Declaration on the fight against cross-border organized drug crime

Working together on a secure and trustworthy port

Ports and the maritime sector are the engine of a country's prosperity. They must therefore be adequately protected from illegal activities and criminal gangs. Measures must be taken to reduce criminals' chances of success and increase the chances of them being caught and punished. This not only requires close cooperation between relevant government departments at all levels and across borders, the cooperation of local and national policymakers but also intensive cooperation between public and private parties, such as shipping companies, port facilities, shipping agents and trade associations.

Signatories therefore endorse the common desire to make sea-going vessels and ports secure and trustworthy workplaces, with the welfare, wellbeing and safety of staff members at its core.

Based on a common interest and mutual trust,

Convinced that only by joining forces criminal activities can be curbed, the signatories express their will taking into account their respective roles, responsibilities and capabilities, to:

- 1. Within trusted and secure partner vessels, the framework of the regulations in force, exchange necessary and useful information and good practices (e.g. on modus operandi and risks in source and transit countries) in order to increase security and thus resistance to criminal actions.
- 2. Explore how and where smart seals, smart containers, container tracking or similar technical applications can be introduced incrementally, starting with cargo originating from source and transit countries.
- 3. Explore how data protection can be used to make information available only on a need-to-know basis, as an extra threshold to shield sensitive information. This can for example be applied to release containers in a secure way (e.g. also by using digital rights and/or biometrics). Good practices should be exchanged between private actors.
- 4. Reach agreements and practices at national levels to incrementally institute screening or other types of background checks for high-risk individuals in certain positions within shipping companies, their local offices and shipping agencies. The measures are aimed at keeping out persons coming from or having links with criminal organisations employed in such positions.
- 5. Continued commitment to staff integrity and resilience. This by cooperating in developing, organising and participating in training opportunities to learn to recognise suspicious behaviour or suspicious containers, where to report it and to examine what possibilities the regulations can offer.
- 6. Pursue a stricter HR policy, for example with the help of a code of conduct. This code of conduct will also make it clear that any cooperation with unauthorised actions will not be tolerated. A code of conduct that clearly states that unauthorised persons cannot gain access to vessels and, by extension, the ports and port facilities where these vessels can dock.
- 7. Comply with the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS Code) and closely follow the measures imposed under it, in particular the reporting of incidents with or on board the ship during the voyage and in ports.
- 8. Cooperate on the governments initiative to extend the ISPS Code at the international level through the International Maritime Organisation in order to achieve an expansion of its scope and thus pursue a level playing field on port security at the global level.

The follow-up and implementation of this declaration will be laid down in a jointly developed work plan that will be reviewed 6 monthly. To perpetuate the signatories, undertake to meet annually in a high-level meeting.

This declaration does not create any rights or obligations under international law.

Alexander DE CROO

Prime Minister (BE)

Vincent VAN QUICKENBORNE

Vice Prime Minister (BE)
Minister of Justice and North Sea

Vincent VAN PETEGHEM

Vice Prime Minister (BE)
Minister of Finance

Annelies VERLINDEN

Minister of Interior Affairs, Institutional Reform and Democratic Renewal (BE) **Aukje DE VRIES**

Secretary of State for Finance and Customs (NL)

Mark HARBERS

Minister of Infrastructure and Watermanagement (NL)

Dilan YEŞILGÖZ-ZEGERIUS

Minister of Justice and Security (NL)

Ahmed ABOUTALEB

Mayor of Rotterdam (NL)

Bart DE WEVER

Mayor of Antwerp (BE)

Claudio BOZZO

COO of MSC Chairman of the Safety and Security Council of the World Shipping Council Franck MAGARIAN

Senior Vice President operations CMA-CGM Tanuj LUTHRA

Vice President of MAERSK Head of Global Safety & Resilience

Dr. Maximilian ROTHKOPF

COO of Hapag Lloyd

Menno VAN GORCUM

Director of Seatrade Group Rotterdam (NL)



