EUROPEAN SEA PORTS ORGANISATION ASBL/VZW
ORGANISATION DES PORTS MARITIMES EUROPEENS ASBL/VZW

# ESPO Environmental Survey 2004

*April 2005*

## Review of European Performance in Port Environmental Management

ESPO is publishing the results of an Environmental Survey, which it carried out, in the course of 2004, in collaboration with the ECOPORTS Foundation and with the assistance of Cardiff University.

The ESPO Environmental Survey 2004 identifies the issues which are at stake for EU ports in the field of environment and shows how the sector is doing in terms of environmental management. The Survey up-dates the results of a similar exercise, which was carried out in 1996, and therefore assesses whether progress has been achieved over the past 8 years. The Survey establishes a port sector's European benchmark of environmental performance, against which individual ports will also be able to evaluate their own environmental management in relation to some fundamental questions.

129 ports participated in this survey. The response rate and the diversity in ports' typology allow drawing a truly representative overview of the EU port sector.

### A. Common environmental issues in ports (as ranked by Port Managers)

*10 most common issues in port environmental management*

| | 1996 | | 2004 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Port development (water) | 1 | Garbage / Port waste |
| 2 | Water quality | 2 | Dredging |
| 3 | Dredging disposal | 3 | Dredging Disposal |
| 4 | Dredging | 4 | Dust |
| 5 | Dust | 5 | Noise |
| 6 | Port development (land) | 6 | Air Quality |
| 7 | Contaminated land | 7 | Hazardous Cargo |
| 8 | Habitat loss / degradation | 8 | Bunkering |
| 9 | Traffic volume | 9 | Port development (land) |
| 10 | Industrial effluent | 10 | Ship discharge (bilge) |

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The table shows changes in port environmental priorities from 1996 to 2004. Many of these reflect prevailing political drivers: e.g. implementation of EU Directives, such as the one on Waste Reception Facilities in ports or the Habitats Directive, which has impact on dredging/dredging disposal and port development – new air & noise regulations are also imposing further constraints on port activities.

There are also consistently highly prioritised environmental issues for a large majority of European ports, which form a basis for environmental collaboration in the port sector, e.g. dredging, dust, port development.

## B. Selected Benchmark of Performance in 2004: Putting Environmental Management in place

Environmental policy/plan:

- 86 % of ports have an environmental policy or are developing one
- 59% make it available to the public
- 49% aim that their plans improve environmental standards BEYOND those required under legislation
- 69% promote, through their plans, environmental awareness among port users

Staff:

- 67% of ports have designated environmental personnel
- 21% have an environmental manager – otherwise, the main operational responsibility generally lays with the port manager (30%) and arbour master (27%)
- 58.1% ensure that their personnel attend environmental management training courses

Environmental management:

- 65% carry out monitoring within the port area
- 48% have identified environmental indicators
- 65% carry out environmental impact assessments in connection with development projects

These results show that EU ports are increasingly complying with the objectives set out in the ESPO Code of Practice, in particular the recommendations related to environmental plans and monitoring

## C. Selected changes in environmental performance of the port sector

Overall trends are even more significant than any given percentage response. The table below illustrates the progress achieved by ports on certain specific aspects:

| **Environmental Management Component** | **1996[1] %** | **1999 [2] %** | **2004[3] %** | **Percentage Change ('96-'04)** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| • Does the Port authority have an environmental plan? | 45 | 52 | 58 | **+13** |
| • Does the plan aim to raise environmental awareness? | 44 | 62 | 69 | **+25** |
| • Does the plan aim for 'compliance-plus'? | 32 | 41 | 48 | **+18** |
| • Do you review your plan regularly? | 23 | - | 40 | **+17** |
| • Does the plan involve community & stakeholders? | 53 | 60 | 56 | **+3** |
| • Does your port have designated Personnel? | 55 | 65 | 67 | **+12** |
| • Do personnel attend Environmental Training? | 12 | - | 16 | **+4** |
| • Is environmental monitoring carried out in the port? | 53 | 60 | 65 | **+12** |
| • Is ESPO Code Available in your Port[1]? | 41 | 48 | 50 | **+9** |

[1] ESPO Survey 1996, [2] ECO Information Final Report 1999, [3] ESPO Survey 2004

As successive surveys represent different numbers and identities of respondent ports, the results should be interpreted with caution. The trends are more reliable as indicators of progress than the actual percentage fit

The table shows the improved performance of the port sector from 1996 to 2004. For example, the increasing trend for ports to produce a dedicated environmental plan, establish activities to manage their environmental risks, and the role of the ESPO Environmental Code of Practice in encouraging the sector's commitment to sustainable development

## D. Perceived challenges for port environmental management

83.7 % of ports still experience difficulties implementing environmental management, both from within and beyond the port authority. Main challenges relate to

1. the costs that environmental management entails
2. the fact that port management does not consider environmental protection as a priority
3. the fact that a multiplicity of agencies are responsible for environmental protection, which are often difficult to identify
4. the lack of information and guidance on environmental legislation and of training

Also, 61% of ports experience or anticipate restrictions on developments due to environmental planning controls. Main pieces of EU legislation which raise concerns to ports are: the Environmental Liability, Water Framework and Habitats Directives (42 % of ports which responded to the Survey are within or contain a Natura 2000 designated site), because they impose constraints on their development. Air and noise regulations also lead to restrictions on existing and forthcoming activities.

[1] The above results do not take into account of the fact that, in 2003, a revised version of the Code of Practice was published, and benefited from a wide dissemination.

In order to respond to ports' needs for guidance concerning the implementation of EU environmental law (and notably of the above-mentioned Directives, which raise specific concerns to EU ports), ESPO launched several initiatives to help them understand better the environmental legal framework in which they operate:

- publication of ESPO Code of Practice which reviews the various EU environmental rules which are applicable to ports and provides guidelines to implement them;
- publication of an Issues Paper[2] which guides ports through the various steps of implementation of the Water Framework Directive and highlights some of the potential challenges for which they must prepare themselves;
- development (ongoing) of an Implementation Guide aimed to assist ports when planning projects in Natura 2000 sites.

Also collaborative projects, such as ECOPORTS, enable ports to join efforts and to share the costs of developing solutions to common environmental problems. ECOPORTS, in particular has developed effective tools which can help ports establish their own system of environmental improvement and can lead to cost reductions and saving: practice indeed shows that good environmental management involves better cost-efficiency.

## E. The way forward: towards further improvements

The data also shows that there is room for further improvement in key areas. For instance, 21% of ports have an Environmental Management System and 31% of them publish and Annual Environmental Report.

The ECOPORTS Foundation has developed useful methodologies to assist ports in their environmental management[3]. In particular the implementation of the two following tools could help ports achieve progress in the above-mentioned areas:

- The **Self-Diagnosis Method (SDM)**, an environmental self-audit which can be used to establish exactly the position and status of a port's environmental management programme for the initial development and implementation of an Environmental Management System, and/or to periodically review performance over time, either against the port's own baseline or in relation to European benchmarks.

- The **Port Environmental Review System (PERS)** aims to assist a port in writing its public environmental review. It contains a check-list of significant aspects of a port's environmental management that should be reported. It may be considered as a first step in a phased programme to implement an Environmental Management System. PERS also includes the option of a voluntary application for a Certificate of Verification by an independent auditor.

ESPO encourages the use of these tools because they can help port authorities to continue improving their environmental management and therefore to enhance the status of the environment in their port.

[2] The WFD Issues Paper is available on http://www.espo.be/policy/position%202004/issues%20paper%20-%20FINAL%20-%20October%202004.pdf

[3] Information on the ECOPORTS Foundation management tools is available on http://www.ecoports.com