

Press Release – NGOs to EU: Don't Dump your Toxic Ships in Developing Countries

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New Report Finds Plenty of Capacity for European Flagged Ships in OECD Countries Brussels, 5 November 2012 - A new report prepared by the Basel Action Network (BAN), a U.S.- based member organisation of the NGO Shipbreaking Platform[1], refutes the European Commission's claim that there is insufficient ship recycling capacity in developed countries. The new report[2] identifies significant clean and safe ship recycling capacity in North America, Europe and Turkey that can ensure that all EU-flagged end-of-life ships sent for breaking each year can be accommodated in member states of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) facilities. This is vital to ensure that Europe upholds its long established principles and legal obligations under the Basel Convention which has banned all exports of hazardous wastes from developed to developing (non-OECD) countries. *"The European Commission claims that they must send toxic ships to developing countries, even though it is forbidden under the Basel Convention, because there is not enough ship recycling capacity in developed countries,"* said Jim Puckett, Executive Director of BAN. *"Not only are there shipbuilding yards in Europe which can be considered as dormant capacity, ready to be awakened to create jobs in Europe, but if we look to North America to fill the current capacity shortage of the EU and nearby Turkey, we have calculated that all EU-flagged ships can be recycled at environmentally sound OECD facilities."* The European Commission developed the proposed ship recycling regulation[3] on the basis that OECD ship recycling capacity was insufficient to accommodate EU-flagged tonnage. However, they failed to consider OECD capacity in North America, the largest 'green' ship recycling market in the world, and that which currently operates significantly below capacity. This message will be delivered to the European Parliament and EU Council tomorrow during an event at the Parliament hosted by Carl Schlyter MEP, the rapporteur to the Parliament Environment Committee on the European Commission proposal for a ship recycling regulation, and co-organised by the NGO Shipbreaking Platform. *"There is no good reason for Europe to discard its long established principles which prevent the movement of hazardous wastes to developing countries,"* said Patrizia Heidegger, Executive Director of the NGO Shipbreaking Platform. *"All that is needed is the political will by the European Parliament and Council to take responsibility for our own toxic waste-laden ships."* Today, the vast majority of European flagged or owned ships that reach the end of their service are sold to shipbreaking facilities in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, where they are run onto the beaches and dismantled in conditions harmful to human health and to the environment. In 2011, more than 200 EU ships were sent to the beaches[4]. By mid-October 2012, already 411 European-owned ships had been sent to the South Asian yards, which represents 41% of all end-of-life ships sold so far this year[5]. In September, a fire broke on a former British ship that was being dismantled in Alang, India, killing seven workers[6].

NOTES [1] The NGO Shipbreaking is a global coalition of human rights, labour rights and environmental organisations – See: www.shipbreakingplatform.org [2] Download the report on the Platform's website: <http://bit.ly/TFzuJH> [3] COM (2012) 118 [4] See the Platform's press release from January 2012: <http://bit.ly/A89gAS> [5] Statistics compiled by the French NGO Robin des Bois: www.robindesbois.org [6] As reported by the Indian media Times of India: <http://bit.ly/SO5Gs4> CONTACT Patrizia Heidegger Executive Director, NGO Shipbreaking Platform patrizia@shipbreakingplatform.org +32 0483 125 443 Colby Self Director of Green Ship Recycling Campaign, Basel Action Network (BAN) cself@ban.org