

Press Release – Civil society calls on Greece to address poor environmental performance of Greek shipping

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Athens, 28 May 2015 – Several

key environmental NGOs working on sustainable shipping have met with Greek and European policy makers to discuss concerns related to the shipping industry's high emissions, marine pollution and poor shipbreaking practices. As one of the largest shipping nations, Greece has a particular responsibility to mitigate pollution caused by ships. The day before the official opening of the European Maritime Days in Athens, both Greek Environment Minister Yannis Tsironis and Director of the Greek Ministry of Shipping Agisilagos Anastasakos exchanged views on possible solutions for sustainable shipping with an NGO coalition consisting of MedSOS, Greenpeace, Surfrider Foundation Europe, Transport and Environment, and the NGO Shipbreaking Platform. Whilst there was agreement that environmental concerns related to shipping need to be tackled at the international level, European Parliament rapporteur on the monitoring, reporting and verification of carbon dioxide emissions from maritime transport José Ignacio Faria strongly argued that Europe has an obligation to take the lead when international solutions are weak or fail to gain consensus. Member of the European Parliament Stelios Kouloglou from Greek government party Syriza also maintained the EU's responsibility to counter poor practices related to air and sea pollution and substandard shipbreaking on South Asian beaches [1]. European ship owners control 40% of the world fleet and Greece is the European Union's largest ship owning Member State. Several European policies target the environmental performance of shipping. The environmental NGOs ask for the following actions at the EU level to secure a shift towards a truly sustainable shipping industry in a joint policy briefing [2]:

- inclusion of shipping emissions in the climate and energy package's 40% reduction commitment by 2030 together with concrete measures to achieve this;
- expansion of liability to all stakeholders in maritime transport and the integration of the recognition of Ecological Prejudice into European legislation;
- urgent establishment of a network of marine reserves to safeguard the sea, its productivity, its marine life, and its ecosystems for the millions of people who rely on it for their health and well-being;
- incentives to reward those who are at the forefront of environmental protection, eco-innovation, sustainability, and support infrastructure transformation; and
- rapid publication of the list of approved ship recycling facilities so that the new EU Ship Recycling Regulation's requirements become applicable, and secure the establishment of a financial incentive to ensure compliance with the Regulation and the principle of "polluter pays".

The Greek shipping industry should play a significant role in the reduction of air emissions and marine pollution. Greek ship owners should also opt for safe and environmentally sound ship recycling *"Greek ship owners have for many years been the worst dumpers of end-of-life vessels sold to substandard shipbreaking yards. In order to reverse this trend, we expect the new Greek government to hold its ship owners responsible and in the future to direct Greek-owned end-of-life vessels to EU-approved ship recycling facilities"*, says Patrizia Heidegger, Executive Director of the NGO Shipbreaking Platform. **CONTACT** Patrizia Heidegger Executive Director NGO Shipbreaking Platform patrizia@shipbreakingplatform.org **NOTES** [1] MEP Stelios Kouloglou's [video message can be watched here](#) [2] The policy briefing [can be downloaded here](#)