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For Immediate Release

Liner Shipping Industry Commends the EU Commission for its Decision to Extend the EU Consortia Block Exemption Regulation (BER)

Today, the European Commission published a final regulation extending the EU Consortia Block Exemption Regulation (BER) until 25 April 2024, without modification. This regulation provides a “safe harbour” under European competition law for vessel sharing arrangements that have a market share up to 30%. The World Shipping Council (WSC) commends the Commission for continuing to recognize the importance and the value of the Consortia BER after conducting a lengthy evaluation that included extensive consultation with stakeholders.

“The liner shipping industry has maintained support for the BER because it creates legal certainty for the use of vessel sharing agreements, which are essential operating tools used by carriers to provide customers with better services at lower cost and with improved environmental performance,” said World Shipping Council President and CEO John Butler. “Vessel sharing is the backbone of the global liner shipping network, and we should not underestimate the value of this tool for smaller carriers and lower volume trade lanes where demand might not otherwise support as many competitors,” Butler added.

“We saw the conclusions that the Commission reached when it published its Staff Working Document (SWD) last fall, and we are pleased to see that the final decision concurs with the earlier findings,” WSC President and CEO John Butler said.

Among other things, the SWD found that:

- “consortia allow their members to pool their vessels together and provide services or frequencies that carriers would not be able to provide on their own means; and,
- cost efficiencies have been passed on to customers to a material extent over the evaluation period; and,
- quality of services has not deteriorated but rather remained stable since 2014.”

The liner shipping industry transports over 45 million TEU (twenty-foot equivalent unit) of imports to and exports from the European Union annually that are valued at more than €1.4 trillion.

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ABOUT THE WORLD SHIPPING COUNCIL: The World Shipping Council (WSC) is an association of liner shipping companies, with offices in Brussels, Singapore and Washington, D.C. WSC's members carry over 90 percent of international containerized trade. The World Shipping Council's goal is to provide a coordinated voice for the liner shipping industry in its work with policymakers and other groups interested in international transportation issues. For more information about the World Shipping Council and the liner shipping industry, please visit www.worldshipping.org.

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