Madam Minister,

Honourable Director of the Museum,

Excellencies Ambassadors, Dear Colleagues,

Madam Executive Director of EMSA,

Members of the Administrative Council of EMSA,

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Friends,

It is a great honour for me, to be here with you today for the opening of our photographic exhibition, regarding the “Maritime Tradition of Cyprus”. A maritime history, which goes back thousands of years and it has its own roots to our small nation, Cyprus. It is also a great honour to welcome in Lisbon the Shipping Deputy Minister to the President, Ms Natasa Pilides, who came here for visiting EMSA, having a meeting with the Executive Director, Madam Kostelac, and having a bilateral consultation with the Minister of Sea, Madam Vitorino.

Today, we are going to take a journey back together in history, through the photographs that we are going to present to you shortly.

This photographic exhibition was presented only in two other countries before. Firstly, in Cyprus and secondly, in the United Kingdom, where the seat of the International Maritime Organization is. Where else could the international journey of this exhibition go next?

Portugal of course, the great maritime nation. Portugal, the country with the greatest seafarers during the medieval period. Your seafarers, who discovered the modern world. Today, through the photographs, histories, old ships, maps, tools and documents, our ancient seafarers, will too make an appointment with the great Portuguese seafarers in the Maritime Museum of Lisbon. The maritime tradition and the maritime history are connecting both our countries.

[The history of maritime in Cyprus is an exciting journey with great richness and in the depths of time. The Cypriots turned to the sea from the very early on, seeking trade and contacts with their neighbouring countries, and exchanging products, throughout antiquity. The ports of Cyprus were crossroads for people, ideas and civilizations. The exhibition emphasises to the geographical position of Cyprus in the south-east Mediterranean region, which defines its history in antiquity and medieval period, and in the modern era. The great maritime tradition of Cyprus bears the stamp of all civilizations which came to the island in the course of time.]

The exhibition is going to be presented in this amazing museum for a period of two months. For this reason, I would like to express the appreciation of my Government and to thank the Director of the Museum, Captain João Passos Ramos, for his valuable support. I would like to thank also his colleagues for their support and cooperation, as well as my colleagues in the Embassy, who worked hard together to make this possible.

Finally, I would like to thank all of you, for your interest and your presence here today. I hope that you are going to enjoy the exhibition and the nautical journey with us.

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