



IMO Briefing



International Maritime Organization, 4 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7SR, United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (0)20 7735 7611 Fax: +44 (0)20 7587 3210
Contacts: Lee Adamson – Head, Public Information Services; Natasha Brown – External Relations Officer
E-mail: media@imo.org Web site: www.imo.org

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Portugal hosts inaugural World Maritime Day “parallel event”

The theme for this year’s World Maritime Day is *International Shipping – Carrier of World Trade* and, in a reflection of the truly international nature of shipping, the first ever official, international celebration of World Maritime Day to take place outside IMO’s London Headquarters is to be held this year on Tuesday 15th November in Lisbon, Portugal.

The move follows the endorsement of the IMO Council of a proposal made by the Secretary-General aimed at spreading the formal celebration of World Maritime Day among a wider audience. The President of Portugal will be among participants in the “parallel” event, which will take the form of a two-day meeting. On day one, government and industry experts will debate the key issues associated with this year’s World Maritime Day theme; the second day will be devoted to matters related to the fishing industry, in which Portugal has a particular interest.

Following opening addresses by IMO Secretary-General Mitropoulos and a representative of the host Government, day one will consist of two “round table” discussions on the theme of World Maritime Day. During the first of these sessions Mr. Tom Allan, Chairman of the IMO Maritime Safety Committee, will chair a panel of some of the shipping industry’s leading personalities. Peter Swift, Managing Director of Intertanko will be joined by BIMCO Secretary General Carsten Melchior, João Carvalho, Chairman of the Portuguese Shipowners’ Association, John Bainbridge of the ICFTU, and by Michael Grey MBE, of Lloyd’s List.

In the afternoon session, the emphasis will switch to Governments and shipping administrations. Mr. Joaquim Ramos Silva, Professor at the Institute of Economics and Management in Lisbon will mediate the discussion in which Captain Luis Díaz-Monclus of Venezuela, Chairman of the IMO Council, will participate, along with Mr Dumisani Theophilus Ntuli, Alternate Permanent Representative of South Africa to IMO, Mr. Neil Ferrer, Alternate Permanent Representative of the Philippines to IMO and Mr. Willem de Ruiter, Executive Director of the European Maritime Safety Agency.

An invited audience from the shipping and diplomatic communities from all over the world will be in attendance and will have the opportunity to participate in what promises to be a lively and stimulating set of discussions.

Day two of the event, which coincides with Portugal’s own National Day of the Sea, will feature contributions from the President of the Geographical Society of Lisbon, the Secretary of State for National Defence and Sea Affairs and the Minister for Public Works, Transport and Communications of Portugal as well as interventions by an IMO representative and closing remarks from the President of the Portuguese Republic.

The chosen venues for this groundbreaking occasion are Lisbon's Centro Cultural de Belém (day one) and Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa (day two).

In expressing his personal appreciation to the Government of Portugal for hosting this inaugural event, Mr. Mitropoulos said it was fitting that Portugal, a country with a great maritime heritage, should be leading the way in this new initiative. "I have every confidence," he said, "that the country that has given us such historical nautical luminaries as Vasco da Gama, Ferdinand Magellan and, of course, the great Prince Henry the Navigator, whose school of navigation, astronomy, mapmaking and shipbuilding at Sagres might be seen as a forerunner of modern maritime education and training, will steer this event to a very successful conclusion."

It is anticipated that the event in Portugal will be the precursor of a series of similar events that will eventually embrace all the regions of the world.

IMO – the International Maritime Organization – is the United Nations specialized agency with responsibility for the safety and security of shipping and the prevention of marine pollution by ships.

Web site: www.imo.org

For further information about the World Maritime Day parallel event in Portugal, please contact Ms. Isabel Gonçalves on +351 21 391 45 15 or email isabel.goncalves@imarpor.pt

For further information about IMO please contact:

Lee Adamson, Head, Public Information Services on 020 7587 3153 (media@imo.org) or
Natasha Brown, External Relations Officer on 020 7587 3274 (media@imo.org).