

Global conversation about “Maritime economic world and the role of the Coast Guard”

On the 20th of March, the Global Governance students had the pleasure to attend a Global Conversation about Maritime economic world and the role of the Coast Guard, held by four members of the Italian Coast Guard (ITCG) Headquarters.

Giuseppe Quattrocchi of the Plans and Operations Department introduced the audience to this fascinating world, explaining the functions, organization and operations of the Coast Guard. He described it as a military body with civilian competences related to maritime safety and VTS, ship and port security, maritime customs activities, trafficking and smuggling, maritime border control, monitoring and surveillance, environmental protection, search and rescue, ship casualty, maritime disaster response, fisheries inspections and control. According to the European Coast Guard Functions Forum, the Italian Coast Guard is a national relevant authority for eight out of these eleven functions and actively contributes for the other remaining ones. Thus, it cooperates with several organizations and ministries, such as the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport, the Ministry of Environment and Protection of Land and Sea, the Ministry of Agriculture Food and Forestry Policies, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Economic Development, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism, the Judicial Authority and the National Civil Protection. However, apart from this civilian aspect, the Coast Guard is a military corporation with a very articulated organizational structure divided in departments, under control of a commandant, a deputy commandant and supporting offices to the commandant. In addition to the 10.516 units composing the human resources, there are many assets capabilities, like vessels, aircrafts and driver bases. These are used for missions in the field of safety, security and governance, achieving successful results. One of the most important activity is the maritime search and rescue (SAR) that in 2016 managed to save 178.145 migrants and other 4.605 persons not related to migration crisis. Furthermore, the Coast Guard plays a fundamental role as the safety of navigation is concerned, doing port state control for a total of 122.281 controls in 2016.

Then, Commander Massimo Di Marco took the floor. He is now working at the international affairs office in Rome but he also worked as harbormaster in Porto Empedocle, where he led several rescue operations of migrants. The Commander gave us some information and statistics about the Mediterranean Sea and the maritime economy. The Mediterranean Sea is very important for its strategic position: the maritime traffic through it is 19% of world trade in volume and 25% in terms of maritime routes and the trade transiting the Mediterranean ports amounts to 2 billion tons. The enlargement of the Suez Canal during 2015 now allows the

passage to all types of vessels, also megaships (ships between 13000 and 21000 teus and 400 MT. length), enabling a growth of Chinese imports and exports and the formation of the “ocean alliance” between China, France, Taiwan and Hong Kong. In 2016 there was also the enlargement of Panama Channel but it still does not allow the passage to all vessels so it remains mainly used by American companies in order to reach Asia while Suez Canal has a global impact. After all these data, the commander explained the European Union's strategies and plans in order to support the economy through the potential of oceans, seas and coast for jobs and a sustainable growth. The areas with high potential for this “Blue growth” are coastal and maritime tourism, biotechnology, renewable energy, mineral resources, aquaculture and transport. Also Italy has possibilities for development but it is challenged to introduce factors of competitiveness for security, safety and efficiency and the coast guard has an important role in all of this. Investments are essential too in order to support international trade growth.

Last but not least, we met the lieutenant commander Matteo Prantner, who is currently working in the communication department. He told us about improving the efficiency of maritime transport by the electronic exchange of data. Nowadays the authorities know every time where a ship is and what it is transporting thanks to particular systems but it has not always been this simple. When a ship approached a harbor, many reporting formalities had to be completed and this was a waste of time and money. For the purpose of facilitating the maritime transport, the FAL Convention was drafted in 1965. The convention simplifies formalities and procedures associated with the arrival, stay and departure of ships engaged on international voyages. Afterwards, the European Union embodied the convention in the directive 2010/65/EU of the 20th October 2010 that sets also an obligation for the member States to establish National Single Window (NSW) for reporting formalities from ships arriving or departing from ports. In Italy, the NSW competent authorities are the Coast Guard, that work in this in coordination with stakeholders, and the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport. Following the EU directive, the Italian Government established the law No. 221 of 2012 that acknowledges the system PMIS (Port Management Information System) as the only national interface for the sending of the formalities of ships arriving or departing from any Italian port. PMIS works in interoperability with SafeSeaNet, the customs information system, port community systems and other national authorities and all is regulated by the legislative degree No. 82/2005. What we had clear in our mind at the end of the conference, is that the maritime world and the world of the Coast Guard face issues that can be really defined as “global” because, as we explained, they deal with EU, agreements, national legislation and authorities, private customs, civilian tasks, electronic systems and much more.

Marianna Sabatini and Clara Saglietti



Activities performed: Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport



- ✓ Harbor Master - Captain of the Port
- ✓ S.A.R. on maritime S.R.R. and major lakes
- ✓ Maritime safety (Port and Flag State Control)
- ✓ Ship and port security (ISPS Code)
- ✓ Management of vessel traffic: monitoring and information systems
- ✓ Discipline of naval property and administrative regime for merchant, fishing and leisure vessels
- ✓ Discipline and administrative regime for professional qualifications and certifications of seafarers
- ✓ Maritime law-enforcement
- ✓ Maritime casualty investigations