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MARITIME PILOTS

Maritime pilots provide an essential and unique service to the shipping industry. Their principal role is to:

Provide critical independent local knowledge and navigational information to vessels
Bring the highest level of shiphandling skills to manoeuvre vessels within their port.
The prime obligation of pilots is to provide a critical public safety service by ensuring the careful management and free flow of all traffic within their pilotage area, thus protecting the environment.

Pilots need to be able to exercise their professional judgement undeterred by commercial or economic pressure. Pilotage is an essential part of a Ports Safety Management System and compulsory pilotage is considered to be the most effective and important form of navigation safety regulation.

Pilots come aboard vessels by small boat or helicopter at the most critical phase of a vessel's voyage to assist with the conduct of navigation in waters with limited draught, widths, variable currents and other traffic competing for space. Ship's masters cannot be expected to be fully conversant with the special navigational and regulatory requirements of an area.

Pilots also bring highly developed shiphandling skills which are necessary with ever-larger ships and they bring the local communications knowledge necessary to work with local services such as tugs and linesmen.

A pilot's training is of necessity long and thorough, given the value of ships and their cargoes. Pilots normally enter the profession after a career at sea and learn their new trade mostly by mentoring from a qualified and experienced pilot. This is typically supplemented by simulator training and model training. Thereafter, training continues on a constant basis to maintain skills to the very highest degree.

The Master and Pilot relationship is an intriguing balance of mutual trust and respect, largely unwritten, which provides an unrivalled level of safety in a society that expects, and receives, the highest of standards from the shipping industry.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stein Inge Dahn', written in a cursive style.

Capt. Stein Inge Dahn
EMPA President