

Press Release – NGOs Publish 2013 List of Toxic Ship Dumpers: German and Greek Shipping Companies Amongst the World’s Worst

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Brussels, 3 February 2014 –

The NGO Shipbreaking Platform, a global coalition of organisations seeking to prevent dirty and dangerous shipbreaking practices worldwide, today published the complete list of ships that were dismantled around in the world in 2013. Of the 1213 large ocean-going vessels that were scrapped in 2013, 645 were sold to substandard beaching facilities in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh [1]. Approximately 40% of these ships were EU-owned. The new EU regulation on ship recycling entered into force on 30 December 2013. However, unless an economic incentive is added to it, the registration of European ships under flags of convenience will allow ship owners to sail around the new regulation and continue dumping their toxic ships in substandard facilities. End-of-life vessels contain toxic materials such as asbestos, heavy metals, PCBs and organic waste within their structures. South Asia has become a preferred dumping ground as environmental, safety and labour rights standards are poorly enforced there. Ship owners are able to sell their ships to the beach breakers for considerably greater profit than if they were sold to clean and safe recycling facilities. *“Whereas the number of dismantled ships remained nearly as high as in 2012, the number of beached ships dropped from 850 to 645 in 2013, representing a reduction of 24% from the previous year. More ship owners have opted for cleaner and safer solutions in 2013 compared to previous years – this is good news for the environment and the workers, and also for those ship recycling yards globally that have invested in better practices”*, says Patrizia Heidegger, Executive Director of the NGO Shipbreaking Platform. *“Still, the majority of ship owners uphold their dirty practices and European owners are amongst the worst.”* European ship owners sold a total of 372 large commercial vessels for breaking last year, of which 238, almost two thirds, ended up on a South Asian beach. Greece remains the worst European toxic ship dumper, closely followed by Germany. Owners in these countries disposed a record-high 80 percent of their end-of-life ships in India, Bangladesh and Pakistan, and included well-known companies such as Danaos and Euroseas (Greece), and Conti, Hapag-Lloyd and Leonhardt & Blumberg (Germany). Comparatively, Japanese owners sent 43% of their ships to South Asia, whilst Chinese owners in vast majority opted for nationally available ship recycling capacity [2]. Other European companies that have recurrently topped the lists of worst dumpers include Switzerland-based Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC), with 9 ships dumped in India in 2013, and the Monaco-based Sammy Ofer Group, with 13 ships dumped in Bangladesh, Pakistan and India. Once applicable, the new EU ship recycling regulation will ban the breaking of ships registered under the flag of an EU Member State in beaching yards and demand proper recycling in facilities that meet the requirements set out in the Regulation. However, the Regulation runs the risk of becoming a paper tiger: more than two thirds of the European ships dismantled in 2013 did not sail under the flag of an EU Member State when heading for a dismantling yard and would therefore not have been covered by the new Regulation. In addition to the ships already sailing under non-European flags during operational use, another 55 ships were flagged out from European registries just before scrapping outside the EU. Flags of convenience such as Comoros, Tuvalu, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Togo and Sierra Leone, that are less favoured during operational use, were excessively popular flags for the end-of-life vessels broken on beaches in 2013. *“Reflagging has always been a convenient way for ship owners to circumvent rules enforced by the flag states. The Platform and its members have been calling upon the EU to introduce an economic incentive to promote clean and safe ship recycling, because a Regulation based only on the voluntary registration under a European flag will not have the promised impact”*, says Patrizia Heidegger. Responsible European ship owners have meanwhile developed ship recycling policies. The Danish Maersk group, the world’s largest containership owner, was amongst the first to have an ambitious ship recycling policy and has so far lived up to it for those ships registered under its name. However, Maersk sold off three ships to Greek owner Diana Shipping and chartered the vessels back: all three were beached in 2013. The sale of old ships to a new owner while continuing to be the operator is a common way of avoiding responsibility at end-of-life, and it weakens Maersk’s efforts to be a global leader in green ship recycling. Best practice examples are Norwegian ship owners Grieg and Høegh Autoliners, who have proven to be serious about their environmental policies and have not beached vessels in 2013. Canada Steamship Lines (CSL) and Royal Dutch Boskalis went one step further and had their ships recycled within OECD countries only. Dutch company Van Oord, active in the dredging and offshore industry, has recently stated they will no longer beach any of their ships. CONTACT Patrizia Heidegger Executive Director +32 2 609 9419 patrizia@shipbreakingplatform.org Ingvild Jenssen Policy Advisor +32 2 609 9420 ingvild@shipbreakingplatform.org NOTES [1] Ships are broken in Bangladesh, Pakistan and India 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 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, and enforced regulations, 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 dangerous business. 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 among the world's most dangerous jobs. It is also important to note that not all ships sold to modern ship recycling facilities were necessarily demolished in a safe and environmentally sound way. Beyond technology, a hazardous industry requires expertise and training, tight controls by the authorities, transparency and traceability of waste as well as independent trade unions. [2] In 2013, China launched a three-year cash subsidy program for scrapping cargo ships and tankers. Chinese ship operators will receive a cash subsidy of 750 Yuan (91 euro) per gross ton for scrapping an older ship.