



Financial safe harbour?

Arthur A Nitsevych, of International Law Offices, reports on a recent two-day conference in the Ukraine

Earlier this summer, the two-day conference 'Practice of maritime business: sharing experience 2007' finished its work. It was held in Odessa, Ukraine and gathered about 150 delegates from 13 countries. The audience included representatives of shipping, insurance, survey companies, law firms, ports and terminals, specialised mass media etc.

The main topics of the conference were 'Models of port management and investments' and 'Maritime claims and their settlement'. The event was organised by International Law Offices with the support of the Remedy law firm, based in Russia, for the third successive year.

This year the programme was spread across two days, allowing for the expansion of the subject of the conference and the discussion of many practical issues.

The atmosphere, discussions and contacts were very good. The 'quality' of delegates continued to be very high. This year it was a mixture of international firms (Clyde & Co, Faegre & Benson, ThomasCooper etc) and international professionals and local players.

The first day of the conference was dedicated to the problems created by the existing practice of port management and investments in Ukraine.

The reports of the leading specialists in port development from Holland, Malta, Ukraine, Russia, Latvia and Cyprus were listened to with great interest.

Russian colleagues presented reports on the practice of sea ports in the southern regions of Russia and the region of St Petersburg.

Port investment

A separate part of the conference was dedicated to the issue of investment in Black Sea ports, in particular Ilyichevsk. Paul van Eulem, a consultant of the Dutch company Maritime Transport Business Solutions, spoke of the European models of port management and touched upon the practical experience of investments in Ukrainian ports.

Georgiy Tokman, head of the development and investment department of Ilyichevsk port, in his report noted that one possible solution to the problem of attracting credit funds is co-operation with the leading international banks under guaranties of the Ukrainian government.

Other speakers' reports were dedicated to the questions about port management in European Union and demonstrated both positive and negative experiences of neighbours.

One unique feature of the conference was its practical component. The first day of the conference included a visit from major international grain trading companies interested in investments in Ukrainian ports and terminals.

The second day of the conference was dedicated to maritime claims, the topic which affects all those involved in the transportation process. In my own report to the conference, I paid special attention to the concluding and executing of contracts with offshore companies, security means and guarantees under such contracts and spoke about typical mistakes and problems.

The report 'P&I repayment and

settlements on collision and oil pollution cases' covered and analysed norms of the Ukrainian legislation regulating claims connected with oil pollution, responsibility provided by law and typical examples in practice.

In summing up the conference, I must express special gratitude to the public institutions that supported the event: Nautical Institute of Ukraine, Association of Shipping Agencies of Ukraine and Association of Ukrainian ports.

Nikolay Melnykov, presiding partner of International Law Offices invited all delegates to join the next conference at the end of May 2008.

Once again it will take place in Odessa, most likely with the support of BIMCO, London Maritime Arbitrators Association and German Maritime Arbitrators Association. The topic of the forthcoming conference will be 'Arbitration and dispute resolution'. ■



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