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ASA
Asian Shipowners' Association

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Comments of the Asian Shipowners' Association on CASE BE/0004: Commission Proposal to Vary (Renew) the Competition (Block Exemption for Vessel Sharing Agreements) Order 2017

The Asian Shipowners' Association ("ASA") appreciates this opportunity to comment on the consultation on the Commission Proposal to Vary (Renew) the Competition (Block Exemption for Vessel Sharing Agreements) Order 2017.

The ASA consists of seven members from the shipowners' associations of Asia Pacific nations i.e. Australia, China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Chinese Taipei and the Federation of ASEAN Shipowners' Associations comprising Brunei, the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. The ASA membership together is estimated to represent approximately 50% of the world merchant fleet today. The role of the ASA is to promote the interests of the Asian shipping industry and express its views on key issues affecting this industry, such as the regulatory framework of cooperative agreements in liner shipping in the world.

The ASA very much welcomes the HKCC's proposal to renew the Competition (Block Exemption for Vessel Sharing Agreements) Order 2017 for a period of 4 years. We firmly believe that by the extension this time, the Hong Kong's competition regime for liner shipping will remain consistent with the regime of the rest of the world such as Europe, Singapore, the United States and other part of China, and it will afford a greater legal certainty for the carriers utilising the VSAs, which operate international liner trades to and from Hong Kong. It is certain that the competitiveness of Hong Kong as an international transshipment centre in Asia will be retained or enhanced by the extension this time, which will bring positive results for customers, consumers, and the economy in Hong Kong and the rest of the world.

In addition, the ASA recognises that the other maritime associations' submissions, from the Hong Kong Liner Shipping Association (HKLSA), the Hong Kong Shipowners' Association (HKSOA) and the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS), also welcome the HKCC's proposal this time.

The ASA highly appreciates the study and analysis which have been made by the HKCC to date and that the HKCC has duly understood the voice of Asian shipowners on this important issue. The ASA hopes that the Commission will continue this kind of approach to maintain and enhance Hong Kong's position as one of the most important logistics hubs around the globe.

Respectfully submitted

ASIAN SHIPOWNERS' ASSOCIATION

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