Resolution on an EU strategy for better ship dismantling

2009/2571(RSP) - 26/03/2009 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Following the debate which took place during the sitting of 25 March 2009, the European Parliament adopted by 469 votes to 8 with 3 abstentions a resolution tabled by the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety on an EU strategy for better ship dismantling. It notes that there is serious concern that without urgent regulatory action at EU level the conditions in which the dismantling of ships in South Asia is taking place, which are both environmentally destructive and degrading to humankind, will further deteriorate. Furthermore, the number of ships going out of service following the global phase-out of single-hull oil tankers and a backlog of old vessels now being withdrawn from the market, in part due to the recession, will lead to an uncontrolled expansion of sub-standard facilities in South Asia, and will spread even further to countries in the African region, if no immediate and concrete action is taken by the EU.

Parliament points out that Parliament's resolution of 21 May 2008 on the Green Paper on better ship dismantling, and its views expressed therein, are still valid. These views should be reflected as far as possible in the Convention on the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships (Ship Recycling Convention), which is due to be adopted in May 2009. It points to the need for ship recycling to be treated as an integral part of a ship's life cycle, with recycling requirements being taken into account at the planning stage for the construction and fitting-out of the ship. Members state that end-of-life ships should be regarded as hazardous waste, as a result of the many hazardous substances contained in such ships, and should therefore fall within the scope of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal.

Whilst welcoming the EU strategy for better ship dismantling, Parliament stresses that the Commission must rapidly move beyond feasibility studies and fully commit to action which will safeguard the effective implementation of the Waste Shipments Regulation (Regulation (EC) No 1013/2006). It calls for tighter controls by national port authorities and invites the Commission to present guidelines in this area. Parliament stresses that there is no time to waste, and calls for concrete regulatory action at EU level that moves beyond the regrettably weak remedies of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO).

Parliament also calls for the following:

- an explicit prohibition on 'beaching' of end-of-life ships. Any technical assistance to South Asian countries within an EU framework should further aim at the phasing out of this grossly unsustainable and seriously flawed breaking method;
- negotiation of entry-into-force conditions which will ensure that the Ship Recycling Convention will indeed be applicable very rapidly;
- -Member States to ratify the Ship Recycling Convention as possible after an agreement is reached at IMO level;
- the Commission, the Member States and ship-owners to apply the main elements of the Ship Recycling Convention in order to ensure that the ships which will be sent for dismantling in the future will be dealt with in an environmentally sound manner;
- concrete measures, such as labelling schemes for safe and clean recycling facilities, to promote the transfer of know-how and technology in order to help dismantling sites in South Asia comply with the standards which will be set by the Ship Recycling Convention. This objective should also be taken into account in the wider framework of the **EU's development aid policy** towards the countries involved in ship dismantling;
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dialogue between the EU and the governments of South Asian countries involved in ship dismantling on the issue of labour conditions at shipbreaking yards, including the question of child labour;

- a funding mechanism that is based on mandatory contributions from the shipping industry and is in line with the producer responsibility principle;
- the Commission to establish that the state with jurisdiction over owners of waste is the responsible state.

Lastly, Parliament supports the suggestions by the Commission for measures to establish independent certification and auditing of ship dismantling facilities. It stresses that any Community funding of the shipping industry should be made conditional upon the beneficiary's use of such certified facilities.