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For immediate release

FONASBA Annual Meeting in Varna, Bulgaria: International Ship Brokers and Agents Federation gains two new members

Ship broking and ship agency professionals from some 30 countries attended the 41st Annual Meeting of FONASBA, the international body representing ship brokers and ship agents, in the Bulgarian city of Varna from 11th until 15th October. Topics discussed included recent market developments, actions to strengthen the role of agents as 'Port Single Windows' as well as the 'e-Maritime' project launched by the European Union. Two new associations – representing Indonesia and Turkey – were elected as FONASBA members, increasing the total number of countries in membership to 46, and a new President was elected for the coming two years.

Market sector reports give cause for optimism

Market reports covering the bulk, tanker and container trades traditionally form a major part of the plenary meeting of the Federation's Chartering & Documentary Committee. Additionally, this year's meeting also featured a report focusing on the rapidly growing offshore supply sector in Brazil. Generally, these reviews confirmed that shipping is picking up across the board after the 2008/09 crisis. "The international maritime transport sector is overcoming the crisis", the outgoing FONASBA President Tonny Dalhøj Paulsen confirmed, "we see clear signs confirming that the shipping industry is overcoming the unpleasant consequences of the recession". Delegate discussions, however, also made it clear that the last two years have tightened consolidation trends in both ship broking and ship agency and in particular continued the downward pressure on agency fees.

Focus on demonstrating the Value of the Agent

In response to ongoing concerns relating to the role of the port agent, FONASBA recently launched an initiative to demonstrate the added value the profession brings to owners and operators. "As a first step, our Brazilian association FENAMAR has developed a web-based system for comparing agency services in countries represented in FONASBA", explains the Federation's General Manager Jonathan C. Williams FICS, "This survey already documents the impressive scope of services provided by port agents in 15 member countries. We will now extend this, expanding both the number of countries covered and the number of ports in those countries and this will provide a very useful tool for comparing services between different countries and also ports in the same country". FONASBA's objective is to provide documentary proof to legislators, shipowners and port users of the complexity of the tasks undertaken by, and the significant responsibilities laid upon, the agent as well as the lack of harmonisation across the sector. It is anticipated the data gathered by this project will be made publicly available in early 2011.

FONASBA gaining increased presence in the Far East

During its plenary meeting in Varna, FONASBA's Council granted membership to another two associations, the Maritime Association of Ship Owners and Agents of Istanbul (Turkey) and the Indonesian Shipping Agency Association (Indonesia). Outgoing President Tonny Paulsen acknowledged Indonesia's membership as further evidence of FONASBA's increasing presence in the

dynamically developing Far Eastern market. "The Far East is the major global exporter and our business would not exist without it", Paulsen commented, "That is why, during my recent visit to the region, I was very happy to see clear evidence of a recovery in demand for goods and therefore for maritime transport". In order to better represent the interests of its members in the region - Australia, China, Japan, Indonesia and the Philippines - FONASBA is establishing a new 'Far East, Oceania and Australia' regional range committee. It is hoped this will be fully operational by the time the organisation holds its next Annual Meeting in Sydney in October 2011. At this year's Council meeting it was agreed Venice would host the 2012 FONASBA Annual Meeting.

Chris Papavassiliou new President of FONASBA

At the end of this year's meeting the presidency of FONASBA passed from Tonny Dalhøj Paulsen to Christakis P. Papavassiliou, Past Chairman and member of the board of FONASBA's Cyprus member, the Cyprus Shipping Association (CSA). Papavassiliou, who heads the Limassol-based liner and tramp shipping agency Shoham (Cyprus) Ltd as Managing Director, has previously held various other positions in FONASBA. In addition he is a very committed member of the Cypriot maritime community, among others as a former member of the board of the Cyprus Shipping Chamber and member of the Executive Committee of the Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry. He will serve as FONASBA President on a two-year term until October 2012.

Both Tonny Paulsen and Chris Papavassiliou thanked the Bulgarian Association of Ship Brokers and Agents (BASBA) for hosting this year's Annual Meeting in Varna. BASBA Chairman Captain Nikola Hristov outlined the importance of the assembly for Bulgaria's shipping community. "The Black Sea is a busy crossroad, linking the surrounding countries with the rest of the world", Hristov said, "this is the first time that the FONASBA Annual Meeting takes place on the coast of the Black Sea, bringing people with different background and ideas together". ◀

London, October 2010

Plenary Meeting of FONASBA's European Committee

ECASBA establishes 'e-Maritime' Working Group

The Plenary meeting in Varna of FONASBA's European committee ECASBA (The European Community Association of Ship Brokers and Agents) focused on the future role of port agents as 'Port Single Windows'. In response to an initiative launched last year by the European Union, ECASBA has established a dedicated 'e-Maritime' Working Group. "The e-Maritime initiative aims to foster the use of advanced information technologies in the maritime transport sector, a move that constitutes both an opportunity and a challenge for agents", Jonathan C. Williams comments, "ECASBA will therefore monitor the initiative carefully and contribute to it constructively. Our objective is to strengthen the role of port agents as 'Single Port Windows', as we are convinced that whilst classic agency services can certainly be supported by enhanced communication methods, the core activities cannot be replaced". During its Plenary meeting ECASBA implemented a new, streamlined Working Group structure. In addition to the 'e-Maritime' Working Group it will in future have three other councils concentrating on Customs & Transit, Education & Training as well as Short Sea Shipping & Environment. ◀

FONASBA was established in 1969 to represent and promote the interests of ship brokers and agents world-wide, to promote fair and equitable practices in these professions and to cooperate with other maritime bodies. Membership is open to national associations and similar organisations of ship brokers and agents. In order to assist ship owners and operators to identify those agents and brokers that are well-founded and committed to quality, FONASBA has launched its own Quality Standard back in 2007. In a dozen countries around the globe brokers and agents have already implemented the 'FONASBA Quality Standard'.