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INFLUENCE OF IMEAK MARITIME CHAMBER OF COMMERCE TOWARDS POLICIES AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MARITIME SECTOR

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Abstract
Around 85% of the world's trade is carried out through the maritime sector, which reveals the importance of the logistics sector based on shipping. The sector moves along with the course of international trade. The importance of the sector for Türkiye, which is surrounded by seas on three sides, is an undeniable fact. Many global and national actors play a role in the policies developed for the maritime sector. The organization that has an important position among these actors in Türkiye is the Istanbul and Marmara, Aegean, Mediterranean, Black Sea Regions Chamber of Shipping (IMEAK DTO). The aim of this study is to examine the role of IMEAK DTO, the umbrella organization of the sector, in the policies developed for the maritime sector since its establishment. In order to gain a deeper perspective, the research involved consulting and interpreting the views of sector professionals. The interpretation and evaluation of the information obtained through a standardized open-ended interview forms have been evaluated. The main mass of the research consists of individuals, institutions and organizations involved in the formulation of maritime policies and/or affected by these policies. A sample of 30 people was selected. The sample consisted of experts, senior managers, academicians, employers and professionals working in the maritime sector who are directly or indirectly involved in the formation of maritime policies. The main findings of the research are as follows: The establishment of an independent maritime chamber of commerce has made significant contributions to the Turkish maritime sector. IMEAK DTO has been found to be the most important actor in the development of maritime policies and has provided significant advantages to the sector. It has been determined that the lack of a 'Ministry of Maritime' in Türkiye slows down the capacity and growth rate of the maritime sector.

Keywords: Maritime sector, maritime policies, chamber of shipping, ministry of maritime

Introduction

The concept of 'a country surrounded by seas on three sides' is an idea deeply embedded in our collective consciousness at the social level. This geographical term, which has been taught repeatedly since the early years of learning, has become a familiar expression for almost every member of our society. We witness that this concept is used when making economic comparisons between Türkiye and countries with geographical similarities. We also witness that these expressions are used to determine to what extent the seas are utilized in Türkiye. It is seen that the studies on maritime economics in Türkiye are still limited, and those that exist are mostly related to naval maritime economics. It can be said that studies on civil maritime economics are still at the beginning of the road (Koraltürk, 2010). In this study, the role of IMEAK DTO, which has an important place in terms of civil maritime economy and history in Türkiye, in maritime policies is discussed. The Turkish Language Association (TDK) defines the concept of policy as; the whole of the principles of organizing and realizing the activities of the state in terms of purpose, method and content, politics, policy: 'The fair and balanced distribution of the tax burden is the social objective of fiscal policy (TDK, 2024). He defined it as. Yıldız (2013), on the other hand, defined it as; 'The way the state follows in international relations, all the views it wants to put into practice. Politics. The path followed by a political party in the executive, that is, the government, in the administration (Yıldız, 2013). Yıldız (2013) expressed policy as the relationship between goals and means. Policies guide the process of using the tool while achieving the stated objectives. Policy does not contain any details and is a general framework. Plans are implemented according to the conditions of this framework. Policy is about the future of societies and organisations tomorrow, next week or years from now. Policy making is defined as the activity of determining new policies and this process also includes vision, goal, preferences and future possibilities (Özer, 2010). In Western languages, the concepts of "policy" and "politics" are used interchangeably. In Antique Greek, the concept of "polis" was used to refer to the Ancient Greek city states. In public the word "polites" was used in its meaning. The structure and political system of the state as "politea" has been defined. Things related to civil rights and civil law are referred to as "politica" or in the same sense. The words "politikè" used, meaning political art and referring to related issues has been used. These concepts were used especially for works related to the state management system (Dursun, 2018) Maritime policies are a set of solutions, principles and approaches suitable for the development of needs and objectives arising from trends, opportunities, resources and scientific knowledge in the maritime sector. While formulating a maritime policy and planning, the requirements, objectives (e.g. ship fees), problems or solutions to be addressed in any field within the field of economy, management, marine resource management business, marine ecology and maritime law should be taken into consideration (Çiçek & Kişi, 2007). To summarize, when formulating a policy, not only certain aspects and frameworks should be taken into account, but also the economic, social, political and cultural consequences of the policy when it is implemented (Çiçek & Kişi, 2007).

Materials and Methods

Qualitative Research and Participants

In the present study, opinions of individuals, institutions and organizations operating in the maritime sector about the role of IMEAK DTO, the umbrella organization of the Turkish maritime sector, in maritime policies since its establishment, have been analyzed. The main question in the research was *'What is the role of IMEAK DTO, the umbrella organization of the maritime sector in Türkiye, in the development of the Turkish maritime sector and how is this role of the chamber evaluated by the stakeholders?'.*

Target of Research

The objectives of this research are set as follows:

- To determine what the priorities are in the formulation of maritime policies
- To analyse whether the chamber has an influence on the formation of maritime policies
- To determine whether the target group in the research plays a role in the formation of relevant policies
- To try to measure the point of view about the adequacy of the chamber in terms of the development of maritime policies
- To determine the perception of members and sector interlocutors on the transparency of the decision-making processes of the Chamber
- To learn ideas about the work of the chamber with public institutions related to the sector
- To learn the opinions about the establishment of an independent professional chamber related to the maritime sector

Research Area

The research area was composed of representatives of individuals, institutions and organizations that have an impact/contribution on the policy development process of IMEAK DTO and participants who are directly or indirectly affected by maritime policies. In addition, experts from universities, media, associations, foundations, etc. within the research area were reached and their opinions on the subject were consulted. These people were given preliminary information about the subject and purpose of the research. In this sense, the scope of the study is limited to the interpretation of the data/information obtained from the mentioned individuals, institutions and organizations.

Limitations of the Research

Considering how wide the boundaries of the concept of policy are, interviewing 30 participants in the study on maritime policies can be considered as an important limitation of the research. The process of persuading the participants to participate in the interview and the reliability and validity of the answers given are other limitations that cannot be measured. The limited number of sources on the Turkish maritime economy after the Republic of Türkiye it has been one of the important challenges we have faced.

Data Sources

In the study, the data were obtained with a holistic approach with the 'Qualitative Research Method', which is one of the research methods in social sciences. In qualitative research, data are collected verbally and in writing. Participant interviews, documents and observations are the data sources of qualitative research method (AU, 2018). The aim of the research using the 'Structured Interview' type is to determine the parallelism and differences between the information given by the interviewed individuals and to make comparisons accordingly (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021). In the research, the data were obtained through the 'Standardised Open-ended Interview Approach' method within the framework of structured interviews. In the related approach, questions are asked to all Interviewers in the same style and in a certain order. It was preferred due to the fact that the questions are standardised and open-ended and can be used effectively with more than one person (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021).

The distribution of the Interviewers is as follows; 7 general managers/chairmen of the board of directors, 1 DTO branch council chairman, 3 managers, 1 association manager, 1 technical officer, 1 transport and operation engineer, 1 administrative officer, 1 technical sales manager, 1 technical manager, 1 sales manager, 3 academicians, 1 deck teacher working at MEB, 4 captains, 1 engine officer, 1 DPA officer, 1 author publishing on the maritime sector and 1

secretary general of IMEAK DTO. This type of interview with participants who are in economically, socially and politically important statuses is called 'Elite Interviewing' (Manheim et al., 2002). In this study, which was conducted within the framework of the elite interviewing approach, it was confirmed by verbal agreement that the personal information of the Interviewers would not be shared. For this reason, in order to ensure anonymity, the relevant persons were randomly coded as '1st Interviewer, 2nd Interviewer, 3rd Interviewer, ...' in the tables and question form. Information about the interviews, interview dates and durations are given in Table 1. In the analysis phase of the research, the data were subjected to content analysis without using any computer-aided software. The data were analysed and the findings obtained as a result of the research were listed as items.

Table 1. Details of the Interviews

Nickname	Interviewed Organisation/Person	Date of Interview	Duration of Interview
1. Interviewer	Navtek Deniz Teknolojisi A.Ş./General Manager	12.10.2023	30 minutes
2. Interviewer	DTO Kocaeli Branch/Chairman of the Assembly	12.10.2023	25 minutes
3. Interviewer	Espadon Technical and Engineering /Manager	12.10.2023	20 minutes
4. Interviewer	TRX Marine-Shipyard/ Technical Officer	12.10.2023	18 minutes
5. Interviewer	Idakont Logistics Inc./Maritime Transport and Operation Engineer	05.11.2023	by e-mail
6. Interviewer	TRC Marine Elektrik San.ve Tic. Ltd. Şti/Administrative Responsible	09.09.2023	20 minutes
7. Interviewer	GNG Vana ve Makina Sanayi Ticaret Anonim Şirketi/General Manager	12.10.2023	18 minutes
8. Interviewer	GF Hakan Plastik/Technical Sales Manager	12.10.2023	22 minutes
9. Interviewer	Vulkan Türkiye Engineering, Marine and Indusrtial Prodtucts Ltd./General Manager	12.10.2023	15 minutes
10. Interviewer	AVS Global Ship Supply and Management Corporation/Technical Manager	12.10.2023	16 minutes
11. Interviewer	MECpartner Den. Ve Müh.Dış Tic.Ltd./Founding Partner/General Manager	12.10.2023	33 minutes
12. Interviewer	Ortech Marine Maintenance S.A./Chairman of the Board of Directors	12.10.2023	20 minutes
13. Interviewer	Smyrna Maritime Consultancy Services and Survey Inc/General Manager-Captain	12.10.2023	19 minutes
14. Interviewer	VTS Maritime Industry Trade Limited Company/ General Manager	14.10.2023	25 minutes
15. Interviewer	Airtech Kargo Taşımacılık A.Ş./Manager	08.09.2023	by e-mail
16. Interviewer	IMEAK DTO/General Secretary	16.01.2024	130 minutes
17. Interviewer	DenizTemiz Derneği/TURMEPA/ Association Manager	20.10.2023	by e-mail
18. Interviewer	Martey Maritime Engineering Trade Limited Company/Sales Manager	18.09.2023	by e-mail
19. Interviewer	Sakarya University of Applied Sciences/Academician	10.01.2024	by e-mail

20. Interviewer	Sakarya University of Applied Sciences / Lecturer	12.01.2024	by e-mail
21. Interviewer	Tayfun Odabas/Uzakyol Captain	12.01.2024	by e-mail
22. Interviewer	EgeUniversity/Instructor-Captain	30.12.2023	by e-mail
23. Interviewer	Beykoz Barbaros Hayrettin Paşa Maritime Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School / Deck Teacher	11.11.2023	by e-mail
24. Interviewer	Retired Engineer Officer	01.11.2023	40 minutes
25. Interviewer	Mt Kalyoncu Lojistik Hizmetleri Gıda Sanayi Ticaret Limited Şirketi Samsun Branch/DPA Officer	25.11.2023	by e-mail
26. Interviewer	Captain of the Distant Way	25.11.2023	by e-mail
27. Interviewer	Captain of the Near Way	20.11.2023	by e-mail
28. Interviewer	Mt Kalyoncu Lojistik Hizmetleri Gıda Sanayi Ticaret Limited Şirketi Samsun Branch / Uzakyol Captain	25.11.2023	by e-mail
29. Interviewer	Mt Kalyoncu Lojistik Hizmetleri Gıda Sanayi Ticaret Limited Şirketi Samsun Branch / Personnel Manager	25.11.2023	by e-mail
30. Interviewer	Seafaring Writer	20.10.2023	by e-mail

Results

Evaluation of Priorities in the Formation of Maritime Policies

Interviewer-1 did not answer the first question and 1. Interviewer stated that he had no information about this issue. With this question, it was tried to measure how the priorities of DTO in maritime policies are perceived by the sector actors. When the answers given by the Interviewers are evaluated, the diversity in the answers stands out. Due to the fact that maritime is a global business field, the priorities of the chamber are; the works carried out to ensure that all systems in the maritime sector are at the international level, the solution of sector-based problems, the establishment of maritime customs, the appropriate use of natural advantages within the framework of the interests of the country and the sector, the effort to ensure the integrity of the sector through communication policies, the establishment of the university related to the maritime sector with the support of DTO, the distance taken in information sharing, the development of sustainable policies for the maritime sector in domestic and foreign markets and the environmental policy have been the prominent evaluations. On the other hand, the criticisms that DTO has developed policies based on short-term needs, that some of the decisions taken are far from the realities of the world and Türkiye, that the needs of large and well-established companies are prioritised rather than small and new enterprises, and that it has not developed policies for the employees of the sector have come to the fore. In addition, the 30th Interviewer (2023) stated that *"The priority is the establishment of a Ministry of Maritime Affairs."* The idea expressed by the 30th Interviewer (2023) was evaluated as an important finding that stood out in the opinions in the first question of the research. In addition, the general framework of the maritime policies of DTO was drawn by the 16th Interviewer (2024). According to the relevant Interviewer, in summary, DTO emphasized *"protecting the rights of the Turkish maritime sector, adhering to the principles of impartiality and reliability of the chamber, developing sustainability for the sector and contributing to GNP for this purpose*" as maritime policies. However, 19th Interviewer (2024) stated that "*DTO gives priority to the policies related to the employer dimension and the demands of the labour side are put in the*

second plan", 27th Interviewer (2023) stated that "*When policies are formed, the demands and suggestions of the shipowners or shipowners are mostly valued and the demands and requests of the maritime workers are often ignored."* and 28th Interviewer (2023)'s emphasis that *"DTO is more company-oriented rather than maritime workers" have* emerged as statements that support each other in terms of the labour policies of the chamber. These three statements have revealed that DTO needs a holistic approach as the labour and employer segments in the formation of maritime policies.

Influence of the Chamber in the Formation of Maritime Policies

The second question was answered by all Interviewers. When the data are analyzed, it is evaluated that a large part of the Interviewers have the idea that DTO plays an effective role in the formation of maritime policies. In the answers given, it is stated that the opinion of the DTO is taken before the maritime laws are enacted, even the policies are determined by the chamber, it cooperates with the relevant institutions in line with the needs of the sector, it is an advisory institution in policy development, and it is the voice of the sector at all these points. While the Interviewers were almost unanimous in policy development activities, some criticisms stood out. The fact that the policies are oriented towards short-term needs and respond to a narrow circle and that they are not sufficient have been the subjects of criticism. There are also those who think that no policy is developed and that the chamber is not active at this point. 9th Interviewer (2023)'s statement; *"Of course, it has carried out studies on ports, regulations, international standards."* is considered as an indicator that the chamber carries out studies on an international scale. The statement of the 1st Interviewer (2023); *"The public side does not enact laws without taking the opinion of the chamber."* revealed the conclusion that DTO has a policy-making role while developing maritime policies. This view was supported by the 7th Interviewer (2023)'s statement "*It is the DTO that determines and follows the policies."* supported this opinion. 14th Interviewer (2023)'s opinion *"Before all the laws are enacted, the members of the DTO are notified and the opinions of the members are taken, then they are presented to the relevant authorities. Necessary revisions are made."* His opinion revealed that the chamber shows an example of participatory leadership in its policy-making role. In addition, the fact that the laws to be enacted are presented to the relevant authorities *"on behalf of the members"* is considered as a finding that supports the definition of the *"umbrella organization"* of the chamber.

Evaluation of the Sector's Contribution to the Chamber in the Formation of Maritime Policies

When the data related to the third question is analyzed, it is determined that the number of those who contribute to the policy-making process is lower than those who do not contribute. Considering the research area, this data is not sufficient, but when the sector addressed by the chamber is considered, it has been determined that a large part of those in the sector are not active in policy-making, but they express an opinion when asked for an opinion. Interviewer 25 (2023)'s statement *"By participating in surveys in decision-making processes, we become a part of decision-making processes."* is a data that supports this view. In the answers given; it was determined that the chamber exchanges opinions with people or institutions that are experts in the sector on issues requiring expertise, communicates with the branches affiliated to the centre, and evaluates the suggestions in the works and transactions brought to the agenda in the chamber assembly meetings. When the Interviewers who did not contribute to the policy-making process were asked about the reasons, some of them did not give any answer, while the other part stated that they were not consulted on this issue, that the decision-making mechanism only works in the assembly, and that they did not contribute because they did not have a duty in the chamber. All these statements reveal that the members are not at a sufficient level to contribute to policy development. In the research, Interviewer 2 (2023) stated the *following: "I*

mean, at the national level, DTO has really done good things by taking the opinion of the branches affiliated to it. Locally, other chambers do not want to leave space for DTO on these issues. They enter the field of duty of DTO. It prevents the tasks that DTO tries to do." The statement of *2023* revealed that in some cases there is *a "confusion of authority"* between other chambers and DTO.

Assessment of the Chamber's Policy Making Competence

When the data obtained in response to this question, which was asked in order to obtain information about the adequacy of the IMEAK Chamber of Shipping, were analyzed, it was concluded that the majority of the participants concluded that the Chamber has sufficient facilities and equipment. The reasons given were that the managers and professionals working in the chamber are well-equipped people from the sector, that it has a wide service network and a strong financial structure as it is the umbrella organization of the sector. The Interviewers who think that it is partially adequate and that there are aspects that need to be improved stated that there are situations that exceed the possibilities and capabilities of the chamber. The argument of those who think that it is not sufficient is that the country has not paid enough attention to maritime as a country and that merit is ignored. When the research data are analyzed, it is seen that Interviewer 25 (2023) stated *"It is thought to have sufficient equipment and merit with its management structure and members. However, unfortunately, it is not possible to give a similar answer in terms of facilities. DTO may encounter some problems and other obstacles due to the fact that many issues are public partners and/or auxiliaries."* When the statement of the Interviewer (2023) is analyzed, it is found that even if DTO has sufficient facilities, the intensity in the public bureaucracy prevents the capability of the chamber. This finding also revealed that the lack of a *"Ministry of Maritime Affairs"* in Türkiye limits the possibilities and capabilities of DTO.

Assessment of Institutional Transparency in the Policy Making Processes of the Chamber

When asked about the adequacy of the chamber in terms of institutional transparency in policy development processes, a significant portion of the Interviewers stated that the chamber attaches importance to institutional transparency. For example, Interviewer 25 (2023) stated this situation as follows: *"Since the chamber always highlights its accessible side through surveys, problems and information it shares with its members, it is seen that dialogue channels are open. This is a sufficient example for a transparent structure.*" The activities such as the assembly, board of directors, disciplinary board, professional committees and members of the chamber and the problems and solutions in the sector are taken transparently as a result of the work of these bodies, the dialogue channels are open, the information is made to the members and the announcement of the decisions are the information presented for competence in this regard. 16. Interviewer (2024) summarized *that "The working principle and secretariat services of the chamber organs are carried out in a transparent manner in line with the Law No. 5174 and the relevant regulations, directives and decisions taken by the board of directors. It is subject to the supervision of the Ministry of Trade. In this respect, it is beyond explanation that the decision-making processes are transparent."* The statement has shown that DTO grounds transparency on legal grounds. In the research, there are also data that think that DTO is not transparent. While the 12th Interviewer (2023) expressed this situation as *"I think that the chamber is closed in decision-making processes. I think that they evaluate without reaching every sector while making decisions."*, the 3rd Interviewer (2023) used a parallel expression as "*Unfortunately, no one has any information except the board of directors"*. However, despite these statements, when the general framework is considered, it has emerged as a more dominant finding that DTO is sufficient in institutional openness and public disclosure activities while conducting its business and transactions.

Evaluation of Public-Choice Co-operation in the Policy Making Process

For this question on how the sector perceives the work carried out by the Chamber with the public side in the policy-making stages, the 1st Interviewer (2023) summarized; *"It is a great advantage that DTO, the umbrella body of maritime industry, meets with the public side without intermediaries"*. This data revealed that institutional organization has a positive effect on the sector in the works and transactions carried out with the public side. This idea is supported by the 22nd Interviewer (2023); *"I think that DTO should be and is an institution that should be in constant elbow contact with the public."* In addition, Interviewer 25 (2023) stated that he found the chamber "quite successful" in this regard. The fact that the Chamber provides information and suggestions to public institutions in the development of maritime policies, organizes trainings in cooperation with the public sector for the training of qualified personnel in the maritime sector, supports schools providing maritime education, develops joint policies for the cleaning of the marine environment and the protection of the seas, acts jointly with public institutions within the framework of the interests of the sector at international level, acts as a bridge between maritime companies and public institutions, supports innovation, R&D studies and works with the public sector in eliminating resource problems have emerged as positive sides within the framework of Chamber-Public cooperation. 9th Interviewer (2023) stated; *"It does not meet the expectations. I see the low business volume of the maritime sector as the reason for this. For example, the maritime sector is at the level of 1 in 4 of the automotive sector.*", 27th Interviewer (2023); "I believe that DTO does not develop enough studies and projects", and 4th Interviewer (2023); *"I do not think that it progresses in the same synchronization with the public side. I think that DTO has a more active and faster decision-making mechanism than the public side." statement, the* findings that the needs of the chamber cannot be responded quickly due to the more intense bureaucracy on the public side, the business volume of the sector is low compared to other sectors, and the projects developed by the chamber are not sufficient, it has been found that the most important problem faced by DTO is scattered bureaucratic obstacles and delays.

Evaluation of the Establishment of an Independent Chamber of Shipping

In this question, which was asked in order to evaluate the establishment of DTO as a separate chamber representing the maritime sector, the vast majority of the Interviewers stated that the establishment of DTO was positive. Unlike the other Interviewers, Interviewer 24 (2023) claimed that the existence of a separate chamber *"does not make any difference"* for the sector. It was observed that all the remaining Interviewers found the establishment of a professional chamber specific to the sector positive. Interviewer 4 (2023) stated: "*...The maritime sector has had its own institutional structure. ... Today's representation power is extremely dynamic and active compared to the ITO period. I consider it important that an independent chamber has been established for the maritime sector and that it gathers the sector under a single roof."* It can be seen that DTO contributes positively to the dynamism in maritime activities. However, the statement of the 5th Interviewer (2023) *"...Because maritime and maritime economy is a special field and it is beneficial for Turkish maritime that people who will focus only on that field are assigned here and their activities are engaged at this point."* and the statement of the 7th Interviewer (2023) *"...Since the managers and the board of directors are seafarers, empathy has been established at the point of our problems."* revealed that the fact that the chamber and the sector are formed by individuals from the same economic sector turns the ability to establish mutual empathy into an important advantage. In addition, when the statement of the 11th Interviewer (2023); *"...From a fragmented structure to a more collective and proper structure, it has become a national level organization."* is taken into consideration, it is concluded that as a result of the establishment of the DTO, the sector has been gathered and gathered and it is a finding that supports the importance of the existence of an umbrella organization related to the

sector. In the research, it was revealed that the establishment of DTO is a "necessity" rather than a wish. 16th Interviewer (2024)'s *statement*; "*Since the merchants operating in the maritime sector have different conditions, different rules and different characteristics compared to the merchants operating on land, it has become obligatory to establish a maritime sector chamber separate from the chamber of commerce." and 30th Interviewer (2023)'s* statement*; "It has been very good, although its work is insufficient in my opinion, they did not have the opportunity to carry out these studies when they were affiliated to ITO.*" are the data supporting the necessity of establishing an independent chamber for the sector. In summary, maritime activities have significant differences in terms of conditions, characteristics, rules and laws compared to other economic activity fields. Since the sector is an international activity, the necessity of the rules and regulations to comply with both national and international legislation and the fact that all these transactions require expertise are among the important reasons for the establishment of the chamber. The fact that it would not be sufficient to develop maritime policies within another chamber of commerce, that the existence of a separate professional organization is important in terms of representation power, the advantages of the chamber's board of directors being composed of individuals from the sector, the fact that the whole sector is gathered under a single roof, that the sector has its own dynamics and that it is adequately represented are the prominent data in the research.

Evaluation of Other Opinions of the Interviewers in the Framework of the Research

In the last question of the research, a general evaluation question was asked to the Interviewers who are interested in the maritime sector in theory and practice with the intention of opening new doors for our study and other future researches. When the data are analyzed, it is seen that the most important problem in front of the sector is the fact that the "Ministry of Maritime Affairs", in a more holistic expression, "Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Logistics" has not been established in Türkiye. 2. Interviewer (2023); *"I hope that a ministry will be established only as the ministry of maritime and logistics, which DTO and everyone dreams of.*", 3. Interviewer (2023)*;* "It is a disadvantage that a maritime ministry has not been established until today.", 30.Interviewer (2023); *"Türkiye is in dire need of a maritime ministry."* and Interviewer 10 (2023); *"...A maritime ministry should be established, maritime should be encouraged."*, have revealed the necessity of a "Ministry of Maritime Affairs" or "Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Logistics" in Türkiye. It is thought that the establishment of the relevant ministry will add strength to the Turkish maritime sector and level it up in the international market. Other prominent findings are the coordinated work of the public and DTO, implementation of the innovations of industry 4.0, increasing the awareness of the sector and encouraging it, making the chamber more active, planning and realizing international memberships, making sponsorship agreements for the promotion of maritime, and making use of marine resources and marine opportunities.

Discussion

Institutions and organizations related to maritime policies in Türkiye can be listed as public institutions, associations, foundations, trade unions, unions, professional chambers and universities. From past to present, the public side has many duties and activities in maritime sector policies such as developing strategies, supporting and encouraging investments, conducting and/or supporting research to increase global and national competitiveness, providing support and developing measures for the protection of the marine environment. All ministries, especially the Ministry of Transport, Maritime and Communications, General Directorate of Coastal Safety, General Directorate of TCDD, Department of Ports, General Directorate of Health and General Directorate of Turkish Borders and Coasts and General

Directorate of Turkish Maritime Enterprises (which was affiliated to the Privatisation Administration on 4 November 1994 and renamed as TDI Turkish Maritime Enterprises Inc.) have emerged as important public stakeholders of maritime policies.

Associations, foundations, trade unions, chambers and unions, which can be called non-governmental organizations or civil society organizations, have an important role in the development of maritime policies, such as providing advice, contribution or pressure in policy development. These organizations that have a role in sectoral activities are not limited to those discussed in our study. Ship Suppliers Association of Türkiye, Ship Industrialists' Association of Istanbul and Marmara, Aegean, Mediterranean and Black Sea Regions (GESAD), Association of Ferry Owners and Agents, Ship Recycling Industrialists' Association (GEMİSANDER), Ship Brokers Association (GBD), International Transport and Logistics Service Producers Association (UTİKAD) and Turkish Marine Environment Protection Association (TURMEPA) are some important maritime sector associations. While Turkish Marine Research Foundation (TÜDAV), Turkish Maritime Education Foundation (TÜDEV) stand out as important foundations, Piri Reis University (PRU), of which TÜDEV is the founding foundation, was established in 2008 as Türkiye's first maritime-themed university with the contributions of IMEAK DTO and its members.

Trade unions, which are stakeholders in the formation of maritime policies, are organised as employee and employer unions. The prominent trade union organizations in the sector are the Turkish Port, Dock and Ship Industry Workers' Union, the Turkish Port, Marine, Shipyard and Warehouse Workers' Union (LİMAN-İŞ), the Turkish Seafarers' Union (TDS) and the Turkish Shipowners Employers' Union (TAİS). Professional chambers in the maritime sector are organized according to some professional groups and regions. TMMOB Chamber of Marine Machinery Operating Engineers (GEMİMO), Mersin Chamber of Shipping (MDTO), Chamber of Marine Engineers (GMO) and IMEAK Chamber of Shipping are important professional chambers. Unions, which are the supreme organizations of professional chambers, aim to protect and develop professional interests. In this sense, professional associations can be characterized as pressure groups in protecting and developing the interests of the sector. Prominent associations in the maritime sector are the Turkish Shipowners' Association, the Association of Turkish Travel Agencies (TÜRSAB), the Ship and Yacht Services Exporters' Association and the Turkish Shipbuilders' Association (GİSBİR).

When the history of IMEAK DTO is briefly examined; some members of the Shipowners' Association have made various initiatives for the progress of the maritime sector in Türkiye and the development of maritime trade for the benefit of the country, for the realisation of the maritime chamber of commerce, which has been desired to be established since the past. On 24 December 1981, the establishment of a chamber of maritime commerce was made possible by amending the Chambers and Commodity Exchanges Law dated 24 December 1981 and numbered 2567. The establishment of the Istanbul Chamber of Shipping (DTO) took place on 26 August 1982 after the official approval of the Ministry of Commerce dated 4 May 1982 and numbered 14 (630.2/201) 21262. When it was established, the number of maritime companies that were members of the chamber and operating in Istanbul was found to be 744. Later, the chamber started to operate in the Marmara region with the membership of maritime companies in the provinces bordering the Marmara Sea. In the following years, it continued its activities in the Aegean and Mediterranean regions. Finally, in 1989, it started to operate in the Black Sea region and started to operate in the coastal provinces of Türkiye (Mersin is the only province that is exempt from these provinces). Having expanded its field of activity, the name of Istanbul Chamber of Shipping was changed to 'Istanbul and Marmara, Aegean, Mediterranean, Black

Sea Regions Chamber of Shipping (IMEAK DTO/DTO)'. There are 9 branches, 17 representative offices and 2 liaison offices affiliated to IMEAK DTO throughout the country (IMEAK DTO, 2024). IMEAK DTO has developed various policies for the advancement of the Turkish maritime sector. These policies are; financial policy, quality policy, human resources policy, environmental policy, communication and communication policy, information technology policy and information security policy. The Chamber has also developed important strategies such as carrying Turkish maritime to advanced levels, developing the love and culture of the sea with the awareness of blue economy, sustainable environment, increasing the quality and efficiency of chamber headquarters and branch services, increasing the teamwork of members and supporting the development of professional activities. It publishes various publications online and/or in printed form in order to inform the sector and its members and to support researchers. IMO and EU bulletin, maritime trade magazine, sector and activity reports, circulars, strategic plans and books are the publications of IMEAK DTO.

As a result of the research; it can be underlined that the existence of an independent professional organization addressing the sector has significant contributions to the sector and thus to Turkish maritime. It can be said that IMEAK DTO unites the disorganized structure in the sector under a single roof. The policies developed by IMEAK DTO regarding the personnel to be employed in the maritime sector have found a significant response. The activities carried out to meet the personnel need in the sector have contributed to the fulfilment of the need for qualified personnel and the employment of seafarer personnel. In addition, the fact that it carries out activities for the training of the people actively working in the sector and announces the content and dates of these activities on its official website supports this view. When the interview with 30 participants is evaluated, it can be said that IMEAK DTO plays an active role in developing policies for the sector, but the plans made are not long-term. However, it is open to discussion whether the inclusiveness of the plans is sufficient. It can be said that there are deficiencies in the labour-employer factor in the planned policies and that the working sector should be included more in the policy processes. During the interviews, it was determined that the participants expressed their opinions in this direction. Communication of IMEAK DTO with the stakeholders of the sector has continuously improved since its establishment, but there are parts that need to be improved in terms of inclusiveness of communication. The facilities of the Chamber have increased significantly since its establishment. It has been evaluated that the Chamber has institutional transparency due to the fact that it is a public professional organization and the decisions taken in accordance with the legislation are made within the framework of legal procedures. The fact that the sector representatives have to carry out bureaucratic procedures with many public institutions for the official procedures they need to carry out has caused loss of time and financial losses. Maritime activities in Türkiye are controlled by various ministries. This situation causes a number of problems due to bureaucracy and spread of responsibilities between ministries and lack of communication between various authorities. Consequently, there is an accepted view that a 'Ministry of Maritime' should be established to bring all maritime affairs together under a single structure (Yercan, 1998). In order to develop maritime policies in a sustainable, rapid and long-term manner, it is considered that the lack of an independent ministry may slow down the growth capacity of the sector.

Therefore, the fact that a 'Ministry of Maritime' or 'Ministry of Maritime and Logistics' has not been established in Türkiye can be considered as a disadvantage for the sector. The fact that the Ministry of Maritime has not been established may lead to the inability to develop a holistic approach to the sector and the Turkish maritime sector may be disadvantaged in international competition. Considering the general opinion of the participants within the framework of the research, it can be said that IMEAK DTO acts as a bridge between its members and the

bureaucracy. IMEAK DTO can be considered as an economic organization, a non-governmental organization and a pressure group in the national and international arena. The establishment of a university (Piri Reis University) in Türkiye, which is supported by IMEAK DTO and whose focus is the maritime sector, is important. The university has contributed to the training of qualified personnel needed in the sector for the maritime economy and the Turkish maritime industry. It can be said that the relevant university will contribute to the advancement of scientific research and academic studies, especially in the field of civil maritime. In addition, it can be said that the establishment of a university supported by IMEAK DTO will reflect positively on the image of the chamber both at home and abroad.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the present study, the following issues can be suggested for future investigations:

- Considering the Turkish maritime sector, is it sufficient for the sector to be represented at the level of general directorate?
- Would it reflect positively on the country's economy to bring foreign flagged Turkish owned ships back to the country with a study to be carried out under the leadership of IMEAK DTO?
- Is IMEAK DTO developing policies for the combination of land, air and maritime transport in terms of maritime economy?
- Considering that IMEAK DTO is a public professional organization, to what extent should the expectations from the Chamber be?
- To what extent do other persons, institutions and organisations operating in the sector contribute to the policy development process for maritime economy?

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Ethical approval

No ethical approval needed for this study.

Informed consent

Not available

Data availability statement

The authors declare that data are available from authors upon reasonable request.

Conflicts of interest

There is no conflict of interests for publishing this study.

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Contribution of authors

Kenan AKPINAR: Conceptualization, Research, Methodology, Writing an original draft

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