel

- Shipowners (tanker, container, bulk, ...)
- Insurers
- Shippers
- Classification societies
- Brokers
- Pilots
- Maritime safety experts
- and a few institutions concerned (SGmer; AEM; CMF; IFM)

- Interviews of outside personalities

- Shipbuilders (cruise)
- Forwarders
- Maritime prefects
- Salvage Masters

Mandate (terms of reference)

“ Megaships: new avenues of reflection ”

- **The increase in the size of ships, coupled with higher speed, raises new questions**
- **These questions should be neither ignored nor overemphasized**
- **They concern maritime safety, ship finance, insurances, responsibility, human management, environment protection, ...**
- **They open up new lines of enquiry which can serve as a basis for proposals**
- **The objective is less to define solutions than to pose the right questions, to be studied by the competent international bodies**

A process of continual and probably irreversible change

- **Passengers and container carriers most impacted**
- **There are some uncertainties but these do not affect the general trend**
- **Globalisation and “maritimisation”**

Possible limits?

- **Technical limits?**
- **Economic limits?**
- **Technico-economic limits?**
- **Logistical limits?**
- **Navigational limits?**
- **Managerial limits?**
- **Limits created by the pressure of competition?**
- **Limits created by confusion over responsibilities?**
- **Limits created by a lack of adequate accident response**

Limits linked to insurance cover

- Increase in the value and the complexity of assured risks
- Multiplication of associated new risks
- Megaships and accidents
- New challenges?

Megaships offer major advantages

- **Economic and commercial advantages**
- **Environmental advantages**
- **Advantages linked to type of accident**
 - Road and air
 - Real “total loss” rather unlikely
 - The more big vessels, the less vessels at sea
 - Positive general trend (accidents/traffic)
 - Quality of concerned shipowners

Containers lost at sea

- **Megaships = greater risk**
- **Possible remedies: harmonization of port procedures = clear lines of responsibility/liability (load/discharge operations)**
- **Traceability**

Megaships: possible solutions? (1)

Medium and long term

- **Reduce the level of self-regulation**
- **Rigorous and diversified prevention policies**
 - Probabilistic analyses of the maritime environment
 - Collaboration with maritime operators
 - “total safety” and greater transparency

Megaships: possible solutions? (2)

Short term

- Deep sea pilotage in certain areas?
- Special validation of seafarers' qualifications?
- Obligatory speed limits in certain zones?
- Reserve certain traffic lanes according to vessel's speed?
- Refine traffic regulation?
- Replication of vital systems?
- Bridge watch?
- Prohibition of right of passage in certain risk zones?
- Better design and use of equipments?

Megaships: possible solutions? (3)

Short term (post-accident)

- **Fast high-quality information for rescue services**
- **Procedures for ship abandonment**
- **Coordination of coastal emergency response capacity**
- **Use of new ID and monitoring systems**
- **Fitting of emergency towage equipment to the fore and aft of very big ships**

Conclusion

- **No prohibition**
- **Solutions must be universal and consensual**
- **Encouraging examples**
- **Need for an urgent international response at IMO level (in cooperation with IACS)**

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Cannes

28th and 29th April 2009



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