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VEINS OF SHIPPING

TURKEY AS SHIPPING HUB

**(Agency Regulations/Transit Passages/Advantages of
Turkish Straits Supplies)**

Panelist

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Turkish Straits

Seas, most important routes embracing the lands, which are the common country of human beings and exhibiting their common integrating nature in locations at the end of highroads are also start points of trade. The states being aware of such features of seas and using them intelligently ensures significant advantages en route being world states.

Seas and sea-sources of our country has specifications, qualifications and efficiencies empowering our economical, social and cultural life, diversifying our economical activities, providing access to worldwide markets, bringing mobility and acceleration to our economical development as well as realizing wishes and expectations of our community. Our Turkish Straits connecting Black sea to Aegean and Mediterranean, shores and territorial waters are ensuring integrity of Anatolia.

Turkish Straits integrating with Istanbul Strait, Marmara Sea and Canakkale Strait are the waterway open to international maritime traffic. This route connects Black sea with Aegean Sea and to oceans through the Suez Channel and Gibraltar Strait. The location of Turkish Straits does not like to any other international strait in terms of its structure. Istanbul Strait and Canakkale Strait passing through Marmara Sea which is historically subject to internal waters regimen as all of its shores are surrounded by Turkish land and which are entirely in the nature of national straits are being used for international transport in line with Montreux Convention that has been signed on July 20, 1936.

Turkish Straits, along with having great importance for our country politically, economically and strategically are also indispensable route of transport for Black Sea and Central-Asia Countries. Black Sea Region and Central Asia countries having most productive lands of the world but closed to seas are gaining significant share from world markets with grains, coal, petroleum, natural gas and other products obtained from their lands. These countries are transporting their products to world markets only through Turkish Straits which is unique waterway. For the countries of world meeting their needs by receiving such products, Turkish Straits also have great importance.

Turkey has adopted Straits Regimen in line with own interests via Montreux Convention.

Since its execution, Montreux Convention on Straits has ensured security of our country and Black Sea has made and will continue to make important contributions to the peace of region and the world.

Rules of Passage from Turkish Straits

Commercial vessels are constructed to transport the assigned cargo to a geographical region by picking it from another geographical region. During voyage, they have to pass through territorial waters, inland waters, and channels, straits of a country, waters surrounding archipelagos and waters of adjacent regions. In such cases, they may enter to/ exit from ports of coast state based on international law and conventions. The vessels must comply with the limitations imposed by coast states during such entries and exits. These are rules on speed limitations, night voyage prohibition, obligation to obtain pilot, to comply with mandatory routes and to pay certain fees.

There are also obligations of commercial vessels in the passages from Turkish Straits such as "Sanitary Dues" and "Light Dues" payment obligation due to Montreux Convention. Again, in the same convention obtaining Pilotage services is left optional. However, it is nowadays strongly recommended to obtain Pilotage for security of life and commodities in this waterway which has the narrowest and sinuous straits of the world with turbulent currents.

Along with development of maritime trade and transport starting from second half of 1960s, vessel tonnages increased and types are varied. As a result of this development, traffic in Straits increased significantly. This increase caused the increase of marine accidents in Straits. The accident caused by Romanian flag tanker named "Independenta" in 15 November 1979 during its entry to Istanbul Strait in loaded status in offshore waters of Haydarpaşa took its place among significant maritime accidents in the world. Explosions lasting for days and spreading of flames to the sea and shore lead significant anxiety of citizens of Istanbul and Turkey.

Increase of numbers and tonnages of vessels passing through straits, frequent occurrence of accidents prompted authorities. First of all, agreement is reached to make amendments with the order of traffic in sea by ensuring security of navigation, life, goods and environment in Straits as a result of researches carried by technical committee established within the organization of Ministry of Transport. In this agreement, the opinion to change "Order of Sailing from Left" to "Order of Sailing from Right" and to take the traffic under control is adopted.

Upon adaptation of this opinion, Istanbul Port Statute issued by Ministry of Transport is published in Official Gazette upon approval of Cabinet Resolution no: 8/4538 dated 9.4.1982. Strait Passage Way is declared as follows in Article 10 of Istanbul Port Statute put into force as of 1 May 1982 :

"Strait Passage Way means the area consisted of two traffic lanes for north and south directional traffic suitable for navigation and a mid-line separating these lanes and the area of Istanbul Strait allocated for passage remaining between the line connecting Türkeli Lantern with Anadolu Lantern in the north and the line connecting Ahırkapı Lantern with Kadıköy İnciburnu Lantern in south."

According to said Statute, the vessels passing from Marmara Sea to Black Sea will use right lane from the entry of the Strait up to exit according to International Regulations Preventing Collision at Sea and vessels to pass Marmara from Black Sea will use right lane in accordance with regulations starting from entry of Strait up to Ahırkapı.

Sailing from left order employed in Straits for long years started to be applied as sailing from right order as of 01.5.1982.

During passing through Straits, commercial vessels have to comply with the provisions of Regulations on Order of Sea Traffic in Turkish Straits which is initially put into force upon resolution no: 1993/5061, dated 23.11.1993 of Cabinet then revised in the current form in 8.10.1998. With this Regulation, the rules of:

- Passage rules of Vessels from Turkish Straits,
- Reporting system in Turkish Straits (TÜBRAB)
- Transit passage and conditions,
- Traffic order of Straits under stream conditions
- Vessels under risk under extraordinary conditions
- Failure, grounding and other accident conditions
- Rescue and assistance services are established.

In 30 December 2003, Turkey get started to operate Vessel Traffic Services System in Turkish Straits. One center is established in each of Istanbul and Çanakkale cities and 9 Unmanned Traffic Monitoring Stations in Istanbul and 7 in Çanakkale are established reporting to these centers. The purpose of this system is to enhance security of life, goods and environment, to monitor vessels continuously either during day or night, to plan traffic organization, to contribute incidents immediately and efficiently in case of accidents, to decrease risk of accident, to assist, inform and warn the captains during navigation and to ensure safe navigation in Straits by providing recommendations to captains.

According to provisions of TBDTD Statute, in addition to magnetic compass, there should be Gyro Compass, Radar(s) and automatic identification system (AIS) as defined in SOLAS and attachments should be available in regular operating condition in vessels passing through Turkish Straits based on Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS 74) Rules of 1974.

TBGTH Centers may organize unidirectional traffic due to conditions of stream and view or may suspend Strait traffic from one direction or both temporarily for other reasons. In such cases, TBGTH may lead the vessels to Straits accompanied by guide pilot or tugboats with the knowledge of Port Authority for safety of life and goods due to severe weather conditions or for force major reasons.

Vessels transit passing from Turkish Straits have to run-up (T) flag during day and to give a green light during nights which can be observed from entire locations of horizon during navigation and anchorage.

Since the construction operations of Marmaray (Tube of railway under the Istanbul Strait) started on July 23,2005 the traffic regulation is operated one-way only at the Istanbul Strait. So during the day for some hours the sea traffic is from South to North and for some hours it is the vice versa.

Services Provided by Shipping Agencies to Vessels in Turkish Straits

Shipping Agencies have to notify passage of vessels from Turkish Straits they are serving as agents according to Article 6 of Turkish Straits Sea Traffic Order Statute :

in electronic medium considering carriage of dangerous cargo by the vessel, its length and tonnage to Center of Turkish Straits Vessel Traffic Services in advance 72 hours before their arrival. In addition to this report called as Sailing Plan-1 (SP-1) including information specified in Statute on Turkish Straits Sea Traffic Order, they also inform vessel captain to submit the report called as Sailing Plan-2 (SP-2).

Shipping Agencies also notify transit passages of vessels from Turkish Straits:

- a. To Health Centers of Borders and Coasts,
- b. Port Authorities,
- c. Sea Security Branch Management,
- d. Customs Administrations,

in electronic medium as the declaration made to Traffic Center of Turkish Straits about passage information of vessels.

Shipping Agencies are obliged to pay transit passage fees of vessels from Turkish Straits to relevant Administrations (Sanitary Dues to Border and Coast Health General Management, Light Dues and Tugboat Service fees to General Management of Coastal Security) within prescribed time periods. Penalties are imposed for fees not paid in time.

Vessels may anchorage in moorings in order to supply mandatory needs provided to obtain permit from Traffic Control Center not to exceed 48 hours. During such period, vessels may perform activities such as replacing crew due to death, disease or leave, contacting with agency, supplying fuel, provisions, repairing failures and similar activities for mandatory needs. Performance of such activities of vital importance for vessels can only be carried via agencies.

Shipping Agencies are obliged to comply with the provisions of Communiqué on Fee Tariff of Shipping Agency Services issued by the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the period and published on Official Gazette no: 26812 dated 10 March 2008 (Domestic Trade 2008/1) and to collect the fees determined according to the Tariff specified in the attachment of this Communiqué for the provided services to vessels in Turkish Straits. Such Communiqué determines minimum level of provided shipping agency services. Shipping Agencies violating this Communiqué are subject to penalties according to Article 14 of said Communiqué and provisions of Regulation on Shipping Agencies published on Official Gazette no: 28224 dated 5 March 2012.

As of July 28 2015; there are 815 Shipping Agencies in our country, 327 of those, i.e. 40 % are operating in Istanbul.

Vessel traffic statistics at the Turkish Straits

2012

Istanbul Strait : 48.329 vessels 550,526,579 gross tonnage 377,072,202 tons of cargo

Canakkale Strait : 44.613 vessels 735,728,537 gross tonnage 454,789,869 tons of cargo

2013

Istanbul Strait : 46.532 vessels 551,775,136 gross tonnage 380,889,393 tons of cargo

Canakkale Strait : 43.889 vessels 745,567,693 gross tonnage 461,373,710 tons of cargo

2014

Istanbul Strait : 45.529 vessels 582,468,334 gross tonnage 394,138,551 tons of cargo

Canakkale Strait : 43.582 vessels 761,631,756 gross tonnage 473,560,261 tons of cargo

Although there is a decrease observed in the number of vessels, it is seen that there is an increase in the total gross tonnage of the vessels and the total cargo carried. That shows us; more cargo are carried by larger vessels in size but by less number of vessels.

Ship Supplies at Turkish Straits

According to data of Vessel Suppliers' Association, 25% of the vessels arriving to Turkish Straits and Turkish ports are supplied for provisions and other needs. Excluding fuel oil supplies, ship supply sector creates about 300 million USD turnover annually.

One of the most advantageous reason for to be supplied at Turkish Straits is; the vessels can be supplied during only slow down at underway, so no need to anchorage and waste of time. The transportation costs for the supplies are also very competitive in Turkey.

When the location of our country and structure of Straits are taken into account, it is thought that such numbers should be far higher. For this purpose, bureaucratic handicaps should be eliminated and more practical and easy delivery methods should be put into practice.

Thank you,

Recep DUZGIT

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