

## **ICONS MEETINGS IN THE U.S 15- 18 September 2000**

### **Washington 15 September 2000**

The Commission concluded its meetings in Washington DC with discussions with the US Coast Guard Headquarters. The Commission was briefed on the US participation in IMO, particularly concerning Flag State self assessment measures developed by the Flag State Implementation Sub-committee. Substantial discussions were centred on the requirements for quality shipping registers and what could be done to encourage Flag States to implement their international obligations for registration of ships and ship safety. Also discussed were measures to assist abandoned seafarers and safety developments for cruise shipping.

### **Fort Lauderdale 17 September 2000**

The Commission moved to Florida on 17 September to attend a session at the conference of the North American Maritime Ministry Association. The Commission was informed of the work of missions in assisting seafarers, and were told of several instances of abuse and ill treatment of seafarers, particularly in the cruise shipping industry. Specific concerns were denial of access of chaplains and unions to crew members as well as excessive hours of work for both maritime and housekeeping staff aboard cruise ships. The conference also discussed the plight of fishing boat crews.

### **Miami 18 September 2000**

On 18 September the Commission received a detailed briefing from the US Coast Guard in Miami, with particular emphasis on cruise shipping operations in the region and small Caribbean cargo vessels. Issues discussed included Port State Control procedures, crew fatigue, the role of Class societies, adoption of safety standards for inspection of small cargo vessels, and the need for improved Flag State administration of safety standards.

The Commission concluded its North American consultations in Miami on 18 September with a public meeting involving seafarer unions, a ship management agent, a class society representative, maritime lawyers and the US Coast Guard. The meeting discussions focussed on the cruise industry, particularly on crewing conditions, hours of work, recruitment procedures, contracts and wages. The lack of shore based waste reception facilities in a number of Caribbean countries was also raised.