

Green Paper on better ship dismantling

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The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety adopted the own-initiative report by Johannes **BLOKLAND** (IND/DEM, NL) on the Green Paper on better ship dismantling.

MEPs welcome the thorough analysis in the Green Paper of the principal social and environmental problems arising from operations involved in the dismantling of ships in Southern Asian countries. They consider that practical measures must be taken quickly at European and international level, the main aim being to protect the environment and public health.

According to the parliamentary committee, the most effective way of achieving that aim is to adopt and implement an international agreement laying down obligations incumbent upon all the parties involved in the process of dismantling ships. The Commission and Member States are therefore called to negotiate an IMO convention that incorporates extensive requirements and regulations which:

- ensures a level of control at least equivalent to that of the Basel Convention;
- provides for a high global safety and environmental standard of ship recycling that is third party audited and certified;
- disqualifies beaching from being an appropriate dismantling methodology,
- will not allow ship dismantling by non-parties;
- establishes the substitution principle for eliminating the current use of hazardous materials in the construction of new ships;
- requires that all hazardous materials from end-of-life ships are removed before sending them for dismantling to non-OECD countries or to send them to specially authorised recycling facilities in OECD or EU countries which comply with clearly defined safety and environmental standards.

MEPs consider it ethically unacceptable to permit the humanly degrading and environmentally destructive conditions involved in the dismantling of ships to continue any longer, thereby accepting that the health of thousands of employees in the Far East is put at risk. They call upon the EU to take immediate, concrete action, in co-operation with the IMO, to stop the practice of social and environmental dumping that stems from economic incentives and to reach a globally sustainable solution.

The report recommends that EU efforts aim at safeguarding minimum standards ensuring the highest environmental, health and safety protection. These standards should comprise regulations for the design and construction of ships, their operation, the preparation of ships for recycling, the operation of ship recycling facilities and the establishment of an appropriate enforcement mechanism for ship recycling, incorporating certification and reporting requirements.

In particular, the European Commission is called to:

- compile and maintain a list of seagoing ships which are likely to be scrapped within a few years;
- consider possible measures to reduce the potential financial implications of ship dismantling by setting more stringent production standards, such as a restriction on the use of certain hazardous substances;
- negotiate within the IMO with a view to standardising the materials used in the building and fitting-out of vessels and to tightening up the environmental requirements relating thereto;
- develop a list of preferred ship recycling facilities which comply with recognised international human rights and health and safety standards;

- propose specific measures to promote the transfer of know-how and technology in order to help dismantling yards in Southern Asia to comply with international safety and environmental requirements.

Lastly, MEPs believe that efforts must be made by the Member States and the Commission to create a **mandatory ship-recycling fund**, jointly funded by shipyards and ship owners (for example by means of taxes levied on new ships, port fees and annual taxes linked to IMO registration) and with shared responsibility. This fund would facilitate the pre-cleaning of vessels of hazardous materials and the development of ship recycling yards in the Union.