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Ship recycling

Committee gives go-ahead to new legislation to end hazardous scrapping of EU ships on beaches

The European Parliament's environment committee today gave the go-ahead to new legislation on the recycling of EU ships by Green draftsperson/rapporteur Carl Schlyter. The new EU Regulation will allow ships flying the flag of an EU member state to be scrapped outside the EU provided strict standards are met. These standards effectively mean the end of "beaching" where ships are simply taken apart on a beach, with scant regard for human health or the environment. Regular inspections, Commission assessments and an increased role for NGOs will help ensure compliance with these standards.

Commenting on the final vote, Green MEP and EP rapporteur/draftsperson **Carl Schlyter** stated:

"This vote is a success for environmental standards on ship recycling and an end to the culture of 'turning a blind eye' to infringement of the 14-year-old Basel ban on the export of hazardous waste. The new rules signal an end to reckless scrapping of European ships in developing countries. Up to now, upon reaching the point where they are no longer usable, most EU ships are sent to South-East Asia where they are scrapped on a beach, with a negative impact on human health and the environment. The new law will make it compulsory for ships to be recycled from built structures only and in such a way that all hazardous materials are fully contained. As this is impossible on a beach, the practice of beaching is de facto forbidden."

"This vote will encourage countries where beaching recycling is currently undertaken, such as India, Bangladesh or Pakistan, to make the necessary investments and build adequate ship recycling facilities. These investments are crucial in terms of protecting workers' health and ensuring that the environment is protected from the hazardous chemicals involved. This vote also represents a clear wake-up call to ship owners: the days of profit-maximisation through exploitation of poverty in developing countries are over.

Following the disappointing vote in this year's April plenary session, where the plenary voted against the

creation of various forms of financial incentives to safely scrap ships, including a scrapping fund financed by the industry itself, the Greens are pleased that the Commission will look into the possibility of establishing a financial mechanism, applicable to all ships calling at EU ports, that would raise funds towards environmentally sound recycling. The negative vote in the plenary came following heavy lobbying from the ports sector and despite support in the environment committee and repeated requests from the European Parliament."

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