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PRESS RELEASE:**European Pilots welcome EU agreement on new Ports Regulation**

On Monday the 27th of June, representatives of the legislative institutions of the EU successfully reached an agreement on the new Port Services Regulation. This legislation will establish a framework for the provision of port services and financial transparency of European ports.

EMPA, The European Maritime Pilots' Association, welcomes the well balanced and coherent conclusion of this extensive legislative process. We believe that the new Regulation will turn out to be an important legal structure for further sustainable growth and development of the important European Ports- and Shipping industries.

We commend the wise and solution-oriented approach that has been demonstrated by the European Parliament's Rapporteur, Mr. Knut Fleckenstein and his staff, the Shadow Rapporteurs, by the Council, the Cabinet of Commissioner Bulc, and by the DG MOVE. EMPA also commends the fruitful co-operation with our sister stakeholders' associations in the European maritime cluster during this process.

An important and clear signal that was given by the European Parliament at its plenary decision on 8th March this year, is that Maritime Pilotage, due to its public service obligations, should not be subject to market access philosophies. The outcome of the trilogue respects this important signal, which is well illustrated by the following justification:

"Pilotage provides an essential and unique service to the shipping industry, which if open to competition would jeopardise maritime safety and security, the protection of the environment and the efficiency of ports."

EMPA fully concurs with the Port Services Regulation's common rules on training, on financial transparency, and on port service and infrastructure charges.

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EMPA, The European Maritime Pilots' Association, is a professional, non-profit organization which represents about 5.000 maritime pilots from 25 European countries, regrouping member countries' associations of maritime pilots from the Baltic Sea, the North Sea, the Atlantic Ocean, the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.

Pilotage is a mandatory public service, strictly regulated by the States, related to maritime safety, efficiency and protection of the environment. The pilots are specialists who assist the captains of vessels in ports and their approaches by bringing them not only independent knowledge of the local maritime conditions and operational practices but also their daily extensive experience of navigating ships in restricted waters. They optimize thus, in an efficient way, the traffic flow and the operation of port facilities while ensuring the control of risks inherent in sailing ships in sensitive coastal areas.