

**PNT'S SPEECH**  
**AT THE OPENING SESSION OF THE MLC SEMINAR**  
**(Athens, 30 and 31 May 2013)**

Minister,

Excellencies,

Secretaries-General of the Ministry of Shipping and the Aegean,

Commandant of the Hellenic Coast Guard,

President of the Hellenic Chamber of Shipping,

Chairman of the Greek Shipping Co-operation Committee,

Representatives of ILO, IMO, the European Commission, EMSA and ITF,

Secretary-General of the International Shipping Federation,

Distinguished Moderators and Speakers,

Media representatives,

Distinguished Guests and participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you, also on behalf of my family, to this international gathering here in Athens in these magnificent surroundings of the always hospitable Evgenidion Foundation. And I take this opportunity to warmly thank the Foundation's President, my friend Mr. Leonidas Dimitriadis-Evgenidis, for making this Conference Centre available to host the Seminar.

I also wish to thank our Minister for Shipping and the Aegean, Mr. Kostis Mousouroulis, for placing the seminar under his aegis and for the co-operation of his Ministry in preparing for it.

My warm thanks also go to the speakers, Heads and representatives of prominent shipping organizations, both governmental and non-

governmental, for coming over to Greece and for their support and co-operation.

The aim of this seminar is to analyse the provisions of the ILO Maritime Labour Convention of 2006 and to explain its implications so that it is introduced in the global regulatory regime in a smooth and successful fashion.

I have no doubt that you are all aware of the importance and significance of the MLC Convention, the “**Seafarers’ Convention**”! I am an old, and proud, seafarer myself and, together with my contemporary seamen, I watch with great interest changes in shipping and compare our lives on board ship with those of modern seafarers. We are proud for our contribution to making the maritime profession as it is nowadays: safer and more comfortable and the seafarers’ welfare to rise to the standards of the MLC.

But we all know what it means to face the elements and submit yourself, after days at sea, to rigorous multi-inspections upon arrival in port. I hope the same understanding will be shown by those who will be called to assess the implementation of the new Convention and that, in the exercise of their duties, will display common sense professional judgment – at least, during the initial stage following its entry into force come August.

Dear friends,

The MLC represents the outcome of strenuous efforts over many years of ILO’S tripartite partners and I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the Organization for its determination to bring it to a successful conclusion. And also to thank ILO’s representative here, Mrs. Cleopatra Doumbia-Henry, for her personal contribution to the development of the Convention and for coming over to assist in the Seminar. Thank you, Cleo!

This Seminar is our Foundation’s second major event following the International Congress organized in Chios last October to discuss issues that came to light in the aftermath of the August 2012 catastrophic fires and to make recommendations to prevent and respond to similar calamities in the future. I sincerely hope that the success of the Chios Congress will be replicated here in Athens.

With these words, I, once again, welcome you here; thank all those (including the Secretariat of the Foundation), who worked hard to put the meeting in place and those who have agreed to play a role in seeing it through; and wish the Seminar every success.

Thank you.

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