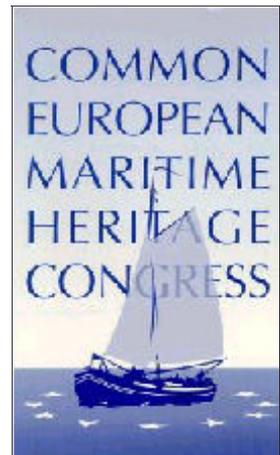


---

# EUROPEAN MARITIME HERITAGE

## A EUROPEAN VISION FOR THE OCEANS AND THE SEA

OCTOBER 2005



---

## Europe's Maritime Future is founded on Europe's Maritime Heritage

*A historical perspective for the Green Book process*

In the light of the European Commission President Barroso's and Commissioner Borg's Communication "Towards a future Maritime Policy for the Union: A European vision for the oceans and the sea", European Maritime Heritage (EMH) - the NGO for maritime history and historic ships in operation - offers the views and recommendations mentioned below.

---

### Historical context: Europe would not be the Europe of today without its maritime heritage

The famous European philosopher Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) said that "life must be understood backwards, but it must be lived forwards". These words come true also when de-

veloping a future integral European Maritime Policy.

The progressive unification of Europe into the European Union highlights

the perception that Europe is more or less a large peninsula surrounded with tens of thousands of kilometres of coastline. Hundreds of lively and flourishing ports on the European coastlines continue to serve, as they have done for centuries, as important dynamos for economical development and cultural life in their regions. They remind us that Europe has always relied on shipping for trade and travel, and that this dependence will continue in the future.

In Antiquity the coastline of Europe witnessed Viking raids, the voyages of discovery, the subsequent gold and silver expeditions to South America, the East India trade, mass migration to the New World, and many more events which are part of our common European history and have shaped the Europe we know today.

And before the development of land based infrastructure for mass transportation (highways, railway, air

*(continued...)*



SS Skjelskør built 1915. The only remaining sea-going steamship in Denmark. Restored by a group of steamship enthusiasts she nowadays take tourists out on day cruises demonstrating how to operate a coal fired steamship.

(...continued)

transport) thousands of sailing and steam coasters kept Europe supplied with goods and materials.

Furthermore thousands of local and regional communities throughout Europe continue to base their existence and their culture on the resources of the sea, as they have done for centuries. Local fishing fleets are the basis for local economies, and they provide food for the whole of Europe.

Shipbuilding Industries have long traditions in Europe. Learning from each others' inventions and developments, numerous shipyards along the coasts of Europe and their suppliers compete to build the finest and most spectacu-

lar ships and equipment for the world. And - although at first glance difficult to compare with ships of previous centuries - today's shipyards still produce ships based on basic principles developed hundreds of years ago.

European navies fought each other for centuries, notably the British, the French, the Spanish, and the Dutch. They borrowed the best ideas from each other in order to improve their vessels.

All this - and much more - is the common European maritime heritage which also is made up jointly by many local and diverse maritime traditions, and is an important element in trying to understand the idea of a unified Europe.

...and, coming back to Mr. Kierkegaard:

The importance of developing safe shipping for the future, for example, is best understood when one appreciates the historical merits of seafaring, and the tough conditions under which this was carried out before.



*Baltic trader visiting festival in Denmark*

## Contribution to the Unification of Europe: Keeping the maritime heritage alive

The concept of preserving traditional ships and craft for future generations by keeping them in operation has turned out to be extremely successful during the past three decades.

Today these historic ships, more than 5.000 seagoing vessels alone throughout Europe, are to a growing extent regarded as living historic monuments. Many are moored in special museum ports built - and now maintained - by private individuals on a voluntary basis and without public funding.

Maritime festivals and regattas organised by non-profit organisations (more than 200 happening every year in Europe) frequently attract hundreds of thousands spectators per event. Consequently they have developed into important elements in the tourism marketing programmes of many European cities and regions.

Major maritime festivals such as those in Brest and Kiel, the Baltic Sail Festivals which take place every year in seven ports (five countries) around the Baltic Sea, the annual Tall Ships' Races organised by Sail Training International in various ports of Europe, as well as various meetings of historical steamships, fishing boats, lateen rigged craft and other working boats, testify that the public has a broad interest in the operating



*Interested spectators crowding the quays in an European port during a visit by the participating ships of the "Tall Ships' Races" organised by the organisation Sail Training International.*

maritime heritage, humble working craft gathered in a small port as well as stately parades of square-rigged 'tall ships'.

For many ship lovers attendance at these events - or the participation on a longer trip on board a traditional ship - may offer the perfect opportunity to experience the European maritime heritage at first hand, in a direct and personal way, by hoisting a gaff sail or by shovelling coal into a

steam boiler.

Even the best museum display cannot provide the personal taste of history which a working ship conveys. If we are to pass on this experience to our successors we must work together on a European level: by sharing expertise and resources among the member states of the EU to ensure that this precious cultural heritage of maritime skills and traditions is not allowed to die from neglect.

## Status on actions taken in order to facilitate the preservation and operation of historical ships

During the latest decades the following political initiatives have been taken in order to facilitate the preservation and operation of traditional ships:

1. 2000: The Parliamentary Assembly for the Council of Europe (PACE) asked the governments of Europe in its **Recommendation No 1468 (2000)** to

xv. *support and encourage public and private bodies and voluntary associations which preserve historic vessels, or life size or large scale replicas, in working order;*

xvi. *encourage the display and use of these vessels for the education and enjoyment of the general public;*

xvii. *encourage further development of a system of mutual acceptability by the maritime authorities of nation states of standards for the safe operation of traditional vessels in European waters.*

2. 2000: The maritime administrations of Denmark, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom signed a **Memorandum of Understanding for Traditional Ships** (known as the "Wilhelmshaven-MoU") which mutually recognizes each country's national regulations for traditional ships in operation, thus allowing traditional ships to call at ports in the signatory states, based on their national certificates for the safe operation of traditional ships, and on their national certificates of competency for crews on traditional ships.

Since then the Wilhelmshaven-MoU has also been signed by Norway (in 2004) and Estonia (in 2005).

3. 2002: EMH adopted the **Barcelona Charter** - a European charter for the conservation and restoration of traditional ships in operation. The Barcelona Charter gives a guideline for proper conservation and restoration of historic ships in operation.



*Lateen rigged former fishing boats of the Mediterranean Sea racing against each other. These boats are maintained and operated by private owners as well as by societies and idealistic associations, and they are important representatives of the Mediterranean ship building tradition.*



*La Granvillaise, built 1990. Replica of a "Bisquine" from 1890. The bisquine was the most common type of fishing vessel on the coasts of Brittany, and they were still built as late as in the early 1940s. However, none of the original ships are still existing, but exact replicas are still built in the region contributing to maintaining the knowledge of the local ship building tradition.*



*The VIC 56. A British coal fired steamship built 1945 as part of the wartime program, and now preserved in working order by a small group of volunteers. She was in service for the Royal Navy until 1978.*

# Recommendations for a future EU Maritime Policy regarding the support and safeguarding of the common European maritime heritage

In order to make the above mentioned PACE-recommendation a reality, EMH submits the following four main recommendations to the European policy makers and authorities:

## a) Acknowledgement

EMH urges policy makers and administrations to acknowledge the fact that the overwhelmingly private and voluntary operators keeping traditional ships and traditions in operation do preserve the maritime heritage, and address a significant public interest (e.g. traditional ship events as regional tourist attractions and significant economic factors).

National governments and EU institutions (EMSA) should acknowledge the *concept* of a traditional ship in their legislation in order to facilitate those vessels to be registered and regulated in accordance with their special status as cultural monuments and tangible repositories of maritime traditions and skills.

### Key problem areas

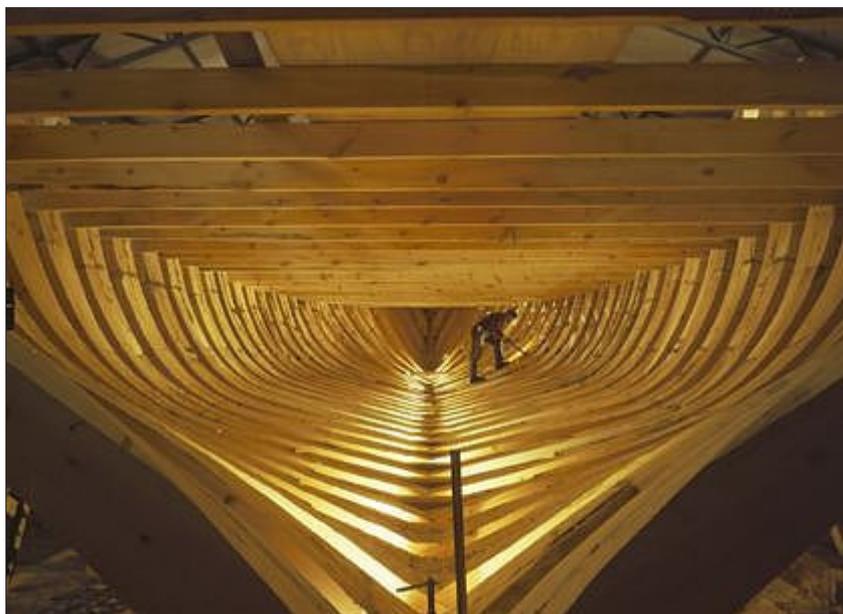
1. The experience with the Wilhelmshaven-MoU has shown that it is difficult to handle the question of the status of the persons on board a traditional ship. The definition of a passenger, and of when a ship is a passenger ship (when carrying more than 12 passengers) was established in 1912 after the loss of *SS Titanic*.

At that time no one could foresee that some day people would demand and pay for being taken out on a vintage ship in order to *work / participate* in the operation of the ship.

Thus the passenger definition has proved to be a serious obstacle for traditional ships carrying paying persons on board. According to modern legislation such ships are regarded as passenger vessels and should in principle fulfil Directive 98/18/EU or SOLAS, which reflect the



*The Alma built 1882 is the only remaining Finnish "Jakt". Until the late 1950s such ships worked as traders and were common in Finnish waters. This photo shows the condition in which she was found in 1998 on the Suomenlinna Island outside of Helsinki.*



*Seven years later the restoration of Alma is well under way. Thanks to private initiative and money – combined with adequate amounts of stubbornness, patience, and a love for maritime heritage – determined volunteers are securing Alma for future generations.*

current state of the art of ship-building technology and are thus often in contradiction with traditional construction and historical character.

The persons on board are not *passengers* in the sense of the

rules, as they have decided purposefully to experience a "living museum" (rather than a cruise) and often participate in the operation of the ship. Nor are they *crew* or *trainees*.

*(continued...)*

(...continued)

EMH recommends that a future EU Maritime Policy contains a definition of the persons on board traditional ships different from the definition of a passenger.

Furthermore EMH recommends that a future EU Maritime Policy contains a definition of traditional ships different from the definition of passenger vessels.

2. Not all EU member states have implemented the concept of traditional ships into their legislation, and thus not established regulations for traditional ships in operation.

Among states which have implemented this concept, and have established regulations for traditional ships, there exists uncertainty to whether the regulations of different states are comparable.

EMH highlights that the "Wilhelmshaven-MoU" provides a guideline for a common minimum standard for traditional ships in operation, which should be the base of a EU Maritime Policy.

#### b) Elimination of legal inconsistencies

EMH requests administrations to scrutinize law and regulations for



SS Oster built 1908 in Norway – and still in operation - taking tourists on day cruises out of Bergen.

effects hostile to the preservation of maritime heritage. Since traditional ships (although more than 5.000 seagoing in Europe) are a relatively small number compared to maritime traffic in total, careful exemptions or special rules should be implemented which encourage the preservation and operation of traditional ships in today's legal environment.

#### Key problem areas

1. Prominent examples of such hostile effects are the ill-considered application of modern shipbuild-



Coal firing is an integral part of keeping a historic steamship alive. But modern emission standards is a threat to the operation of such ships.

ing standards (e.g. prohibition on use of wood as structural material) and crew practices (e.g. minimum manning necessitating maximum automation) to traditional ships as well as the ban of traditional wood conservation paints (e.g. tar, lead- or copper-based primers and coatings) as biocides, or the application of modern emission standards to the coal fired engines of steam ships.

2. Scrapping rules in relation to the European fisheries have over the last 10 years eliminated hundreds of historically valuable fishing vessels in all EU coastal member states, just to prove that they are out of business - many of these vessels that could contribute to preserve historic knowledge of fishing and the European fisheries and which could be taken out of the market

(continued...)



Scrapping of a British fishing vessel. EU scrapping rules have eliminated hundreds of historically valuable fishing vessels in all EU coastal member states.

(...continued)

without destroying them.

EMH recommends that a future EU Maritime Policy contains the possibility of preserving valuable historic fishing vessels instead of cutting them to pieces.

### c) Support

Administrations should support restoration and preservation in the same way as this is done for land based heritage objects, for example through documentation, the special yards, museum harbours and heritage organisations, to help voluntary private owners, associations and museums preserving maritime heritage. Support could be given in many ways, ranging from financing documentations, supporting projects within the framework of social/unemployment initiatives, to making available locations for museum ports and traditional boat yards. Planning policies need to give more attention to the rapid disappearance of mooring facilities for traditional vessels. The huge popularity of residential developments on the waterside often threatens to chase away the same vessels that have moored at these places for decades, rather than integrating them.

#### Key problem areas

1. So far there has been no possibility of EU funding directly to-



SS Thorolf, Norwegian steam ship built 1911 in Ålesund, Norway.

wards restoration and preservation of historic ships, because "Culture" is seen as a duty of the member states. When - in the few cases existing - restoration and preservation of historic ships have been supported by EU funding, this has been done as a sub-activity to other EU fundable activities. The Interreg programmes and educational programmes are examples of this. In the member states heritage preservation support is still mainly focused on buildings and landscapes. Therefore a EU funding programme directly aimed at restoration and preservation of historic ships and maritime facilities is strongly recommended.



Proud volunteers posing in front of the Norwegian steam ship SS Thorolf.

Furthermore, multinational companies in Europe are invited to sponsor respective complementing funds for preservation activities, which could be a true reinforcement of Europe's maritime heritage.

### d) Tax Concessions

Tax concessions are needed (e.g. zero Value Added Tax on the repair and restoration of historic vessels, reduced VAT rates for fuel etc.) to encourage private owners to continuously maintain historic vessels. Individuals or associations who operate traditional vessels should not be regarded as "transport businesses".

It is obvious that in almost all cases, due to the high operation-, maintenance- and preservation costs of a traditional ship, all available incomes from operation, sponsorships etc. are needed to keep the ship maintained and in operation. That is why those ships have been phased out of the real transport or service business!



The Estonian 3-mast schooner Alar built 1937-39 in the municipality of Emmaste on the island of Hiiumaa. She is the only wooden cargoship in Estonia which have survived 50 years of Soviet regime in Estonia. The municipality of Emmaste (with a population of around 1.200) has so far managed to preserve her from further decay, but it has yet not been possible - after seven years - to find funds for her restoration.

# European Maritime Heritage

**E**MH bundles a unique know-how in all matters concerning the maritime heritage and traditional ships, craftsmanship and skills. EMH offers expertise and advice to European and national policy makers, governments and authorities.

EMH is a non-governmental umbrella organisation for private owners of traditional ships, as well as for maritime museums and other interested bodies, with a national and regional representative structure. EMH primarily represents the interests of private owners and organisations which keep traditional European ships in operation.

The objectives of the EMH exclude any pursuit of profit, and are:

- to encourage mutual cooperation between the extensive community of organisations in Europe – including museums – involved in keeping maritime heritage alive,
- to act as a conduit for the exchange of knowledge, advice and assistance between such organisations,
- to contribute to the mutual understanding of different maritime cultures, and to increase public awareness of those cultures by organising a triennial congress,
- to identify and promote historic water-borne links between European regions, publicising the role of waterways as a cultural bridge between



German "Zeesboote" gathered for a Festival in Barth.

ween nations,

- to study and resolve common problems identified in the course of preserving and operating traditional ships in Europe, and
- to provide official bodies of the European Union and the Council of Europe with a representative and consultative service, and advice on all aspects of preserving and operating historic ships.

The EMH membership consists of:

#### Full national members

- Træskijs Sammenslutningen (Denmark), *The Danish Wooden Ships' Association*
- Estonian Association of Historical Ships (Estonia)
- Suomen Perinnepurjelaivat ry (Finland), *Traditional Sailing Ship Association in Finland*
- Fondation National du Patrimoine Maritime et Fluvial / France Maritime Heritage (France)
- Gemeinsame Kommission für historische Wasserfahrzeuge e.V. (Germany), *Common Commission of Traditional Ships*
- Federatie Oud Nederlandse Vaartuigen (Netherlands), *Federation of old Dutch Vessels*
- Norsk Forening for Fartøyvern (Norway), *Norwegian Association for Ship Preservation*
- Sveriges Segelfartygsförening (Sweden), *Swedish Sailing Ship Association*
- Heritage Afloat (United Kingdom)

#### Advisory members

- Nationaal Scheepvaartmuseum, Belgium
- The Danish Ship Preservation Trust, Denmark
- The Maritime Museum of Finland, Finland
- Musée National de la Marine, France



Traditional fishing boats in the port of Kotobrzeg, Poland

- Musée Portuaire, France
- Deutsches Schifffahrtsmuseum, Germany
- Nederlands Scheepvaartmuseum Amsterdam, Netherlands
- Maritiem Museum Rotterdam, Netherlands
- Zuiderzeemuseum Enkhuizen, Netherlands
- Museu Maritim Drassanes de Barcelona, Spain
- Untzi Museoa - Museo Naval, Spain
- Swedish Maritime Museums, Sweden.
- National Maritime Museum, United Kingdom
- Merseyside Maritime Museum, United Kingdom

#### Associate members

- Maritieme Site Oostende, Belgium
- Sammenslutningen af Mindre Erhvervsfartøjer, Denmark
- Sail Training International, International

**EMH-Office**  
Dijkweg 222  
NL-1619 JC Andijk  
Netherlands

Phone: +31 228 593 136  
Fax: +31 228 597 440

[www.european-maritime-heritage.org](http://www.european-maritime-heritage.org)

**Michael vom Baur, EMH-President**  
[michael.vombaur@t-online.de](mailto:michael.vombaur@t-online.de)

**Theodo Fruithof, EMH-Secretary**  
[thedo@wxs.nl](mailto:thedo@wxs.nl)