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Ship recycling

New legislation to end hazardous scrapping of EU ships on beaches



The Council today confirmed an agreement with the European Parliament on new legislation on the recycling of EU ships. The new law 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 rule out the current unsafe and highly polluting practice of "beaching". Compliance with these standards will be ensured by regular inspections, Commission assessments and the right of NGOs to request action by the Commission in case of non-compliance by approved facilities. Commenting on the final agreement, Green MEP and EP rapporteur/draftsperson **Carl Schlyter** stated: *"This new legislation finally puts an end to European ships being recklessly scrapped in developing countries. Currently, most EU ships are sent to South-East Asia at the end of their lives, where they are scrapped on a beach, under unacceptable conditions for human health and gross pollution of the environment. The new law allows ship recycling from built structures only, with full containment of all hazardous materials and use of impermeable floors. None of this is possible on a beach, clearly disqualifying beaching for the recycling of EU ships."* *"I want to stress that this is not an attack against India, Bangladesh or Pakistan - the countries that currently practice beaching - but against the dangerous and highly polluting practice of beaching. This regulation incentivises these countries to make the necessary investments in proper ship recycling facilities - above all for the sake of safe and environmentally-sound jobs in their countries."* *"This is a clear wake-up call to ship owners: the days of profit-maximisation through exploitation of poverty in developing countries are over. It is high time that the shipping industry takes its responsibilities seriously and sends its ships to safe and sound recycling facilities only. Those who think they can avoid this by exploiting the flagging system should take another look at the law: the Commission was tasked with assessing the feasibility of a financial mechanism, applicable to all ships calling at EU ports, to finance environmentally-sound recycling within three years and accompany it with a legislative proposal, if*

appropriate. Polluters have to pay - and if they are not willing, the legislator will have to use its powers to oblige them to pay."

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