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### **Italian Coast Guard Auxiliary – Reorganization**

Good morning everybody,

As you probably know, in Italy the task of the search and rescue at sea in accordance to the International Convention for the maritime SAR, Hamburg 1979, is in charge of the Ministry of Transport, through the Harbour Officers/Coast Guard Corps, belonging to the Italian Navy.

In this role, the Coast Guard manages the Italian Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) in Rome and the 15 Regional Maritime Rescue Sub Centres (MRSC) all around Italy. Harbour Officers and Petty Officers are in command of big or less important harbours, and, in general, local maritime Authorities watch over all maritime activities (fishing, pleasure boats, safety of navigation, Vessel Traffic Services, and now, also security of ports and ships)

Italian Coast Guard depends also from the Ministry of Environment for the sea environmental protection and the antipollution activity.

We have about 7500 kilometres of coast-line (including Sardinia, Sicily, and other more little islands) and outlying offices and venues of the Harbour Officers/Coast Guard Headquarters are obviously shared all along Italy, as shared all along Italy its considerable lifeboats, aircrafts and helicopters fleet.

It is an impressive safety device dedicated to SAR and environmental protection but, considered the above said 7500 kilometres of coast-line, everybody can argue that whatever well shared, it's quite impossible to assure the complete and continuous presence of Coast Guard lifeboats all around Italy: there will always be, in some place or another, a gap of search and rescue cover.

From this consideration, the basic idea to set up a voluntary subsidiary service where the Coast Guard cannot be always present: actually, we have already in Italy some volunteer organizations working for the safety at sea and water in general, like my association, the Società Nazionale di Salvamento, National Rescue Society, founded in the far 1871, a bit of time ago, that with its lifeguards and rigid inflatable boats every summer carries out a safety service called "Safe beaches" under the coordination and the supervision of the Coast Guard, and other more little organization, but every organization goes by their own, without common guidelines to achieve their aims...

So, the idea to gather all voluntary organizations active at water in one big organization, a big SAR and environmental protection device, with the vision, considering this two main aims, that being together and joining the respective strengths and capabilities, we all can do better what we would able to do by ourselves, and because another aim is to be subsidiary to the Coast Guard, the name of this second level organization cannot be other than Coast Guard Auxiliary, and cannot be other than a not for profit organization, so to be recognized by Civil Protection Authorities.

We started some years ago with the first attempts, we had agreement and disagreement with the Coast Guard, some association left and some joined in the meanwhile, we had also some mistake and lack into the organization....we can say we had a crisis of growth, but now, after a couple of years we have preferred to be "sleeping", to say so, we restart with more clear objectives, and different guiding lines.

The model is the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary, and first of all the first guiding lines is to keep in closed touch with our Coast Guard, moving and organizing administrative structures, internal rules, operation activity, etc.. as agreed in advance with the Coast Guard and its local maritime Authorities, on the basis of a Constitution and By-law approved by the Coast Guard (we want to move the life of the Auxiliary into their groove), so we are now revising the old By-law, dropping down a new programme for the training of skippers and crew members of boats of which the Auxiliary will have the availability (direct property or availability from associated volunteer members), organizing things in the way we can begin some activity within the next summer.

.The main structures is

National Head Office, with a National President, a Vice National President, a National Inspector, a Secretary General, plus staff

The National board of Directors

The Auditors Board.

The same bodies are repeated for each Italian maritime Region (14)

Moreover each Region will have an Operative Centre always in touch with the local Coast Guard offices, and all the operative missions (rescue, antipollution, etc...) will be carried on under the coordination of the Coast Guard, both for SAR missions (according to the Hamburg 1979 Convention) and for other kind of missions.

Because my association, the SNS, is the biggest among other registered associations, we have now, till the next elections in three years (the next 2010), the Chairmanship (the SNS President Giuseppe Marino) and the Vice Chairmanship (myself) of the new C.G. Auxiliary.

To be noted that, because the Coast Guard depends from the Ministry of the Environment for the Sea environment protection, also the C.G.A. will be in touch with this Ministry, and, in fact, this Body has already recognized and registered the C.G.A. as volunteer association of national interest for the environmental vigilance and control (tomorrow morning I shall inform you about a specific course for volunteers employment on the antipollution activity)

Beside the operative missions, not less important, as everybody know, it's the activity of prevention of dangers at sea and water, and, in general, how to grow the maritime education, the awareness of water dangers, the culture of the sea, to say so, especially among the youth: Having in mind this big aim the C.G.A. will organize, by itself or joined with the Coast Guard, informative campaign (lessons, conferences, etc...) through schools, games for children and teenagers, promoting events and demonstrations for communities and tourists, and so on....

Moreover, we wish also, in the near future, to organize navigation safety campaign dedicated to the pleasure crafts people, with the aim to give information, advices, and so on, in favour of this activity that unluckily, every year, reports an always too much high number of incidents.

We will hope to succeed, we'll see, but this time, we have the entire basis and the experience for a successful outcome.

That's all, and thanks you for your attention.