



REPUBLIKA SLOVENIJA

KABINET PREDSEDNIKA VLADE

ADDRESS

OF THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA AND PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL JANEZ JANŠA AT THE EUROPEAN MARITIME DAY CEREMONY

Strasbourg, 20 May 2008

Mr President of the European Parliament,
Mr President of the European Commission,
Mr Commissioners,
Distinguished Members of the European Parliament.

It is my pleasure to be with you here today to launch the European Maritime Day. "European Days" have a long and important tradition. They promote activities in the areas which shape the quality of our life: from languages and healthy food, to organ donation and civil justice. It is time for the maritime sector to start celebrating its European Day, too. After all, it is one of the key driving forces in European development.

As we note in the Declaration, our prosperity is very much linked to the sea. Our sea territory is larger than our land territory. Twenty-two of the Member States, Slovenia included, have a sea coast with access to the international waters. Nearly 90 percent of our external trade and more than 40 percent of our internal trade goes by sea.

Globalisation, however, brings new challenges for the maritime sector, too. Sea levels are rising, coasts are being eroded and sea food resources have largely been exhausted. But the sea is not only a mirror of existing problems; it is also a treasure chest of solutions to deal with these problems more effectively. It is a motor of technological innovation, a space for energy-efficient transport and a key to climate regulation and the diversification of energy sources.

The better we integrate the economic, social and environmental aspects of maritime policy, the better we will be able to exploit the potential of the sea. That is why I am sure that the integrated maritime policy – adopted by the European Commission in October and supported by the European Council in December – represents an important milestone on our path to sustainable sea management.

I am pleased that the integrated maritime policy coincides with the three principal guidelines of the current Slovenian Presidency.

- **It is a reflection of the parameters of a new cycle of the Lisbon Strategy, launched at the March European Council.** It aims at a better balance between the economic, social and environmental aspects and places emphasis on the four traditional Lisbon pillars.



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Slovenian Presidency of the EU 2008
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- It promotes investment in maritime research and technology. As maritime research is very costly, improved cross-sectoral coordination is required in order to use the financial resources effectively.
 - The maritime sector offers also an enormous amount of business potential. Enterprises should be encouraged to strengthen inter-sectoral integration. Maritime clusters, for example, ensure the circulation of knowledge and good practices, and the conversion of innovations into industrial applications.
 - Sustainable employment in the maritime sector will depend on how successfully social and education policies are brought into line with new industrial, transport and research trends. It is our task to increase the visibility of the maritime sector and to ensure better working conditions, greater job mobility and enhanced assistance in retraining.
 - Maritime policy is indispensable in fighting climate change and energy dependency. By redirecting transport to the sea, emissions could be substantially reduced. Thanks to carbon capture and storage on the seabed, they could even be halved by 2050. Offshore wind power plants and potential wave and tide energy can additionally facilitate the transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources.
- - **The integrated maritime policy embodies the whole point of the Slovenian EU Presidency's call for 'synergy for Europe'.** It is founded on awareness that certain sectors and factors are so closely interlinked that combined action is much more successful than a lot of uncoordinated individual activities.
 - **The integrated maritime policy is also a reflection of the recognition that current challenges can be countered effectively only at the global level.** Seas and oceans cover more than two thirds of the Earth. European efforts to improve their management would be there for literally just a 'drop in the ocean'. Our objective should be to set an example at world level and to develop common responsibility for the seas that we share with our neighbours. One tangible contribution by the Slovenian Presidency will be the Euro-Mediterranean University, whose charter will be signed on 9 June in the coastal town of Piran.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The great voyages that changed the world started from European soil. Pompey's saying '*navigare necesse est*' (it is necessary to navigate) provided the golden rule which characterised centuries of the European history – the history of Marco Polo, Christopher Columbus, Ferdinand Magellan, Amerigo Vespucci, Vasco da Gama and many others. This motto was also adopted by the Hanseatic League, in which the germs of the European idea could already be seen. All the great European seafarers had something in common: the enthusiasm that lies at the heart of European progress – the enthusiasm for research.

I wish the maritime sector plenty of wind in its sails. It is my firm belief that the launch of the European Maritime Day will enhance its visibility and progress.



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