

MLC SEMINAR
Opening Speech by Foundation's Chairman

Good morning, Ladies and Gentlemen and welcome to this Seminar on the implementation of the ILO 2006 Maritime Labour Convention. I am Thimio Mitropoulos and I am the Chairman of the Board of the “Maria Tsakos” Foundation, organizers of the event.

Minister,
Secretaries-General of the Ministry of Shipping and the Aegean and
Commandant of the Hellenic Coast Guard,
Representatives of ILO, IMO, the European Commission and EMSA, ISF,
IACS, ITF and the Mission to Seafarers,
President of the World Maritime University,
President of the Hellenic Chamber of Shipping,
Chairman of the Greek Shipping Co-operation Committee,
General Secretary of the Panhellenic Seamen's Federation,
Chairman of the Evgenides Foundation,
Media representatives,
Distinguished guests and dear friends,
Ladies and gentlemen,

The Mission Statement of our Foundation starts with the phrase: “We pursue initiatives to advance seafarers' welfare, maritime education, training and research...”

It would, therefore, be inconceivable for us to let the opportunity of the forthcoming entry into force of the ILO Maritime Labour Convention of 2006 pass without doing something to give effect to the words of our Mission Statement. There was no way the coming of the dawn of the new era the Maritime Labour Convention will herald come August would leave us indifferent.

Starting from the premise that the world cannot do without shipping and that shipping cannot function without seafarers, we are keen to see all

matters regulated by the new Convention being properly implemented to their and shipping's benefit.

We are grateful to all those who have offered to assist in staging this Seminar – in particular, those who have come to Athens from abroad to enlighten the meeting with their knowledge and experience in matters that have been included in its programme.

We are also grateful to the Evgenides Foundation for making this magnificent building available to host the meeting.

The idea of organizing this Seminar was first discussed while awaiting to collect our luggage at the airport of Chios between Minister Mousouroulis, Captain Tsakos and myself. It was in October of last year when the Minister had come to Chios to open the Congress the Foundation had organized in the aftermath of the devastating fires of last August.

The positive response of the Minister to the usefulness of a meeting such as the one we inaugurate today was spontaneous – as was his offer to place it under the auspices of his Ministry. The rest is history.

It is, therefore, with a deep expression of thanks to him and his staff in the Ministry, who assisted us in many ways in the preparation of the meeting, that I invite Mr. Kostis Mousouroulis, Minister for Shipping and the Aegean, to address the Seminar.

Thank you.
