

Handels- og europaministerens tale ved BDF-konference
den 3. oktober 2013

Ready for new blue frontiers

Madam Commissioner,

Chairman Uffe Ellemann-Jensen,

Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends,

Only last week, the world's largest ship – the Triple E – visited
Copenhagen on her maiden voyage.

The Triple E was commissioned by the Danish company Maersk and
designed to set new frontiers when it comes to efficiency, economy
environmental.

400 meters long.

A pure steel weight of 50.000 tons.

A loading capacity of 18.000 containers:

The Triple E is an impressive achievement.

In a sense, the Triple E is a reflection of Denmark's tradition as a
sea nation. We are one of the largest in the world.

Thank you for inviting me today.

I want to take the opportunity to deliver this message: Denmark is
well equipped and ready. Not only for increased cooperation in the
Baltic Sea region. But also ready for Blue Growth.

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Historically, the sea has been gateway to success, growth and job creation in Denmark.

Ever since we learned to build our first boat to fish and trade with other countries. Ever since the first Viking took to the sea.

It is the same thing today. The sea and the maritime sector are economic drivers to Denmark. We depend on international cooperation and trade.

In this day and age, the maritime industry accounts for a quarter of the total Danish exports.

Its production amounts to 10% of total production in Denmark.

And most important, the job of 115,000 danes depend on the sector.

This just goes to show that the maritime sector plays a critical role in the Danish economy.

The financial crisis has had a negative impact on Denmark, Europe and many other parts of the world.

The maritime and shipping sector is no exception.

Already before the crisis, shipyards in our region were suffering. They experienced a reduced need for shipping. This led to massive losses for ship owners. And to harbors fighting competition from trucks and railroads as alternative solutions.

But we also see light at the end of the tunnel. Or the sun rising in the horizon of the deep blue ocean, if you like ☺

Some shipyards innovate.. Increasingly, harbors show business mentality. They specialize, and it becomes less about fishing and more about providing services.

To mention a few examples:

They engage in the LNG gas sector, renewable energy projects, windmill transportation and offshore activity.

So what is this story about?

It is about a sector that is aware of the need to innovate when the economy goes down.

Necessity is the mother of invention, somebody once said.

And innovation, I would add.

And innovation and cooperation are precisely the core pillars of Danish maritime industry.

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We have launched a Blue Growth strategy
Our ambition is to establish Denmark as a maritime core player in Europe; as an excellent base for market access and expansion in the EU and the Baltic region.

We are committed to make sure that Denmark remains Europe's leading maritime nation.

We offer attractive conditions, including an international ship registry and a competitive tonnage tax system.

We have ratified the Maritime Labor Convention covering seafarer's conditions of employment and rights.

I wish to draw particular attention to the Danish project “Green ship of the Future”.

The aim is to create new solutions that are not only environmentally, but also economically sustainable.

But our complete maritime cluster covering all parts of the value chain is a core sign of our competitive edge in this sector.

What is the way ahead to create growth in the maritime sector for Denmark, the Baltic and the EU?

An obvious focus is to enhance cooperation between maritime industries, research institutions and relevant governmental authorities in Denmark.

For example, Invest in Denmark cooperates closely with the Danish Maritime Authority to coordinate investments and export promotion.

But I am certain that we - in Denmark and internationally - can coordinate and cooperate even better.

Cooperation could be centered around ports, ship owners, seafarers, equipment manufacturers and research authorities.

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Yes, we are individual states competing for the next big foreign investment.

But we are also part of a Baltic and European context where cooperation may be just what is needed for the next investor.

Today we show our firm commitment to Baltic Sea cooperation. We are well equipped and ready to sail. Thank you!