Challenges and Opportunities in Maritime Security and Surveillance for Effective Governance and Innovation in the EU’s Maritime Domain

Dublin Castle – 8th and 9th April, 2013

Opening Address by the Minister for Justice, Equality and Defence, Mr Alan Shatter T.D.

Commissioner, distinguished speakers, moderators and guests, ladies and gentlemen:
Welcome to Ireland and welcome to Dublin. It is my great pleasure to open this seminar today which will address “Challenges and Opportunities in Maritime Security and Surveillance for Effective Governance and Innovation in the EU’s Maritime Domain”.

On a personal basis, I would particularly like to thank our distinguished speakers and moderators for agreeing to participate and present at this high level seminar. I extend a warm welcome to Maria Damanaki, European Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries. I am confident that her keynote
address, and the contributions of all the other participants, will provide a wide ranging view of the challenges and opportunities facing the EU and EU Member States in the area of Maritime Security and Surveillance. However, just as important is the active participation and engagement of all present here today so as to provide valuable food for thought and a clear direction on the way forward in the area of maritime security and surveillance.

Security and safety in our oceans and seas is extremely important to the Union both as a key world trading block reliant on safe and secure
sea-lanes for commerce and trade and in terms of our own internal security. To understand the risks, challenges and vulnerabilities that we face in this regard, it is necessary to have a full picture of what is happening at sea – an integrated maritime picture.

If we do not have the requisite surveillance, intelligence and presence in the maritime domain, it is not possible to know what activities are actually taking place and, as such, impossible to develop and deploy the necessary capabilities required to provide an
effective response to the security and safety challenges arising.

That is why this seminar is important, that is why we are here. We have here an opportunity to highlight the importance of building a Union-wide consensus on maritime security, both internal and external, and to foster the required cooperation and collaboration among the member States in delivering that security. We can use this occasion to support the strategies and policies already in place and to consider further means of working together to achieve safety and security in our maritime area.
As with all the seminars held during Ireland’s EU Presidency, I would like to see fruitful discussions leading to positive outcomes that can feed into Council Conclusions at the end of our Presidency.

It is not a coincidence that Ireland chose Maritime Security and Surveillance as one of its Presidency priorities. As an island nation with significant maritime borders and responsibilities, it is an area where we are acutely aware of the benefits which can be delivered through enhanced cooperation and interoperability between different actors and
systems – civilian and military and national, regional and international. This focus on maritime security also builds on the work undertaken by the previous Cypriot presidency in the area of maritime security and development.

Cooperative arrangements and systems can deliver very significant benefits, not alone within the EU’s maritime domain and borders but also in CSDP operations. However, to achieve these benefits, I believe that closer cross-sector and cross-border cooperation is required. To that end, we need to focus on how
we can improve cooperation between all the various actors, whether that be naval forces, coastguards, customs, police or other member State security actors engaged in delivering maritime security safety and surveillance within the Union. We also need to leverage innovation and research instruments to support a more integrated approach to maritime security, which is independent of national security actors.

Bearing this in mind, as part of the Commission’s objective to achieve an integration of Maritime Surveillance in the EU,
they are currently developing a Common Information Sharing Environment for the EU maritime domain. The aim of this is to generate a situational awareness of all activities at sea, such as maritime safety and security, border and fisheries control, maritime pollution and marine environment.

This will be achieved by providing the relevant authorities and their associated systems, such as the European Defence Agency Maritime Surveillance (EDA MARSUR), the European Border Surveillance System (EUROSUR), SafeSeaNet, Fishery and Border control etc.,
with ways to exchange information and data. While I am impressed with the technical developments which will help underpin the Common Information Sharing Environment, I am acutely aware the real challenge to success is both political and institutional.

Therefore, it is important that we all work together to make this a success and change the focus from a need to know basis to a need to share basis. For this reason, initiatives for enhanced collaboration for security cooperation in EU sea basin strategies, for example the
Baltic, the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, are vital.

Ireland has a very large sea area, which is 10 times the size of our land mass. Indeed, if our sea territory was counted in addition to our land mass, Ireland would be one of the largest countries of the European Union. Ireland is also a very significant trading nation with a very open economy, reliant on safe and secure sea-lanes for trade and goods. This raises very particular security challenges, not alone in terms of Ireland’s responsibilities and obligations as a member of the Union at the
forefront of the EU’s maritime borders, but also in terms of countering inappropriate or illegal use of our waters by organised crime in drug and people trafficking which impacts directly on our citizens security.

Ireland’s maritime area contains natural resources with a potential value in excess of a trillion euro including mineral deposits, fossil fuels, marine life, fisheries and wind and wave energy. Marine transport, leisure and tourism, seafood, renewable ocean energy and marine biotechnology, are but some of the key areas that can contribute to Ireland’s economic
recovery and are, therefore, worth protecting. Ireland’s Integrated Marine Plan – “Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth” – which was approved by our Government last July, sets an overarching target to double the value of our ocean wealth to 2.4% of GDP by 2030, exceeding the global average of 2% of GDP and moving towards the EU average of 3.5%.

The Plan also recognises that good governance and, in particular, effective maritime safety, security and surveillance are vital to achieving Ireland’s vision and goals for the marine.
Ireland’s challenges and opportunities in the maritime domain are not unique. They are shared by very many EU Member States. According to the recent European Commission’s Blue Growth communication, the EU's “blue economy” represents 5.4 million jobs and a gross added value of just below €500 billion per year.

Strikingly, 75% of Europe’s external trade and 37% of the trade within the EU is seaborne. Between 3% and 5% of the EU’s Gross Domestic Product, is generated by marine based industries and services, and this does
not include the value of raw materials such as oil, gas or fish.

In recognition that the EU’s seas and oceans provide an essential contribution to our wealth and wellbeing and that they hold immense untapped economic opportunities, in terms of energy, food and mineral resources, the EU’s Integrated Maritime Policy was launched in 2007. The EU’s Integrated Maritime Policy, which we will hear more about today from our distinguished speakers, is essentially viewed as a cross-cutting policy for the EU’s maritime domain, which seeks to provide a more
coherent approach to maritime issues, with increased coordination between different policy areas.

In support of the Integrated Maritime Policy, the “Limassol Declaration” – a European agenda for creating growth and jobs in the marine and maritime sectors, was adopted during the Cypriot Presidency, by EU Ministers for maritime policy and the European Commission, represented by President Jose Manuel Barroso and Commissioner Maria Damanaki, who is with us here today. The “Limassol Declaration” underlines the
importance for promoting dialogue, enhanced cooperation, and the exchange of best practices with regard to maritime affairs at both regional and international level.

President Barroso further stated that the Declaration “is a strong basis on which to develop the blue economy in Europe. By doing so we are giving a strong maritime pillar to the Europe 2020 strategy”.

The purpose of this seminar is to raise awareness of the role that maritime surveillance and security can play as an
economic enabler right across the Union, contributing to the European Union Jobs, Growth and Innovation strategy. It is also designed to raise awareness and identify approaches to support Europe’s security needs in countering criminal activity occurring in its maritime environment and in the international sea-lanes which are essential to the maintenance of the Union’s international trade.

The technologies and tactics which can deliver situational awareness and counter illegal
activities within the Union’s littoral maritime environment are the exact same as those which can deliver situational awareness and counter illegal activities more widely in the context of CSDP operations. At the technology and tactical level these activities and the technological research and innovation underlying them are inseparable.

The Union’s maritime domain faces many threats and challenges that have the potential to adversely impact on the security and safety of the Union as a whole, both for its citizens and its economy. The threats to the security of the
Union include, amongst others, illegal immigration, terrorism, piracy and drug trafficking. None of these threats can be addressed by individual Member States and addressing this reality is a key focus of today’s seminar.

In this context, I would also like to acknowledge the work undertaken by NATO in this very important domain. NATO published the Alliance Maritime Strategy in 2011, which outlines the roles that NATO Forces may have to carry out in the maritime environment in order to contribute to the Alliance’s defence.
and security and to promote its values. These include maritime security, crisis management, and cooperative security – through partnerships, dialogue and cooperation.

During the various sessions taking place today and tomorrow, the panellists will address key European Union maritime security challenges, at European, International and National level. The expanse of Europe’s coastline of the Atlantic and Arctic oceans and of its four seas - the Baltic, the North, the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, accounts for over two thirds of the European Union’s borders. It will come as no
surprise then that the protection, security and management of our oceans and seas require an extensive and comprehensive political and operational commitment if we are to reap the many benefits, and maximize the sustainable use of this important resource.

As the sea is an open environment, threats related to safety and security cannot be dealt with by individual Member States acting alone, but require the combined efforts of all Member States and a wide range of State actors. The combined efforts of the Naval Services, Coastguards, Border Officials, Policing,
Customs, Fisheries Control and Environmental Agencies of the Member States will be required to respond effectively to threats such as piracy, drugs smuggling, human trafficking, illegal migration, organised crime, trafficking of illicit materials, illegal fishing and dumping at sea.

Protecting trade, and indeed protecting the “blue economy” which has the potential to provide much needed jobs in, for example, the offshore renewable energy sector, research and technology, and in the biomedical and pharmaceutical area, is a priority.
The difficulty is that at National level, Maritime Security is different in every Member State of the European Union. Therefore, to achieve a whole of European Union approach to maritime security will be challenging, and will require sustained political will.

We can point to achievements in relation to the development of strategies for the Baltic Sea Region and for the Mediterranean and the more recent work being undertaken by the Commission in relation to a strategy for the Atlantic Ocean area. Work is also progressing on a Global Maritime Security Strategy for the
European Union. These vital links will all help to counter the various maritime challenges and improve governance of maritime affairs, resulting in sustained growth and also addressing common issues of concern.

Working on an Action Plan for the Atlantic Strategy has been a key focus for the Irish Presidency. The Action Plan is a set of action areas for research and investment for the five Atlantic Countries to tackle common challenges and identifies areas where there is scope for collective work. Improving and reinforcing maritime safety and security will be a specific
objective of the Plan, which is on course to be adopted by the Commission in the coming weeks. We hope that once the Plan has been formally adopted by the Commission it can be endorsed by the Council by the end of the Irish Presidency.

It is fortunate that today we have experts with us who will advise on the Security and Defence challenges that we face in the European Union’s Maritime Domain, and outline the various European Union Policies that will secure the environmental, resource and defence interests of the European Union. We
will also hear from experts from various Navies in relation to the European Union Sea Basin Strategies and we will be informed about International Maritime Operations. Research and Innovation has a crucial role to play in delivering Maritime Surveillance and Security and this theme will be elaborated on by experts from the Commission and the European Defence Agency. At National level, we will hear from Industry and Research Institutes in the Maritime Sector, and in our final session, we will be advised of the necessary steps that we
should take in this important area in the coming years.

As I mentioned earlier, I would like to see fruitful discussions leading to positive outcomes that can feed into Council Conclusions at the end of our Presidency, so I will now leave you in the experts’ capable hands and wish you a very enjoyable and productive Seminar.

Thank you very much for your attention and I look forward to listening to the many contributors on this important issue for the European Union.