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EU Maritime Policy and the (Northern) Adriatic Foreword to the Round Table

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Paper presented at the round table

‘EU Maritime Policy and the (Northern) Adriatic’

organized by the Maritime Law Association of Slovenia (MLAS)

Portorož, Slovenia

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EU Maritime Policy and the (Northern) Adriatic

Foreword to the Round Table

Mitja Grbec^{*1}

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to the third annual round table organized by the Maritime Law Association of Slovenia (MLAS) on the occasion of the EU Maritime Day. There is a common denominator to the three events which may be subsumed as ‘The European Maritime Policy and the Mediterranean: The Way from Piran to Piran’. Some of you may wonder why ‘The Way from Piran to Piran’?

On 11 September 2009, the EU Commission issued a Communication: ‘Towards an Integrated Maritime Policy for a Better Governance of the Mediterranean’, which has, however, its origin *inter alia* in the *Conference on Maritime Policy in the Mediterranean Sea*, held on 10 June 2008 in Piran - Portorož (Slovenia). The latter was the first ever international high level conference on maritime policy and governance in the Mediterranean and was organized by the Slovenian Presidency of the EU, the European Commission and the University Centre for Euro-Mediterranean Studies (Center EMUNI) in cooperation with the representatives of the Executive Council of MLAS. A particular merit for this event also goes to the then MLAS President and Slovenian Ambassador of the Blue Book, Prof. Marko Pavliha.

The works with regard to the implementation of the EU Integrated Maritime Policy in the Mediterranean have gone a long way since the 2008 Conference. However, an important

¹ President, Maritime Law Association of Slovenia. Address delivered at the round table ‘EU Maritime Policy and the (Northern) Adriatic’ organized by the Maritime Law Association of Slovenia (MLAS), EU Maritime Day 2011, 20 May 2011, Portorož, Slovenia.

development for the Adriatic (sub)region occurred on 16 February 2011 in Ancona, where the EU Commissioner for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs, Maria Damanaki, announced that works are in progress on the elaboration of a 'Maritime Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Seas' within the framework of an Integrated EU Maritime Policy for the Mediterranean. The mentioned strategy will be, as announced, organized around four axes: fisheries, protection of the marine environment, blue growth, and maritime safety and security. As far as we are aware, our round table will be the first event within the consultation process in the region. We are particularly proud to have brought together so many renowned speakers and stakeholders, both from the Adriatic, Mediterranean and the EU.

The range of topics discussed today is broad and includes *inter alia* the implementation of the EU Marine Strategy Directive in the (Northern) Adriatic coupled with the implications of the entry into force of the new protocols to the Barcelona Convention (Offshore, Coastal Zone Protocols) and of the 2001 Bunkers Convention for Adriatic States. Reference will also be made to the need for the set up of a network of efficiently managed marine protected areas in the Adriatic Sea and potential alternatives to the process of extension of coastal state jurisdiction (alternatives to the proclamation and delimitation of full EEZs) in the (Northern) Adriatic, where reference will also be made to the potential establishment of a Northern Adriatic SPAMI on the basis of the provision of the 'Biodiversity Protocol' to the Barcelona Convention. Emphasis will also be placed on some relatively new sources of marine pollution that is also threatening the Adriatic (e.g., discharges of ballast waters, underwater noise pollution, etc.), which could eventually be addressed, together with the extension of the existing Adriatic system of traffic separation schemes (routing measures) within the framework of a future Adriatic PSSA. Finally, reference will be made to the recently adopted document by the EU Commission (18 March 2011) which has many times been referred to as the 'Environmental Guidelines for Ports'. The mentioned document will be particularly relevant in the context of ports expansion projects in the (Northern) Adriatic.

The aim of the today's round table is to accordingly assess the work undertaken on the way 'from Piran to Piran' (2008-2011) and to provide some feed-back, proposals, ideas and materials which may be useful in the future phases of the consultation process in the Adriatic and the Ionian Sea.

We are particularly pleased that today we will also have the opportunity to regionally launch the book 'Limitation of Liability in International Maritime Conventions: The Relations Between Global and Particular Maritime Conventions', written by a very good friend of MLAS, Dr. Norman Martinez Gutierrez, a senior lecturer at the IMO International Maritime Law Institute in Malta. The mentioned book was simultaneously published at the beginning of this year in London and New York. Norman, well done!

Ladies and Gentleman, on behalf of the Maritime Law Association of Slovenia, I would like to thank you for taking part in this event.