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ECPY calls for moratorium to resolve French yachting sector crisis

By David Robinson

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In a bid to resolve the crisis facing the French yachting sector over Article 31 of the Social Security Act, the European Committee for Professional Yachting (ECPY) has called for a moratorium to bring back common sense to this important part of the French marine industry.

Thierry Voisin, ECPY president, said in a press notice that such an action was used by Nicolas Sarkozy in the 1990s when he was the Minister of the Budget to suspend the catastrophic effects of Community customs provisions. Voisin states: “It worked, so it was a solution that proved its effectiveness.

He adds: “It is clear that since August 2, 2017 (the date of our meeting with the Ministry of Transport), no progress has been made. The situation is frozen and we are cheerfully heading into the wall! The various ministries concerned are returning the bullet indicating that an inter-ministerial meeting must take place!

“The question is, when?,” he asks. “The necessary decisions must be taken immediately and not in September; it will be too late for the shipyards, which will have definitively lost the contracts that were to feed them during the winter. The immediate future of yachting is therefore now in the hands of politicians and depends on the decisions they will take.”

He warns: “It is now up to French politicians to assume their responsibilities without delay

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in order to avoid an economic disaster and to become aware of the reality on the ground.”

Voisin adds a note of surprise, saying: “Moreover, it is surprising that some organisations claiming to be representative of the yachting industry have spoken out in favour of provisions adopted unilaterally by the French State which lead to catastrophe in the economic field and loss of employment.”

One good factor, says Voisin, is that in the field of fuels Community directives are applied in a disorderly and incomprehensible manner. This has led to distortions in the price of fuel, particularly between France and Italy. In France, a ship registered to trade that practices charter will get supplies of gas oil in suspension of VAT at a price of around €1.10-€1.20 per litre.

In Italy, the same vessel will benefit from diesel fuel in suspension of TICPE excise tax at a price of about €0.60-€0.70 per litre. France and Italy are subject to the same Community directives which should be applied uniformly within the EU.



Voisin explains: “The consequence of this situation for this season is that the ships registered to the trade and practicing charter have sourced and continue to get supplies in Italy in gas oil to the detriment of the French fuel distributors who saw their figures collapse. Again, ECPY addressed the French State to intervene and to restore fair competition between the French and Italian fuel distributors. Today, apart from the good words, we have not seen any improvement or progress.”

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