

Press Release – Japanese End-of-life Ship Arrested in Antwerp

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NGOs applaud Belgium for preventing an illegal export of the ship to India and call on the Japanese owners to adopt a sustainable ship recycling policy

Brussels, 6 June 2014 - After having been alerted by the NGO Shipbreaking Platform, a coalition of environmental, human rights and labour organisations, the Flemish Environment Ministry has seized the end-of-life car carrier *Global Spirit*. The vessel is not allowed to leave the port of Antwerp before the Japanese owners provide evidence that the vessel will be dismantled in accordance with European waste law. *"We applaud Belgium for having stopped the Japanese ship from sailing to Alang, India, where the vessel would have been broken under very hazardous conditions, an export which would have been illegal under European law,"* said Ingvild Jenssen, Policy Advisor of the NGO Platform on Shipbreaking. *"On the shipbreaking beaches of Alang labour rights are poorly respected and pollution laws are weak or not-enforced - the conditions we see in India would never be allowed in Europe or in Japan."* The Platform alerted the Belgian authorities earlier this week [1] after it had been reported that the *Global Spirit* was sold to the infamous shipbreaking beaches in India, where at least six workers have died so far this year crushed by steel plates and many more have been taken ill by occupational disease due to ship-borne hazardous substances like asbestos and PCBs. According to the European Union Waste Shipment Regulation, only if all hazardous materials, such as asbestos, residue oils and toxic paints, are removed from the *Global Spirit* can it be allowed to be exported to South Asia. The Regulation was designed to prevent the environmental injustice of rich countries exporting their toxic wastes to impoverished countries that lack the technology and infrastructure to manage such wastes. The end-of-life vehicle carrier *Global Spirit* has been used to transport cars for Nissan-Renault on a regular route Morocco-EU-Turkey under a long term time charter with Hoegh Autoliners, managed by Autotrans based in France. The owners of the *Global Spirit* have already communicated to the NGO Shipbreaking Platform that they are currently looking for an alternative breaking destination for the ship. *"We now call on the Japanese owners of the ship, Mitsui O.S.K. Lines Limited (MOL) and Nissan Car Carriers (NCC), to find a sustainable solution for their entire fleet - not only the Global Spirit for which they have been caught red-handed - and adopt a company policy on ship recycling that will ensure the safe and green recycling of all their ships off the beach"* said Ingvild Jenssen. Last year the Japanese ship owner MOL sold six end-of-life ships to South Asian shipbreakers [2], prioritising the highest price for the ships and ignoring the harm done to workers, local communities and the environment [3]. The charterers of the *Global Spirit*, Hoegh Autoliners, who are also 20 percent shareholders in NCC, have already adopted a sustainable ship recycling policy for their ships requiring them to be broken 'off the beach'. More and more progressive ship owners are refusing to sell their end-of-life ships to substandard beach breaking yards and the new EU Ship Recycling Regulation has set a clear standard for safer and greener practices that effectively rules out the beaching practice.

CONTACT: Ingvild Jenssen ingvild@shipbreakingplatform.org +32 (0)2 6094 420 **NOTES:** [1] See NGO Shipbreaking Platform press release *Belgium Called Upon to Halt Export of Toxic Ship* – 4 June 2014 [2] In 2013 Mitsui O.S.K. Lines Limited (MOL) sold six ships for dismantling on the beaches of South Asia:

- 1996 built wood chip carrier Daio Robin (IMO 9136905) sold to Alang breakers, India
- 1991 built wood chip carrier Ryu Yoh (IMO 8921444) sold to Alang breakers, India
- 1986 built roro Cosmos Venture (IMO 8600143) sold to Alang breakers, India
- 1988 built roro Solar Wing (IMO 8708244) sold to Alang breakers, India
- 1999 built tanker Diamond Jasmine (IMO 9177143) sold to Alang breakers, India
- 1994 built bulker Rubin (IMO 9064114) sold to Chittagong breakers, Bangladesh

[3] In India, Bangladesh and Pakistan ships are dismantled on tidal beaches whose soft sands cannot support crucial safety measures such as heavy lifting or emergency response equipment and which allow pollution to seep directly into the delicate coastal zone environment. No country in the developed world allows ships to be broken on their beaches. While shipbreaking can be done in a safe and clean way with proper technologies and infrastructure, most ship-owners choose to sell their ships for significantly greater profit to substandard yards operating in countries without adequate resources to provide safeguards and infrastructure to manage the hazardous materials found within the ships' structure. On the South Asian shipbreaking beaches, vulnerable migrant workers, many of them children, break apart massive and toxic ships by hand, often without shoes, gloves, hard hats or masks to protect their lungs from asbestos, and poison fumes. The International Labour Organization (ILO) considers shipbreaking on beaches to be amongst the world's most dangerous jobs.