

Italian shipowners' bodies AssArmatori and Confitarma to cooperate

Andrew Spurrier, Europe | 19 January 2018



Confitarma chairman Mario Mattioli (right) took over the role from Emanuele Grimaldi (left). Photo credit: Grimaldi Lines

New Italian shipowners' body AssArmatori has said that it intends to work with existing shipowners' body Confitarma despite its deep differences with the long-standing Italian shipowners' representative organisation.

AssArmatori, which announced its formation officially at the start of this week, has been set up by [Confitarma dissidents, who left the organisation last year over the appointment of Mario Mattioli](#), head of the Naples-based Cafiero-Mattioli group, as chairman. He took over the role from outgoing chairman Emanuele Grimaldi.

They claimed that Mattioli, whose group is best known for its towage and offshore activities, did not represent mainstream Italian shipping. Some commentators claimed that their objections to Mattioli's election were also symptomatic of a north-south divide within Confitarma's membership.

An AssArmatori spokesperson told *Fairplay* today, however, that it did intend to work with the Confitarma. "We do intend to cooperate with all other organisations dealing with shipping and transport activity, including Confitarma," he said, "especially as far as seafarers' contracts are concerned."

In a major coup, the new organisation counts Geneva-based Mediterranean Shipping Company and MSC Cruises among its members and says that it plans to recruit other international companies employing large numbers of Italian seafarers. Other AssArmatori members include Grandi Navi Veloci, Italia Maritima, Gruppo Messina, Moby Lines, and Tirrenia.

The new organisation claims to represent owners operating 600 ships and with 70,000 employees. It is to be headed for a four-year term by Stefano Messina, head of the Genoa-based Gruppo Messina.

Unlike Confitarma, which is affiliated to the Confindustria industry confederation, however, it has opted to affiliate itself via Confrasperto to the Confcommercia trading and services confederation, arguing that it is more committed in the long term to development of the “blue” economy and the role of shipping, ports and logistics as assets for the growth of the Italian economy.

The AssArmatori spokesman said that it would be concentrating on promoting the employment of Italian seafarers, notably by campaigning to have the Italian register extended to “international” companies employing a majority of Italian seafarers.

He indicated that it looked forward, in particular, to playing a consultancy role in the development of a new and more effective Italian maritime policy following the general elections which are due to take place on March 4.

Stefano Messina was quoted in the Italian press as saying that the interests of Italian shipping had for too long been sacrificed to those of other business sectors which regarded it as a tool rather than an economic asset.

“It's time to change course, remaining open to dialogue with all but claiming credibility and a role and that involves full awareness of the main characteristic of the shipping industry, which is its internationalisation,” he said.