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26/09/2007

Dear Commissioner,

SECURITY – US 100% Container Scanning initiative

The undersigned signatories most of them belonging to the Maritime Industries Forum representing the European maritime cluster and/or to other horizontal business organisations commend the Commission for its outspoken opposition to the 100 % container scanning legislation signed by President Bush on 3 August 2007.

The industries wish to reiterate their continued active support for workable and practical measures with added value to security while facilitating international trade. The 100 % container scanning legislation would not contribute to this objective.

The disastrous effect of scanning of all EU export containers on the supply chain is evident. Operations in European ports would be unreasonably delayed and result in a significant additional demand for storage capacity that many ports already today have difficulties in meeting. Congestion in ports and in links to the hinterland would increase and would become unbearable. This would in turn have an effect on European production and put an unnecessary and discriminative burden on European exports.

The added value of a 100 % scanning for security is very much contested and fails to recognize the value of the multi-layered risk based strategy that both the US and the EU have embraced. The industry believes that advance cargo declaration that is already applicable for container shipments to the US and will become applicable for all shipments from the EU as from 2009, is together with appropriate intelligence, a more practical and valuable approach. Additional measures to improve the data available for advance cargo risk assessment will further strengthen this strategy. Mutual recognition of an “Authorised Status” such as C-TPAT and AEO that will be applicable in the EU as from 2008 will also assist in the security analysis.

On the basis of these key elements a targeted scanning of containers aiming at discovering and checking risk containers will have much more practical value for ensuring appropriate security levels.

As mentioned above the industry aims at workable security measures with the highest added value for security. We are convinced that our opposition to the 100 % scanning is shared by the US industry.

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We consider important that the 100 % container scanning legislation will be on the agenda and be seriously discussed both at the EU-US summit and the Trans Atlantic Business Dialogue with the aim to collectively review the US intentions towards a workable system with clear added value for security. Pending such a collective review reciprocity acts that would have a further negative effect on international trade exchanges and distort unnecessarily the supply chain should be avoided.

Yours sincerely,

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