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32 Multinational Companies Say 'No' to Dirty and Dangerous Shipbreaking

02/04/2015

Brussels, 2 April 2015 – Major companies such as H&M, Tetra Laval, ABB, Philips, Volvo and Volkswagen do not want to be associated with substandard shipbreaking practices in South Asia and have asked their forwarders – the shipping companies they use to transport their goods – to adopt sustainable ship recycling policies.

In January, the NGO Shipbreaking Platform published its annual list of global dumpers including 641 ships that were sold for substandard shipbreaking on the tidal beaches of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Several of these ships were owned by companies that the members of the Clean Shipping Network (CSN), a network of 32 multinationals, use to transport

their products. MSC, Hanjin, MOL, Yang Ming, Conti, G Bulk and Danaos were some of the ship owners that last year made a deliberate choice to sell their end-of-life vessels to a substandard shipbreaking yard for the sake of higher profits – a choice of profits at the cost of people and the environment.

CSN members have now reacted to this irresponsible practice with a statement condemning the breaking of ships on tidal beaches. In the statement, shipping companies mentioned on the Platform's list of dumpers are asked to review their policies and practices regarding the selling and recycling of end-of-life vessels. The shipping companies are also asked to report on their ship recycling policy in the Clean Shipping Index questionnaire, a tool used by leading international cargo owners to evaluate the environmental performance of their providers of sea transports.

Eleven of the CSN members even went one step further by sending a letter directly to their business partners in the maritime industry stating that working with companies that do not deal responsibly with their end-of-life fleet is unacceptable for them. They warned that sustainable ship recycling is an issue they will consider when signing agreements with shipping companies, and stated that poor performance in the field of environment and social policies have consequences for their business decisions.

"We believe collaboration is a must to bring about systematic change to the sea transport industry. The Clean Shipping Network members use the procurement process to enhance sustainable development and to raise awareness on how the shipping industry impacts the environment", says Sara Sköld, Director of the Clean Shipping Index.

With increasing pressure from also their customers, many ship owners will have to seriously consider revising their ship recycling practices. Currently thirteen large shipping companies follow sustainable ship recycling policies, including Royal Dutch Boskalis, Canadian CSL Group and Singapore-based China Navigation Company. More recently, German Hapag-Lloyd joined the group of ship owners that opt for ship recycling off the beach. They did so on principle, even if they have to compromise on their profits – just as the other progressive ship owners committed to the proper end-of-life management of their fleet, they simply do not want to be responsible for polluting sensitive coastal zones and putting workers lives at risk during dirty and dangerous shipbreaking on tidal beaches.

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