

**SOUTHERN EUROPEAN PILOTS' MEETING  
VARNA, BULGARIA  
MARCH 27-29, 2008  
COMMENTS OF CAPTAIN MICHAEL WATSON  
PRESIDENT OF IMPA AND APA**

First I would like to note with honor the invitation of The Bulgarian Maritime Pilot's Associations' kind invitation to me, as President of IMPA to join you in this most productive meeting of our professional associations where we come together for the common good of all in our profession.

My special thanks to:

Capt. Krasimir Todorov    BMPA PRESIDENT  
Capt. Mihail Mihailov    BMPA VICE-PRESIDENT  
Capt. Valery Antonov    BMPA SECRETARY

I have had the distinct honor to be invited to attend, observe, and participate in Pilotage meetings in Europe since I first became President of the American Pilots' Association in 2000. Your leaders from Italy, Spain, France, Germany and Scandinavia have extended the utmost hospitality and friendship to both me and my wife. During these meetings we have developed personal friendships with all the members of EMPA and SEP. My first meeting with SEP occurred in La Coruña, Spain and was most productive, and again I note your hospitality and kindness. These relationships, which lead to mutual understanding and respect, will continue to allow us to lead our profession in continued success now and in the future.

I would like to note that I continue to thank all the European Pilots for their support of not only myself while representing us all, but the support you have shown and given to the IMPA Staff and our Secretary General, Mr. Nick Cutmore. With our prime purpose, of protecting our profession and its' individual associations, by establishing the best relationship in London at the IMO, and developing and maintaining proper professional relationships with other interested members of our maritime industry, we are certainly fortunate to have Mr. Cutmore lead our team which is based on the Wellington. He, Caron James and Marie-Claire Jenkins truly are three persons of the utmost integrity, dedication and loyalty that any group could hope for. They are the ones that work with your representatives to help us find success.

Of course I would be neglect if I did not take note of the warm relationship that EMPA has developed with the American Pilots' Association. I have been privileged to join you in several forums and would thank Dieter for his hospitality as well as that of your previous leaders, and I wish EMPA, through Dieter, continued success, and can assure you that you have the support and co-operation of both the American Pilots' Association and IMPA.

**IMPA IT'S PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE**

I was invited to join with you for this Congress and to give you a brief update on the happenings of IMPA. I think you will have a better understanding of today's movement in IMPA if we could briefly reflect on the very first meeting of IMPA.

With this reflection, which will lead to an understanding of purpose, I believe you will agree with me on my approach to the difficult issues of today facing IMPA, which will determine the future of IMPA, and with it all of our destinies.

**MINUTES (IN PART) FIRST GENERAL MEETING OF IMPA  
Held at the Grand Hotel Krasnapolsky, Amsterdam, Holland, on Wednesday, 12<sup>th</sup>  
May, 1971**

GENERAL

1.

The International Maritime Pilots' Association held its first General Meeting in Amsterdam, Holland, on the 12<sup>th</sup> May, 1971, under the Chairmanship of the Right Honorable James Callaghan, Privy Councilor, Member of Parliament, (U.K.), with Captain Henry Petersen (West Germany) as Caretaker-President. The Secretary-General, Mr. Edgar Eden, and his Secretary, Miss Yvonne Blake, were in attendance.

An address was given by the Care-taker President welcoming all Delegates and observers. In summary, he addressed and thanked all present for uniting together to speak with one voice on behalf of our profession. There was discussion of the formation of IMPA and its' Articles. Two of the Articles from their adoption at the very first meeting are what I would like to refer our attention to today, which if followed by all, will lead to a continued strong IMPA as our founding fathers had envisioned when we were formed in 1971.

ARTICLE 5 MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the Association shall be subject to the following principles and conditions. In summary it noted that any Pilot organization may apply in writing to the Secretary-General for membership, if there were more than one pilot group in any country applying for membership then membership will only be granted jointly in the name of that country. Further, under

ARTICLE 6 SUBSCRIPTIONS

- (a) Each Pilots' Organization which has applied for and been granted membership shall be required to pay annually .....for each member of that organization, subscriptions which may be determined at a General Meeting.
- (b) Shall be in respect of a calendar year payable in advance to IMPA
- (c) Each Pilots' Organization shall be required to submit to the Secretary-General of the Association its total membership at the time of joining, and thereafter annually.

**REASON FOR REFLECTION ON THESE TWO ARTICLES**

Since I was elected to be President of IMPA during a contested election in November 2006 in Havana, Cuba, I have sought to address some of the differences of the groups and help form a more united IMPA. The concern that some of our members are not properly expressing their membership roles and paying their fair share of subscriptions has been brought forth to the Executive.

I must note that I greatly appreciate the support of the EMPA members on my behalf both during the election and with your continued support both as elected members of the Executive and as advisors to the Executive.

I must state, that I firmly believe IMPA was conceived with an honorable purpose and through its leadership has followed its charter to become the fine organization that it is today. This is because of the honest dedicated service of all your past, and present leaders.

We have a great, on going Strategic Plan for IMPA, the most transparent and well managed finances of any group, and in general a membership that is willing and able to support our goals and mission in today's world in the most efficient manner possible. We have independent auditors and a most knowledgeable Treasurer with the dedicated service of Capt. Jon Cobeaga of Spain.

As I noted originally, by referring to the Articles established at the inception of IMPA, there are two areas of deep concern to our members. One is, who can become a member and the criteria for membership, and the second is "is everyone paying there fair share". I have formed a membership committee, which reports to the Executive, which will develop a report to the members at the Congress to be held in Bangkok for their consideration and resolution. These are very important issues which must be addressed and I urge you all to attend the Congress so your voice may be heard.

There were many comments concerning the "theme" for our upcoming congress in Bangkok and I strongly felt that instead of singing to the choir about how great we are, we should take a deep and thoughtful look at ourselves and how we can maintain an IMPA that will have unity both now and in the future with a membership that is honest with each other and willing to work together.

#### **COMMUNICATION TO THE MEMBERSHIP**

Another area of concern expressed to me is how to reach all our members, not just the Elected Officials concerning the ongoing events of IMPA. IMPA is, albeit slowly joining the IT world to help make us better known and able to communicate with each other. We have had the wonderful services developing the IMPA web site, by Capt. Cahit Istikbal your IMPA representative and Vice-President from this region for several years. I have formed an IT group with Cahit and Capt. Rodolphe Striga, Vice-President from France working with the Secretary-General which has developed an on going and modernized web-site which is now on line, and Cahit will now change the domain so you can access the new site. It can also be reached on [www.Internationalpilot.org](http://www.Internationalpilot.org) . This web will be easily managed by IMPA staff which will keep it up to date and supply you with information. I must note that all of these areas of IMPA are done by your Executive on their own time and with the support of their Associations. I want to thank them for that.

#### **COMPETITION**

Another area of concern being expressed by many of our members is the problem of expanded efforts to create competition among pilot groups. As

such, the Executive has heard and discussed these problems. To help our membership address these issues we have formed a Competition Committee, chaired by Capt. Istikbal, to develop a data base and comments to be considered by our members. I must note that this is no small problem: We have seen the problems here in the EU, Denmark, Finland, Canada, Japan, Panama, Montenegro, and yes, even ongoing efforts to try in the USA.

We are trying to give assistance as best we can, our past leaders have said, and I totally agree, if we stand united we are a formidable force. If not, we can see that pilots can sometimes be their own worst enemy.

On another note, let's make no mistake, Pilots' world wide have many differing opinions on how their profession should be regulated and managed. This is a good thing, because just as the local navigation and ship handling varies with the individual ports, so does the management and work with the "competent authority" for the regulation of pilots. What works in Chile may not be applicable to Uruguay or Brazil the USA or the different states within the EU. It is with this understanding that IMPA worked together to support and develop Res. A960 which was passed at IMO as guidelines for pilotage to be considered by IMO member countries for their pilotage systems. Some countries and their pilots accept and use these guidelines, some do not. IMPA supports the guidelines and there use but does not interfere in the internal management or operations of any nation.

#### **Note Executive and advisors and their roles**

I would like to say that in my opinion all of your leadership team is working on your behalf to keep IMPA the great Association that it is. We are now a more truly International group, with the recent election of Capt. Bok Lee from Korea and with his efforts throughout Asia, our image and understanding have been greatly enhanced.

IMPA is in great shape and performing all of the missions that it has been given. We are on budget thru this year and future adjustments to operating cost will be presented by the Executive at the Congress. All the staff and elected officials have continually represented your interest at not only IMO and all its committees, but also IALA and with other International groups such as INTERTANKO and the P&I clubs IG group who at times try to make mischief for us.

Again, I thank you all for your hospitality and look forward to seeing you at the Bangkok Congress to be held at the Royal Orchid Sheraton Hotel and Towers August 4 thru 8 2008.