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Clean Shipping Coalition

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Sándor Fazekas

Minister of Rural Development,
Budapest, Hungary.

11 February 2011

Dear Minister Fazekas,

A unique opportunity for the IMO to cut greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from shipping.

We write on behalf of the European Environmental Bureau (EEB), Europe's largest federation of environmental citizens' organisations, and the Clean Shipping Coalition (CSC), eight environmental organisations working to improve the maritime sector's environmental performance.

Commissioners Kallas and Hedegaard said last week, *'Europe must make every effort to help the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) agree this year on global measures to curb greenhouse gas emissions from ships - now and in the long term'*.

A straight-forward legal step

In that spirit, we urge you to ensure that Hungary ratifies a central piece of IMO legislation - namely the MARPOL Annex VI Regulations for the Prevention of Air Pollution from Ships and in your role as holder of the EU Presidency, to urge the Czech Republic, Austria, Slovakia, Malta and Monaco to do the same. This simple legal step could be crucially important in ensuring that the IMO agrees what in effect would be the world's first globally binding instrument to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The IMO is seeking to adopt the Energy Efficiency Design Index (EEDI) as a further amendment to MARPOL Annex VI which now sets limits on SO_x and NO_x emissions. The EEDI would require most newly built ocean-going ships to be progressively more fuel efficient and result, by 2030 when the world's fleet will have been largely renewed, in a reduction of international ship CO₂ emissions of up to 20%. This will not, in itself, be enough to halt the growth in shipping emissions, but it will make a significant difference and be a critical first step. Negotiations at the IMO and UNFCCC on global market-based-measures to reduce ship emissions have been bogged down for years in a clash between the UNFCCC principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and IMO's equal treatment of ships. No early breakthrough is in sight. Unlike these talks, the MARPOL process which could cover a standard but not market-based measures, does not necessarily require consensus.

A unique opportunity

Should the EEDI be adopted as an amendment to Annex VI by a majority vote of ratifying states, this decision would become binding on all IMO's 169 member states by virtue of the IMO's tacit agreement process. The unique provisions in MARPOL to take decisions by such a vote in the absence of consensus, holds the possibility of approving the EEDI efficiency standard even though China, Saudi Arabia and key developing countries oppose the move. The EEDI would in practice become the world's first global mandatory climate instrument.

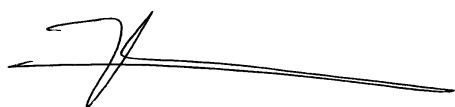
China and Saudi Arabia effectively froze progress on the EEDI by blocking the circulation of the EEDI text at the 61st meeting of IMO's Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 61) last September. However nine IMO members – Norway, Germany, UK, Denmark, Belgium, Australia, Canada, Japan and Liberia – subsequently exercised their right to have the text circulated nevertheless. A decision on the EEDI is now expected at MEPC 62 in July 2011.

Every vote counts

If brought to a vote, adoption requires a two-thirds majority of Parties to Annex VI present and voting and representing at least 50 per cent of world tonnage. Sixty-two countries have ratified MARPOL Annex VI. Hungary, Czech Republic, Austria, Slovakia, Malta and Monaco have not. By ratifying Annex VI now and being present and voting next July, the prospects for success will be greatly enhanced. Absence on the other hand, particularly given how tight we know the vote will be, would reflect very poorly on Europe, on EU claims to play a leading role in climate change action, and on EU professions to help the IMO deliver results. It is clear that opposing states such as China are rallying the opposition.

We call on Hungary to ratify MARPOL Annex VI as soon as possible and on the EU Presidency to ensure the other EU non ratifiers do likewise. We also call on the Presidency and the Commission to ensure that the EU gives strong support to the EEDI in the run-up to the vote including political efforts with other countries notably Iceland and New Zealand which are also yet to ratify.

Yours sincerely,



John Hontelez
Secretary General
EEB - European Environmental Bureau



Eelco Leemans
President
CSC - Clean Shipping Coalition

Cc Vice President of the EC Ashton

Commissioner Hedegaard

Commissioner Kallas

Commissioner Potočník

Chairman Jo Leinen

