



## MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

### VERSION (06/2014)

**PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT:** The Vasco da Gama initiative aims to develop transnational mobility within the human resources employed in the maritime economy. It was launched by the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe, backed by the European Parliament, with a view to making maritime careers within the European Union more attractive.

The initiative has taken shape in the form of a project funded by the European Commission, implemented in 2014 and 2015 and entitled “Vasco da Gama: Training for Safer and Greener Maritime Transport” (VDG: TGSMT).

This MOU has been drafted as part of the project and is one of its deliverables. It constitutes the agreement of a group of different entities to prepare mobility actions, some of which are to take place in 2014 and 2015, and others developed in the subsequent period.

The ultimate goal agreed by the signatories is to succeed in introducing an innovative concept of multi-level transnational mobility in maritime education and training. They also want the results of their work to be recognised by the EU institutions, including in the form of new programmes / instruments / funding schemes that will allow a gradual rise in the number of young people involved in these exchanges.

### THE SIGNATORIES

- Regions

The VDG initiative stems from the regional authorities. On account of their competences and the policies they lead in their territories, maritime Regions assume a specific responsibility as regards training in maritime activities. Those involved in the “VDG: TGSMT” project are signatories to this MOU. They are joined in this agreement by other regions that adhere to the priorities of the project and plan to carry out in the near future actions which fall more broadly within the objectives of the VDG initiative.

- Maritime Education Institutions

In order to organise the transnational mobility of young people involved in the maritime economy, colleges, academies and universities are priority partners of public authorities and professional actors. Institutions signing up to this MOU also endorse the priorities of the project and agree to provide their skills and expertise for its current and future developments. They are especially willing to cooperate to develop coordinated courses and prepare and participate in exchange activities.

Those who are already stakeholders in the “VDG: TGSMT” project hereby affirm their participation; and by signing this MOU, those who join them agree to follow the developments of the project and participate in the groundwork for the future stages.



- [Professional stakeholders](#)

Enhancing the quality of maritime education, its appeal to young people and its integration on a European scale are also priorities for professional stakeholders who employ maritime education graduates and those who represent the interests of employees within the sector. In addition to their respective actions in the already existing advisory bodies at European level, professional institutions signing up to this MOU express their wish to facilitate the implementation of actions carried out under project, and more generally to support the objectives of the Vasco da Gama initiative.

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## **THE SIGNATORIES HEREBY WISH TO CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS THE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A EUROPEAN MOBILITY FACILITY IN MARITIME EDUCATION**

- They welcome the existing European instruments such as Erasmus +, which help to support exchange projects between training institutes. They believe, however, that additional and flexible instruments need to be made available to the maritime sector as a whole.
- They note that in the maritime sector, transnational mobility of students generates high costs and already draws on public money at different levels of public action (local, regional and national). They consider that the strategic nature of blue growth for the European economy justifies a special effort from the European Union in this field.
- They note that there is a wide diversity in maritime education courses between Member States, and they identify areas for specific action that could help reduce obstacles preventing the transnational mobility of young people.
- They take account of the fact that there is no coordinated vision at European level of the supply and demand in human resources in the maritime sector, both in terms of quality and quantity. They therefore consider that developing and speeding up mobility will help to reduce sectoral or geographical deficits in skilled labour - to the advantage young job seekers and employers.
- They believe that the different levels of maritime education and training must ultimately benefit from measures to support mobility. However, they recognise the importance of a gradual approach where priority is given to achieving concrete and targeted actions which, as they are repeatedly developed, will cover an increasingly wide range of activities and target groups.
- They want to help provide the European Union with a world-class standard of maritime education, which meets international requirements (STCW) and actually exceeds them in key areas such as technology, promoting sustainable transport and maritime safety.

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### **IN THIS CONTEXT, THE SIGNATORIES UNDERTAKE TO**

#### **1 - Facilitate the launch of a Master Programme in Sustainable Shipping**

With the support of Kalmar Maritime University and a group of 5 other partners, the CPMR is preparing a specific transnational post-Master syllabus, which will be tested during the first half of 2015. *The signatories undertake as of 2014 to use their own channels of communication to promote this training course among their respective networks, particularly with a view to bringing together a first year of students that are representative of European diversity.*



## 2 - Help CPMR prepare an operational blueprint for a Maritime Erasmus

Starting in the second half of 2015, the CPMR will prepare a pilot exchange action. The lessons learned from this will help to provide the EU institutions with a blueprint for implementing a “maritime Erasmus”. This action will involve a minimum of 20 students and 4 teachers from different EU countries.

The signatories undertake to mobilise their institutions, experts and respective networks to facilitate this action, and in particular:

### - For all signatories:

- learn about the work of the “VDG: TGSMT” project through information circulated by the CPMR and the website [Vasco-da-gama.eu](http://Vasco-da-gama.eu)
- attend and, through their experience and their proposals, feed into the final conference of the “VDG: TGSMT” project in October 2015.

### - For regional authorities:

- ensure - where necessary - a link with relevant educational institutions in their territories;
- utilise - as-needed- regional funds available for these types of international exchanges in the framework of the existing budget lines;
- promote these initiatives in their national networks in the European arena, including among Regions with which they have established partnerships.

### - For educational institutions

- plan to take part in the pilot exchange action and do so if the right conditions are met

## 3 - Participate in the future development of Vasco da Gama

From 2016 to the end of the “VDG: TGSMT” project, the Vasco da Gama initiative will be taken forward by a core group of partners which will gradually expand throughout the duration of the project to constitute the “second circle” of Vasco da Gama.

The signatories undertake to be involved as much as possible in these developments and – working alongside the CPMR - in promoting the initiative at the appropriate levels. In particular, they shall be available to take part in any transnational projects to emerge in the future (hopefully with the support of EU programmes) during the 2014-2020 programming period. These projects will adopt the guidelines of the Vasco da Gama initiative, and could implement them on the basis of thematic areas, priority target groups and / or specific geographical areas (sea basins).

