



## **'Ocean Governance' - A Subject the Maritime Industry should pay Attention to?**

Principal Author: Arnd Bernaerts  
Co-Author(s): -  
Affiliation: -

### **Abstract**

The adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 1982 (UNCLOS) gave ocean matters a new dimension. While the Earth Summit Agenda 21 of 1992 called for 'integrated ocean management', this is meanwhile expressed as 'ocean governance'. A more recent document is the Green Paper of the European Commission (2006) titled: "Towards a future Maritime Policy for the Union: A European vision for the oceans and seas".

Although the term 'ocean governance' is new, the maritime industry should not only be aware of the developments in this respect, but should consider which role it wants to have, based on one hand on the 'common expertise' the maritime industry has with regard to ocean affairs, and on the other hand realise the opportunity of being part in shaping and developing an effective system of 'ocean governance'.

The paper aims at presenting the novel issue 'ocean governance' concerning its background, basics, current situation, and future impact that shall lead to a detailed consideration what position, or part the maritime industry should envisage to play. As 'ocean governance' implies for a comprehensive involvement of all sectors of society, education and capacity building, the maritime industry can continue doing business as usually, or to strive being an active, if not leading part in this field. Opting for the latter role, the paper will discuss: why and how.

The term governance means to rule. Ruling conditions for a territory exist for many millenniums, basic ruling conditions for all ocean space only emerged for the first time with UNCLOS in 1982. Implementation of UNCLOS requires developing a concept to govern the oceans; this will be different from common governance of territories. The question therefore is, whether one should be passive, or take an active role in developing and shaping the future system of 'ocean governance'.

Suggesting that the maritime industry should get involved, one needs to address how this could be achieved. It would make little sense to ask the entire industry, as she is too heterogeneous to organise, and sustain a systematic involvement in the forthcoming development of 'ocean governance'. The appropriate addressees are the maritime training institutions to provide lectures, workshops, and subsequently study courses. They should be highly interested to achieve competence in this field, and not allow this matter to be left alone to other educational institutions. On the other hand relevant societies concerned with maritime matters should require from maritime training institutions to offer training and education in 'ocean governance', and to support them accordingly.

'Ocean governance' just emerged and will be shaped and developed in the near future. Those who want to be part of it need to get involved now. Those who are part of it will be awarded with influence, competence, and expertise.