

Brussels, 16 May 2006

Commission accepts changes to two State aid schemes for maritime transport in Finland

The Commission raised no objections to extending two existing State aid schemes linked to the international shipping register, namely the reimbursement of social security contributions and seafarers' income tax, for ships whose owners are not based in Finland but which are managed by a Finland-based operator.

The Commission considered that the two amended State aid schemes in Finland still comply with Community guidelines on State aid to maritime transport and that they are therefore compatible with the internal market. It should be noted that most existing schemes in other Member States also give ships operated and owned by shipowners the same advantages as those operated and dry leased-in from foreign owners.

In addition, the schemes in question have also now been amended to comply with the new Community guidelines of 2004, in particular by stating that only tugs and dredgers which spend over 50% of their operating hours carrying out maritime transport activities on the high seas are eligible for these types of aid. Finland therefore complies with Community law on State aid in the case of these two schemes.