



ISRA appeals for improvements in shipbreaking at Basel Convention

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The International Ship Recycling Association (ISRA) has urged attendees at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP10) to the Basel Convention in Colombia last month to embrace the new Hong Kong Convention as it holds 'opportunity for dramatic improvements to the ship recycling industry'.

The theme of COP10 in Cartagena was 'Prevention, minimization and recovery of wastes'. Shipbreaking has become a major source of hazardous waste for certain developing countries, especially in South Asia. During its appeal ISRA underlined that despite the successful efforts of the Basel Convention to contain waste streams in other industries it has not been able to prevent the continuing flow of vessels to the non-OECD countries without proper facilities. ISRA reiterated that the Hong Kong International Convention for the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships (2009) does provide a level of control over shipbreaking equal to the Basel Convention.

"The Hong Kong Convention not only offers specific regulations for ships and inventories of hazardous materials but it also promotes sound ship recycling procedures and methods and contains strict requirements for ship recycling facilities where significant improvements still have to be made", says ISRA secretary general Bernard Veldhoven. "Such specialized legislation for ships, for recycling methods, for workers and facilities, cannot be offered by the Basel Convention".

ISRA acknowledges the Hong Kong Convention still needs to move forward with stricter regulations but says it has great potential. Veldhoven: "Much will depend on the ambitions of the stakeholders to invest and improve and the way governments look after the interests of both workers and the environment in this industry."

Despite the strong support for the Hong Kong Convention during the meeting in Colombia from the EU-countries, Norway, Japan, USA and China, some South American and African countries were concerned about replacing the Basel Convention for ships without the prior assurance that the Hong Kong Convention

will work out effectively. Nevertheless Basel Convention Parties have encouraged to ratify the Hong Kong Convention.

The process of ratification will take a period of at least 5 years with the EU working on a new set of rules to enable ships to sail to non OECD countries with appropriate 3rd-party controlled facilities and without being hit by an export ban. This allows countries such as China that have receiving facilities meeting the Basel Convention Standards to continue their ship recycling activities.

Veldhoven says ISRA welcomes all initiatives by the Basel Convention which have the goal to improve present ship recycling practises :“We will continue to offer our expertise to support these programs and to convince shipowners to bring their ships to the safe and environmentally friendly recycling yards of their members.”

Profile ISRA

The International Ship Recycling Association , founded in 2007, is uniting the strongest and most green ship recycling yards in the world. Their aim is to promote environmentally sound and safe ship recycling and to continuously improve the quality of the process of ship demolition among their members. ISRA wants to give the ship owner confidence that by bringing their end of life ship to an ISRA member he acts in line with a sustainable, environmentally sound policy and in accordance with Corporate Social Responsibility. At present the green ISRA capacity is already sufficient to handle more than 30% of the present demand.

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