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BIMCO endorse the FONASBA Quality Standard for ship agents and brokers

The Federation of National Associations of Shipbrokers and Agents (FONASBA) has taken a daring initiative towards setting quality standards for ship agents and brokers. The Quality Standard (QS) will serve to assist shipowners and operators in their selection of who is to represent them. This will ensure a specific level of knowledge and experience as well as financial standing of their selected representative. The QS was initially launched in October 2007 and includes a regular audit controlled by the national associations and overseen by FONASBA to ensure that the required criteria are maintained and that the member displays a demonstrable and tangible commitment to quality.

The Quality Standard was discussed in detail at the recent FONASBA General Meeting in South Africa, where BIMCO also participated in its capacity as a Club member of the Federation. At the meeting, it was confirmed that so far ten FONASBA member associations, representing nearly 200 companies in Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Denmark, Great Britain, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United States now apply the standard. A number of other associations are currently developing the relevant criteria. It is clear, therefore, that this initiative is gaining in stature and is becoming accepted as the global standard for professionalism and quality performance in the ship brokers and agency sector.

In a statement issued by BIMCO, Deputy Secretary General Søren Larsen says that "BIMCO fully endorses this initiative as an important step in raising quality standards, generally, as well as specifically for the agents and brokers sector". Mr. Larsen continued, "In a regulatory environment with increasing focus on maritime safety and quality and significant liability risks for shipowners and operators it is important that the industry strives to self-regulate. The QS provides shipowners and operators with a degree of protection, sets minimum standards and ensures a coherent provision and application of services in this important segment of our industry". Thanking BIMCO for its endorsement, FONASBA President Tonny Paulsen said that the support of the world's largest shipowners' association was greatly appreciated and would add significantly to international awareness of the initiative.

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