

The Baltic Sail conference, in session on 10th October 2008, declares:

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

Maritime festivals and regattas frequently attract hundreds of thousands of spectators.

Major maritime festivals such as the Baltic Sail festivals and many others in various ports of Europe, testify that the public has a broad interest in the operating maritime heritage.

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 member states of the EU to ensure that this precious cultural heritage of maritime skills and traditions is not allowed to die from neglect.

Actions taken

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

- In 2000 the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) asked the governments of Europe in its recommendation No 1468 to:
 - o Support and encourage private bodies which preserve historic vessels,
 - o Encourage the display of these vessels for the general public,
 - o 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 2000 Denmark, Finland Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, and the UK signed the Memorandum of Understanding (“Wilhelmshaven MoU”), which mutually recognizes each country’s national regulations for traditional ships in operation. Norway (2004) and Estonia (2005) have since then joined the MoU.

- In 2002 the Barcelona Charter was adopted, a guideline for conservation and restoration of traditional ships in operation

- In 2007 the participation in the green paper process for a future maritime policy in Europe with recommendations for a EU Maritime Policy regarding the support and safeguarding of maritime heritage

Actions to be taken

The acknowledgement must now be shared that traditional ships in operation do preserve the maritime heritage and address a significant public interest.

- National governments should acknowledge the concept of a traditional ship in their legislation in order to facilitate the registration and regulation of those vessels in accordance with their special status.

- An EU Maritime Policy should be drafted based on existing national regulations for traditional ships.

The Baltic sail conference calls on all responsible persons and authorities to,

- Use their influence to solve the problem of the acceptance of national regulations for traditional ships (on international voyages),

The Wilhelmshaven MoU provides a guideline for a common minimum standard for traditional ships in operation which should be the base of an EU Maritime Policy

- Use their influence to urge governments to work together to establish a European Maritime Policy for traditional ships.

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