EPCSA Press release: June 2011

'The Added Dimension': Port Community Systems Operators create European association

EUROPE is home to the most efficient Port Community Systems in the world – and they will play a vital role in the EC's aspirations for trade facilitation through a Single Window.

That was the clear message from speakers at 'The Added Dimension', the inaugural conference and launch of the European Port Community Systems Association, held at the World Customs Organization in Brussels.

Speakers from DG TAXUD, DG MOVE, the World Customs Organization and UNECE all welcomed the creation of EPCSA, which was described as a much-needed association that could contribute much to the harmonisation and simplification of trade throughout Europe.

"Port Community Systems indeed are an area where we were missing an association," said Manuela Cabral of DG TAXUD. "It has been difficult for the EC to get an overview of what is happening in this area of PCSs; we have been in the situation where we are involved in the development of Single Windows but have had the absence of such a contributor to the discussions. The creation of EPCSA should allow us to move at a faster speed in the non-traditional customs area."

Ms Cabral said the creation of EPCSA was 'perfect timing', and thanked EPCSA's members 'for the idea and the courage to launch this organisation'.

Jukka Savo, of DG MOVE, outlined the huge projected growth in maritime traffic in

Europe over the next 15 years and said PCSs would play a key role in keeping trade running smoothly. "Fuel costs we expect will rise significantly, so we need to have transport using less energy, transport that is cleaner, and more intelligent networks."

It was 'very much in our interests' to build up information technologies, said Mr Savo. "The EC is very much favouring PCSs and supporting the further use and sharing of data. Our purpose is facilitation. It isn't to build new regulations or legislation –

rather, we are asking industry what we need to do to make the sector work more easily."

There were also congratulations for EPCSA from Gareth Lewis, of the World Customs Organization, who described PCSs as 'vital in the interaction between Customs and the business of the port'. "We have a long appreciation of PCSs and, as Single Windows develop, we are going to ensure to a maximum degree we can that there is integration with the work that PCSs do."

And there were positive words from Markus Pikart of UNECE, who said: "We from the UN think it is very important that PCSs have an association. We have worked with some of the members in the past and we are looking to continue to work with you and in particular through your association."

EPCSA chairman Pascal Ollivier, from SOGET, said the 'top news of the day' was the launch of EPCSA's important new White Paper, entitled 'The role of PCSs in implementation of National Single Window'.

"The White Paper considers how we as PCS operators in Europe can save money for the EC, for member states, and for trade in supporting the Single Window developments," he said. "We have to realise that Europe is home to the most efficient PCSs in the world." However, he warned, Business to Business should never be placed under state control and should stay out of the scope of NSW. "That is a very important statement. It will ensure that new technologies enter the logistics sector and are implemented as quickly as possible, and that Europe remains the market leader in global logistics know-how."

Port Community Systems are the most advanced method for the exchange of information within the single or national port community infrastructure, said Mr Ollivier. "It isn't only a significant exchange of information – it is an intelligent exchange of information."

There are a number of countries and/or ports in Europe which don't have a PCS in operation, he said. "Part of the e-maritime initiative of DG Move is to move from

today's situation where 40 ports have PCSs in place, to a situation where PCSs are in place in more than 200 ports. Where no automated systems are in place, we believe that PCSs are ideally placed to provide the foundation or backbone of Single Window when we have to start from scratch. In this way, PCSs can be seen as the gateway to the National Single Window concept."

"The launch conference was also marked by an important ceremony as the six founding members of EPCSA signed the European Economic Interest Group (EEIG) Contract of Formation."

EPCSA secretary general Richard Morton said that getting together six major PCS organisations from Europe for the benefit of Europe was a major achievement. "EPCSA's vision is about supporting Europe and simplifying procedures and avoiding duplication. It is about influencing public policy at the EU level, using the experience of PCSs."

The six members of EPCSA between them handle over one million electronic transactions a day, on average, said Mr Morton, yet until now PCSs had not been good at 'going out and promoting what they do'.

"Working together: the founding members of EPCSA."

Names and companies - left to right
1. Richard Morton – Secretary General and Manager – EPCSA
2. Jacques Ritt – CEO – SOGET, Le Havre, France
3. Javier Gallardo – Deputy Managing Director – Portic, Barcelona, Spain
4. Stefan Engels – Chief Sales Officer – dbh, Bremen, Germany
5. Alan Long – Managing Director – MCP, Felixstowe, UK
6. Ulrich Wrage – Chief Executive Officer – DAKOSY, Hamburg, Germany
7. Pascal Ollivier – Director of Corporate Development – SOGET, Le Havre France
8. Iwan van der Wolf – Managing Director – Portbase, Rotterdam, Netherlands
9. Santiago Garcia-Mila – Strategy and Development Deputy Managing Director – Portic, Barcelona, Spain

Notes to Editors:
A Port Community System:

• Is a neutral and open electronic platform enabling intelligent and secure exchange of information between public and private stakeholders in order to improve the competitive position of the sea and air ports' communities;

• Optimises, manages and automates port and logistics efficient processes through a single submission of data and by connecting transport and logistics chains.

The establishment of the European Port Community Systems Association (EPCSA) means that Port Community Systems will, for the first time ever, have a common lobbying position at the European Union. EPCSA's members have agreed to work together in order to have a positive influence on new developments and initiatives.

The six founding members of EPCSA are:

• SOGET (France)

• dbh (Germany)

• Maritime Cargo Processing (UK)

• Portbase (Netherlands)

• PORTIC (Spain)

• DAKOSY (Germany)

EPCSA's mission is to influence public policy in the European Union level in order to achieve e-logistics throughout all European ports, operating as a key element of the EU maritime, shipping and logistics industry.

EPCSA is part-funded through Work Package 3 of the EU Dryport project, an Interreg IVB North Sea Region project.

A Single Window:

A Single Window is a complex community undertaking which facilitates trade. Various business and functional models can be used for the design of a successful Single Window system. Whether implemented at the regional, national or international level, a major factor in accomplishing a Single Window project is a

strong leading body to promote its benefits. These efforts, combined with strong political support and the appropriate project-centric organisation and resources, are the elements required for a Single Window project to succeed.

www.epcsa.eu

For further information contact Richard Morton, EPCSA secretary general:

richard.morton@epcsa.eu or +44 7796 334960.