NGO SHIPBREAKING PLATFORM

ANNUAL REPORT 2015

ABOUT US

The NGO Shipbreaking Platform is a coalition of environmental, human rights and labour rights organisations working to promote safe and environmentally sound ship recycling globally. The Platform was first created in September 2005 after the few NGOs working on shipbreaking noticed that a broader base of support, a stronger network of organisations from ship-owning and shipbreaking countries, and a long-term approach were needed to challenge the political clout of the shipping industry.

The coalition quickly evolved from being a European Platform to a global one, including NGOs based in the major shipbreaking countries India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Turkey. It is now present with 19 member organisations and six partners in 12 countries. The Platform is recognised by United Nations agencies, the European Union, and leading media as the pre-eminent international civil society advocacy organisation on shipbreaking.

VISION

Our vision is to prevent the dumping of end-of-life vessels containing hazardous waste on beaches in developing countries and other substandard practices, and to ensure clean, safe and just ship recycling in an environmentally friendly ship recycling industry offering decent and safe jobs. Our commitment to finding sustainable global solutions is based on the respect for human rights and the principles of environmental justice, producer responsibility, 'polluter pays' and clean production.

MISSION

To promote clean, safe and just ship recycling globally in respect of human rights, core labour standards and environmental justice.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

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EDITORIAL

In 2015, we counted a total of 768 vessels – container ships, bulkers, chemical, oil and gas tankers, passenger ships but also more and more oil rigs and drilling ships – that were sold for demolition. Compared to the last years, in which we have seen more than 1000 end-of-life vessels scrapped annually, 2015 meant a reduction. However, this is not a sign of a change in practices: in the second half of 2015, the prices offered for end-of-life vessels were very low, mainly due to low steel prices, so that many ship owners, brokers and cash buyers withheld obsolete tonnage. Already in the first quarter of 2016, the figures are back on the rise. And in 2015, 73% of all old ships – in terms of tonnage scrapped – ended up once again on the beaches of South Asia rather than in modern ship recycling facilities.

The debate in 2015 has been dominated by one big question: can a beaching yard, where a ship is broken down directly on the sand, in the intertidal zone, become a clean and safe ship recycling yard? Many business stakeholders quickly answer this question with yes. Amongst them are, of course, the shipbreaking yards from South Asia themselves who want to see their industry portrayed in a green light rather than being criticised for dirty and dangerous practices. But also the cash buyers, that is, the intermediaries to whom most ship owners sell their old vessels before the last voyage, have long started to promote their services as "green"or "ethical". They are afraid that their customary business model, which is based on maximising profits for ship owners and themselves by selling off to those yards offering the highest prices – and these are often those with the lowest standards – will repel more and more responsible shipping companies. The green washing of ship recycling practice is in full swing, while none amongst the major cash buyers stopped working with the worst yards when it brings good money.

Last but not least, more and more ship owners have discovered the concept of 'upgraded' beaching for themselves. It is a very convenient solution: whereas improving the conditions incrementally in beaching yards without ever reaching the top level does not entail substantial investments and can be done comparatively quickly, the profits generated stay high. If only beaching yards were recognised as "green", ship owners could continue externalisting costs for proper recycling to beaching yards without having to bother about critical journalists, researchers, policy-makers, the courts or NGOs. But why do we not buy in to this seemingly easy solution that would allow Indian, and eventually Bangladeshi and Pakistani beaching yards, into the circle of approved ship recyclers?

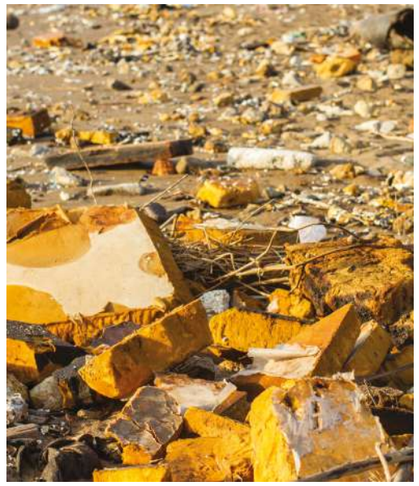
We believe that the beaching method is a dead end. Ship dismantling is an industrial activity that needs industrial methods, equipment and standards. A beach is not an appropriate place for a high-risk heavy industry involving hazardous waste management. Beach locations and intertidal zone operations cannot close all the gaps to ensure safe operations and full containment of pollutants. What is needed is a clear departure from the unnecessarily risky activity of managing reverse logistics of ship material management on a beach and a relocation of ship recycling to platforms that can ensure sustainable practices. Beaching is an archaic method which environmental experts have said needs to be phased-out and that European and Chinese law has banned. We believe that both workers and the environment all around the world have the same right to full protection – and that countries whose industries are developing such as India or Bangladesh do more harm than good to themselves by believing that they cannot operate on a more ambitious level. They can.

This is also why the Platform does not believe that the Hong Kong Convention (HKC) will bring a sustainable solution to the problem of shipbreaking, if it entered into force. During the negotiation for the HKC, the flag states and shipping nations – those international players dominating shipping – did not have the courage of conviction and the will to admit the obvious: that a beach is an unsuitable platform for conducting a hazardous, high-risk heavy industry. They were not willing to accept that end-of-life vessels constitute hazardous waste, and thus the HKC does not address the issues of downstream waste management and environmental justice. More than 100 global environmental organisations, the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Toxics and European policy makers have denounced the HKC for failing to do so.

For these reasons, the Platform continued to strongly advocate for a proper standard for clean and safe ship recycling in 2015. We are convinced that the approach taken by the European Union and the standard set by its Ship Recycling Regulation will provide the shipping industry with an opportunity to improve its practices. While only vessels sailing under an EU flag will be legally obliged to use an EU approved facility, any company around the world with a responsible policy can use the European list to prove their effort. This is a way forward and an approach for real change – waiting until the shipbreaking countries, cash buyers, and end-of-life flags such as St Kitts and Nevis, the Comoros or Tuvalu will get things right, is not.

In 2015, the 32 multinationals united in the Clean Shipping Network declared that they demand from the shipping companies that transport their goods to clean up shipbreaking practices. Moreover, ship financers and banks are looking into stricter environmental standards for ship owners whose businesses they finance. Cargo owners, investors and customers do not accept polluting and harmful end of life management of old ships and are calling for better solutions – off the beach. Responsible ship owners should join this movement rather than entertain the tedious process of incremental greenwashing for the sake of profits. Proper life-cycle management is key to ensuring a sustainable future for shipping – and this will remain our vision throughout 2016.

Patrizia Heidegger
Executive Director, NGO Shipbreaking Platform



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WHAT IS THE PROBLEM ?

After about 20 - 30 years of operation, a sea-going vessel reaches the end of its operational life. In the last years, around 1000 large commercial vessel have been dismantled annually. Shipping companies sell old ships in return for a last profit: about 90% of a ship's structure is made of steel which is recovered during the demolition process and allows for several millions USD of profit for the owner – the amount depending on the size and type of vessel.

Compared to sinking or abandonment, ship recycling is the only environmentally-friendly way of getting rid of an old ship as it ensures the reuse of resources such as steel. However, shipbreaking is a heavy and hazardous industry that exposes both workers and the environment to a great number of risks. It must therefore be carried out in line with safety and environmental protection standards that will safeguard workers, surrounding communities and the environment. Yards must have the proper infrastructure, equipment and procedures to fully contain and control pollution, to safely handle and dispose of hazardous waste, and to prevent accidents and impairment of workers' health.

Today, the five main shipbreaking countries in the world are India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Turkey and China. The majority of end-of-life ships are sold to substandard beaching facilities in South Asia. In 2015, 73% of the world's end-of-life tonnage was broken under dirty and dangerous conditions on the beaches of India, Bangladesh and Pakistan.

DIRTY PRACTICES

Shipbreaking in South Asia is carried out on unprotected beaches where the vessels are broken down manually in the intertidal zone. The ships are ramped up onto the shore and grounded. Cutting down a vessel on a beach does not allow for safe working conditions and the full containment of pollutants, including prevention of leakages into the water and soil.

In addition to toxic materials such as asbestos, PCBs, oil residues and organic waste, ships also contain heavy metals – including toxic paints. Debris and paint chips released during the cutting process and by the crashing of large parts onto the beach are absorbed by the sediments or washed out by the tidal water. Around all shipbreaking areas, the pollution and the uprooting of coastal vegetation, such as mangrove forests, have endangered the biodiversity of the coastal areas and affected the livelihoods of fishing communities.

Millions of tons of hazardous wastes have been, and continue to be, imported to South Asian countries on board end-of-life ships. The hazardous wastes built into the structure of the vessel are in most cases not properly identified. An alarming amount of hazardous materials are not disposed of properly and are either illegally dumped or resold on the local market. The shipbreaking industries in Bangladesh and Pakistan are completely void of hazardous waste treatment and storage facilities. In India, it is legal to re-sell asbestos-containing material and there is no PCB destruction facility.

Environmental concerns also persist where other methods of ship recycling are used. Both the so called 'landing' method used in Turkey and the demolition of vessels pier-side have to ensure that no pollutants are released into the sea and river water, in particular, slag and paint chips containing heavy metals and other toxins as well as oil and polluted water. Also in other ship recycling destinations, such as China and Turkey, hazardous downstream waste management needs to be fully transparent.

DANGEROUS WORKING CONDITIONS

Shipbreaking has been declared the most dangerous job in the world by the ILO. Explosions, falls from great heights and dropping steel parts injure or kill workers. The men also suffers from long-term health effects due to the exposure to toxic fumes and hazardous materials as well as harsh and unhealthy working and living conditions. The risk of contracting a fatal occupational disease at a shipbreaking yard, such as cancer and asbestosis, is high.

SHIPBREAKING HAS BEEN DECLARED THE MOST DANGEROUS JOB IN THE WORLD BY THE ILO

In South Asia, ships are beached at high tide and workers access them at low tide, cutting the structures manually with blow torches. Workers are not provided with sufficient protective equipment, nor are they adequately trained to work in a hazardous heavy industry. In Bangladesh many workers go barefoot or in plastic sandals and whilst hazardous child labour is banned in Bangladesh, many young teenagers are found in the yards, even working night shifts.

Proper respiratory protection during cutting through toxic paints is absent in all South Asian yards. The safe use of heavy machinery to lift cut-off steel parts is not possible on the beaches. Consequently, large parts of the ship crash down on the beach, a practice known as the gravity method and one of the main causes of severe and fatal accidents as workers are crushed by heavy steel pieces. No support is given to disabled workers to start a new livelihood, and the families are often thrown back into extreme poverty.

Also in Aliaga, Turkey, there are serious health and safety concerns for workers. Severe accidents are still frequent, and both the level of protection available to workers as well as the awareness of occupational diseases has to urgently improve. In China, there is a lack of transparency in terms of accident rates. Furthermore, independent trade unions are absent in China.

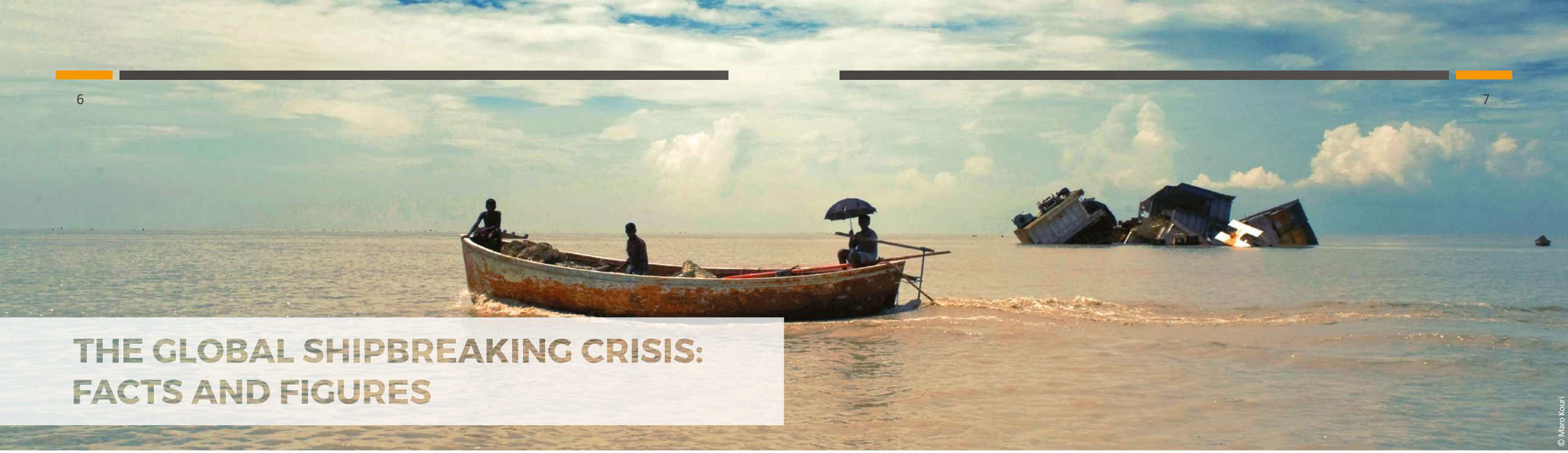
AVOIDING RESPONSIBILITY: CASH BUYERS AND FLAGS OF CONVENIENCE

Often, ship owners do not wish to be associated with a ship that is going to be dismantled on a beach. There are various ways for the ship owners to distance themselves from the vessel, for instance by selling it to a middle-man or by changing the name and the flag of the vessel. In most end-of-life sales, in particular those to the beaching yards, cash buyers are used as intermediaries. These companies specialised in end-of-life deals, buy the ships for cash and thereby ensure immediate liquidity and zero risk to ship owners. The cash buyers become owners for a couple of weeks and take the old vessels to the dismantling yard.

The cash buyers often also re-flag and re-name the ship. The Platform has analysed that certain flags are more popular than others at end-of-life. All these flags are grey or black-listed flags of convenience: they offer a cheap solution for the last voyages to the beaches through very low registration fees, simple online forms and no nationality criteria. Anyone can get such a flag for any vessel overnight and the cash buyer does not even have to incorporate with a post box company. These practices show that the shipbreaking crisis cannot be regulated by flag state jurisdiction, as the cash buyers or the ship owners themselves will always be able to find flag states that are known for not ratifying or properly implementing international conventions and laws, including those regulating ship recycling.

SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS

Clean and safe methods of ship recycling are available. The most sophisticated method is to use a dry dock where a ship is recycled under similar conditions as when it was built: in a fully contained industrial platform with the help of cranes. This method is hardly used however, as it is the least profitable for ship owners. A cheaper and widely used method, for instance in China and Europe, is pier-side demolition where the ship is moored long-side at a quay, cut down from top to bottom, and heavy parts are lifted with the help of cranes. The canoe, the lower part of the hull, is then brought into a slipway and cut down on an impermeable surface. In all cases, strict environmental and safety procedures need to be employed to avoid any unnecessary risks. Towards the end of 2016, the European Commission will publish a list of approved ship recycling facilities: this list will provide ship owners and other stakeholders with a clear reference for sustainable solutions.



THE GLOBAL SHIPBREAKING CRISIS: FACTS AND FIGURES

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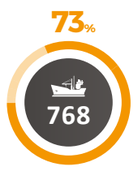
In 2015, a total of 768 vessels had to be dismantled. These ships represented a scrap volume of around 20,4 million Gross Tonnage. As in previous years, South Asia remained the preferred dumping ground for ship owners looking to make the highest possible profits with end-of-life sales: out of the total 768 large commercial vessels dismantled around the world in 2015, 469 were sold to South Asian beaching yards. Therefore, beaching yards represented 73% of the total tonnage scrapped. The rest of old ships were recycled in facilities using more developed facilities, for instance those applying the pier-side demolition method. For the first time in many years, Bangladesh became once again the preferred scrapping destination worldwide and overtook India in terms of tonnage dismantled, which previously representing the largest shipbreaking country. Thus, the country with the worst shipbreaking practices was able to strike most end-of-life deals – very revealing for a ship owners' community promoting itself as environmentally friendly and concerned about the negative impacts of shipbreaking.

Most vessels scrapped in 2015 were bulk carriers, followed by general cargo and container ships, oil and gas tankers, roll-on roll-offs, passenger vessels and oil platforms. Looking at the size of vessels scrapped on the beaches of South Asia, Pakistan received the largest vessels followed by Bangladesh, while Indian yards scrapped more medium-sized ships. China and Turkey tend to recycle smaller vessels on an average. Thus: the larger the vessel, the more likely it ends up on a beach in Pakistan or Bangladesh – where conditions are worst.

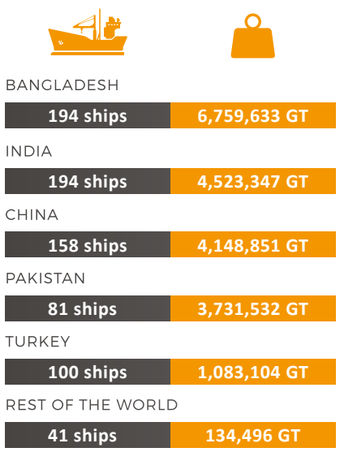
TOTAL

SHIPPING NATIONS DUMPING HIGHEST NUMBER OF SHIPS DISMANTLED WORLDWIDE



469 vessels were sold to South Asian beaching yards

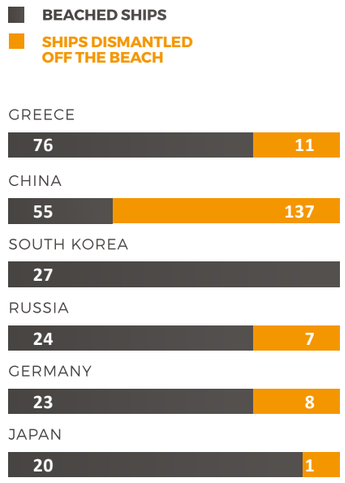
MAIN SHIPBREAKING DESTINATIONS



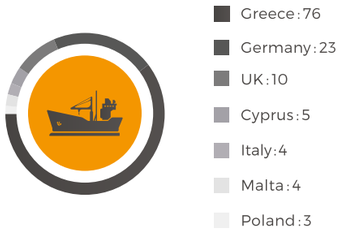
The world's leading shipping nations account for the biggest amount of end-of-life vessels scrapped in 2015. The major ship-owning countries Greece, Germany, Japan, South Korea and Russia sent nearly all of their old vessels for breaking in substandard yards on the beaches of South Asia, that is, ship owners from these countries rarely care about proper recycling and have very little legal or economic incentives to changes their practices. Chinese ship owners sold the majority of their end-of-life vessels to ship recycling facilities within China, for which they receive subsidies from their government, while still dumping more than a fourth of their old ships on beaches.

European ship owners play a crucial role in the global shipbreaking scenario. The total number of EU-owned and/or EU-flagged vessels dismantled worldwide were 217 in 2015. Out of the total of ships dismantled throughout the year, EU ships represented 28,2%. 138 European ship were beached in South Asia. In terms of tonnage scrapped, European-owned ships thus represented more than one third of all end-of-life vessels hitting the beaches. While some European owners show responsibility and have pledged to ensure clean and safe recycling in modern facilities, close to 64% of all European vessels dismantled in 2015 ended up on a beach.

WORLD'S WORST SHIPPING NATIONS



WORST EUROPEAN SHIPPING NATIONS



Out of the 138 European vessels beached, only 31 were still flying a European flag. 9 European-flagged vessels were flagged out to flags of convenience just before their last voyage. The most popular end-of-life flags amongst all vessels scrapped on the beaches in 2015 were Panama, St Kitts and Nevis, Liberia, Comoros and the Marshall Island, amongst which St Kitts and Nevis and the Comoros are known as end-of-life flags.

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MONITORING SHIPBREAKING: DEVELOPMENTS ON THE GROUND

INDIA

Shipbreaking practices in Alang have been under the spotlight of NGOs for more than 20 years. Appalling working conditions and pollution were first documented by Greenpeace in 1998. Following cases filed by NGOs, the Supreme Court issued several rulings demanding improvement of the industry in line with national and international requirements for safe working conditions and environmental protection. As a consequence, the Gujarat Maritime Board (GMB) has set up a waste reception facility and workers now receive elementary training.

The working and living conditions of shipbreaking workers in India remain alarming. Local trade unions reported that at least six workers died in accidents at shipbreaking yards in 2015. Local authorities refuse to publically disclose the accident records and even ignored our requests to share information. We assume that many more workers have suffered from injuries and occupational diseases in 2015. Impunity for yard owners also remains a concern, so far no yard owner has ever been held responsible for the death of a worker as they manage to put pressure on the law enforcers to drop charges brought against them.

In 2015, four yards in Alang received a Statement of Compliance with the requirements of the International Maritime Organisation's Hong Kong Convention from the Japanese classification society ClassNK. Whilst these yards have cemented the secondary cutting zone, installed drainage systems and improved hazardous waste storage at the facility, we have continued to raise concerns related to hazardous operations in the intertidal zone, the lack of proper accommodation and medical facilities for workers, and the weaknesses of downstream waste management. Asbestos contaminated materials are resold and there is currently no proper disposal site for PCBs. NGOs are refused access to the yards.

YOUNG FATHER KILLED

On 22 September 2014, 27-year old worker Prasant Dakua was killed while working on the beached vessel "King Justus" in Alang, India. He had worked without any safety harness at Malwi Ship Breaking. Another worker was severely injured. The Platform researched the case together with German broadcasting service NDR in India and Hamburg, where the last beneficial ship owner, König & Cie, is based, and the report was aired in 2015. The story illustrates the absence of occupational health and safety measures in Alang.

Prashant had married just three months before his death. His father had taken a loan to pay for the wedding, a loan meant to be paid back with Prashant's wage. When the young man died, his wife was pregnant. The yard management did not contact the family to pay the compensation owed to the relatives. Malwi's safety manager said they did not know where the worker came from. By simply asking fellow workers, the journalists found Prasant's parents in a village in Orissa. Although Prasant's father is old and sick, crossed all of North India by train to demand his legal rights. The old man had to hold out for two weeks in front of the shipbreaking yard before he finally received a payment of 2500 Euro – an amount that will not make up for the fact that Prasant's parents, his widow and baby have lost their source of income. Not only did the yard try to deny the family's right to compensation, they also tried to cover up the real reasons for the accident. Fellow workers reported that the victim's face was burnt and disfigured. One said: "This must have been a gas explosion". German ship owner König & Cie, meanwhile partially owned by GMS, one of the largest cash buyers for end-of-life vessels, denies any responsibility. After the NDR report, the Lower Saxony Environment Minister criticised the state-owned bank NordLB for having provided financial service to König & Cie's ship fund.

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BANGLADESH

Dirty and dangerous shipbreaking practices in Bangladesh have been strongly criticized both by international and local NGOs for many years. Severe pollution caused to the marine environment, hazardous waste dumping, appalling working conditions causing many severe and fatal accidents, as well as the wide-spread illegal exploitation of child workers are amongst the main concerns. Shipbreaking first grew into an industry in Bangladesh in the 1980s; however, it was not officially recognized as an industry by the Government of Bangladesh (and thus not regulated) until 2011.

The Chittagong area is void of waste treatment and storage facilities, including a landfill for hazardous wastes such as asbestos. Hazardous materials are either dumped or re-sold. Moreover, vessels are imported with fake certificates claiming they are free of hazardous materials. Thus, wastes are not properly detected and safely removed.

Serious concerns relate to workers' health and safety and systematic breaches of basic labour rights. Workers are usually not provided with proper and hygienic accommodation. They work long hours without holidays and usually do not have any contractual arrangement with the yard management. In 2015, we documented the stories of at least 16 workers who died and more than 20 who were severely injured. The closest specialised hospital is too far for emergencies and the injured workers do not receive financial support for urgently needed medical treatment. The hospital building set up by the Bangladesh Shipbreakers Association, which remained inactive in 2015, can only treat minor injuries.

In 2015, our member OSHE produced a Bengali-language video on occupational health and safety in the shipbreaking yards. OSHE's press work resulted in a series of short documentaries on local TV revealing the working conditions in the yards.

At Least 16 workers died

More than 20 were severely injured

15 YEAR OLD BOY IBRAHIM SEVERLY INJURED PRIVATE DONATIONS PAY FOR OPERATION

In 2015, the Platform and its members followed up on the fate of 15 year old Ibrahim, a boy who was severely injured in shipbreaking. While working at the ARL Group yard, the teenager was struck by a falling steel plate that crushed his leg. His family could not afford an operation. The yard owner, who has a legal obligation to cover medical expenses after a work-related accident, did not respond. It is illegal under Bangladesh's Labour Law to employ children and young workers in hazardous industries such as shipbreaking. If a child is injured in a yard, nobody wants to be responsible: the factory owner would have to admit that he has broken the law. After receiving initial treatment and a bandage, the severely injured boy was sent home. Platform staff member Shahin found him laying in the family's shack unable to walk.

After German international channel DW reported Ibrahim's case, and thousands saw a documentary broadcasted on German, Swiss and Austrian TV, viewers donated for the boy's operation. In April 2015, Ibrahim finally received the operation needed to save his leg. His family is very grateful for the support received. The story ends well for Ibrahim – however, most injured worker do not receive donations. The employers must be held responsible for work-related accidents.

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PAKISTAN

For many years, information about shipbreaking in Pakistan was difficult to obtain. Only in the last years have both international and local NGOs as well as trade unions been campaigning for better working conditions and environmental protection. The shipbreaking yards in Gadani operate directly on the beach without any impermeable and drained working areas protecting the sea and sand from pollution. Gadani and the surrounding area do not have access to any kind of hazardous waste management system, resulting in hazardous waste, such as asbestos, being dumped behind the shipbreaking area.

In 2014, the Platform and its Pakistani member, Sustainable Development Policy Institute, published a first report on the working conditions in shipbreaking. Most of the shipbreaking workers are migrant workers from the poorest parts of Pakistan. There are serious concerns related to workers' health and safety and to systematic breaches of basic labour rights. Workers are usually not provided with proper accommodation and there is a shortage of clean water. Many have built shacks behind the shipbreaking yards made from ply wood and boards found on the old ships. As in Bangladesh, they work very long hours without extra pay or holidays and usually do not have any contractual arrangement with the yard management. In the event of accidents, workers have to be brought to hospitals in Karachi, which is too far to intervene in time to treat severe injuries.

Our member organisation, Center for the Rule of Law, Islamabad (CroLi), filed a petition in 2015 under the Baluchistan Environmental Protection Act. It demands that the shipbreaking industry respect the United Nation's Basel Convention, as is explicitly required under the Environmental Protection Act. The founder of CroLI, advocate Majid Bashir, also met the Chief Minister of the province to convince him to better regulate the industry. The provincial Government has announced that it will work on improving the legal framework. Moreover, we contributed to the ILO's work on a joint effort by the Government of Baluchistan and the Ministries of Labour and Environment to introduce new regulation to improve working conditions in the shipbreaking yards.

SERIOUS CONCERNS RELATED TO WORKERS' HEALTH AND SAFETY

THE BALUCHISTAN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT: PETITION FILED

TURKEY

In 2015, Turkey dismantled 100 ships, 13% of the total number of all scrapped ships and 5,3% of the global tonnage. In comparison to South Asia, Turkey tends to dismantle smaller vessels, many of them either EU-owned or EU-flagged.

In June 2015, we visited the ship recycling facilities in Aliaga. The facilities in Turkey are expected to apply for the EU list of approved ship recycling facilities. We discussed remaining challenges such as the high accident rate and the low awareness of occupational diseases with the Turkish Ship Recyclers Association. Local labour rights groups are seriously concerned about occupational health and safety amongst the shipbreaking workers. Moreover, trade union organisation remains weak. Our members emphasized that these gaps have to be closed if the yards intend to obtain EU approval. We also emphasised the importance of a proper environmental assessment of the landing method, and the necessity to improve practices to avoid slag and paint chips from falling into the water. The Platform approved of the openness towards NGOs and labour rights groups to visit the yards and to discuss controversial issues around the table with different stakeholders.

CHINA

In the early 2000s, Chinese companies invested in modern ship recycling facilities. The beaching method is banned. Currently, the Chinese government subsidises the demolition of Chinese flagged vessels in China thereby retaining domestic end-of-life vessels for its own dismantling industry. In the last 10 years, China has developed into one of the preferred destinations for ship owners, mainly from Europe, seeking clean and safe recycling and it is expected that several yards will apply to be on the EU list of approved recycling facilities.

However, Chinese yards also need to improve their practices. In December 2015, we held a roundtable discussion with the EU Commission, ship recyclers, experts and research institutes focusing on the conditions in China. The outcome of the discussions showed that there is a general lack of transparency and understanding of the overall conditions of ship recycling in China. Not all yards are fully equipped and provide adequate training for the proper removal of hazardous wastes, in particular asbestos. Asbestos is widely used in China, and yards do not always guarantee that all asbestos-containing materials will be adequately disposed of. Also the fate of other waste streams is not easy to track. Last but not least, there are no publicly available data on environmental impacts such as possible contamination of the sea or rivers, air and sediments. Regarding workers' rights, the absence of independent trade unions remains a concern for those seeking ship recycling in line with core international labour rights. While the yards are highly developed at the level of technology and methods used, awareness and specialised knowledge concerning hazardous waste handling need to be strengthened. The NGOs approves of the possibility to visit the yards and that the industry is open to independent researchers.

ASBESTOS IS WIDELY USED IN CHINA

GETTING THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK RIGHT: OUR POLICY CAMPAIGN

What is the issue?

Under international environmental law, end-of-life vessels are considered hazardous waste. However, international law governing the trade of hazardous waste ships, in particular the Basel Convention, is way too easy to circumvent. Under the pretext of continued operational use most ship owners do not declare their intent to dispose of their vessels and thus escape from law enforcement. The industry driven International Maritime Organisation adopted the Hong Kong Convention in 2009. More than 100 global environmental and human rights organisations, the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Toxics and European policy makers have denounced the Hong Kong Convention for merely rubberstamping the status quo rather than demanding a structural change: it does not ban the breaking of ships in the tidal zone of a beach, and it does not regulate the downstream management of hazardous wastes. Only four countries have so far ratified the Hong Kong Convention, which means it will not be enforced by anyone any day soon.

As international institutions have failed to provide solutions to the shipbreaking crisis, the European Union (EU) has worked on new legislation to regulate European ships. More than 40% of the world's commercial fleet is controlled by shipping companies based in the EU and European shipping companies top the global list of end-of-life dumpers. The EU Ship Recycling Regulation entered into force in 2013 and will be applicable by latest 2019, but most probably in 2017 following the publication of an EU list of approved ship recycling facilities. The EU sets a global standard for sustainable ship recycling that we support.

> *I AGREE THAT WE NEED TO STOP THE – I WOULD SAY – SHAMEFUL PRACTICE OF EUROPEAN SHIPS BEING DISMANTLED ON BEACHES*
>
> **KARMENU VELLA, EUROPEAN COMMISSIONER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MARCH 2015**

What have we done?

We advocate for policy developments that support the growth of clean and safe ship recycling practices globally. Building upon 10 years of successful campaigning, our focus in 2015 was on strengthening the existing legislative framework at the European Union level.

MAKE THE POLLUTER PAY!

In April 2015, we published a report entitled "What a difference a flag makes – Why ship owners' responsibility to ensure sustainable ship recycling needs to go beyond flag state jurisdiction". We show that flags of convenience (FOCs), in particular the link between certain "end-of-life flags" and substandard shipbreaking practices, are likely to undermine the implementation of the EU Ship Recycling Regulation. Ship owners will be able to circumvent legislation by simply flagging-out to a non-EU flag. Solutions to ensure sustainable ship recycling globally must therefore go beyond flag state jurisdiction in order to close the loopholes created by the FOC system. The report clearly shows the added value of installing a financial 'polluter pays' incentive based on access to European ports.

We have been pushing for the EU to adopt a financial instrument that will ensure the polluter pays principle during two stakeholders' meetings organised by the Commission, and were successful in prompting the European Economic and Social Committee to issue an 'own initiative opinion' on the necessity of a financial incentive – we will act as the expert to the rapporteur on this file in 2016.

FOCUS ON GREECE

Greece has the largest merchant fleet worldwide and Greek ship owners have repeatedly topped the list of those that sell end-of-life vessels to substandard beaching facilities in South Asia. In order to address this situation, we sought the support of other leading NGOs working on improving the maritime industry – Transport & Environment, Surfrider Foundation, Greenpeace, Clean Shipping Index and MedSOS, a Greek NGO – to organise a public debate entitled "Towards Sustainable Shipping: Civil Society in Dialogue with Policy Makers and the Shipping Industry" in Athens. The event was hosted by the European Parliament's Information Office in Greece. Both the Greek Environment Minister and the Director of the Greek Shipping Ministry contributed to the debate. Having also successfully secured the participation of key Members of the European Parliament, a broader base of support is now safeguarded for the upcoming debates on ship recycling at the European level. During the European Maritime Days organised in Athens we informed visitors at our booth about dirty and dangerous shipbreaking and sustainable ship recycling, and were selected by the European Commission to coordinate a work shop entitled "Greening the Lifecycle of Ships". The European Environment Commissioner Karmenu Vella visited our booth and discussed solutions to the shipbreaking crisis with our Executive Director.

PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL ENDORSEMENT OF THE EUROPEAN APPROACH

We brought our campaign demands to the attention of key international stakeholders, including the UN Special Rapporteur on Toxics and Human Rights, the Basel Secretariat and IMO Secretariat, as well as countries responsible for development projects aimed at improving conditions in South Asia. We also raised our concerns at the Annual Conference of the International Bar Association in Vienna and during a Round Table discussion with recycling experts, academia and the European Commission on the challenges of ship recycling in China.

Call for action

We call upon the European Union to maintain high standards when publishing its list of approved ship recycling facilities and not to give in to shipping interests for beach-breaking. We also call upon the Member States to support a 'European Ship Recycling License', that is, a financial incentive for all ship owners calling on European ports to choose clean and safe recycling.

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MAKING BUSINESS STAKEHOLDERS DO THE RIGHT THING: OUR CORPORATE CAMPAIGN

What is the issue?

Most ship owners still do not feel responsible for the proper end-of-life management of their fleet. They just sell old ships to cash buyers and close their ears and eyes to the consequences of this practice. What counts is profit. However, times are changing and more and more ship owners commit to sustainable shipping. Also producers of consumer goods that transport cargo by sea, ship financers and banks commit to responsible recycling practices and demand ship owners to clean up their end-of-life practices. We advise all responsible ship owners to use the European Union list of accepted ship recycling facilities once it has been published.

What have we done?

We reach out to the shipping industry to inform them about dirty and dangerous shipbreaking as well as clean and safe alternatives. We invite ship owners to enter into a constructive dialogue that will enable them to find better solutions. We have been advising leading ship-owning companies such as Hapag Lloyd, Maersk and Royal Dutch Boskalis. At the same time we have also been naming and shaming those companies unwilling to take responsibility. We have also engaged with large multinationals, the cargo owners, as well as ship financers and banks – the business partners of the shipping industry who can use their leverage to improve practices. By naming and shaming companies that continue to dump their vessels in substandard facilities, we have prompted ship owners to develop policies and to demand the proper recycling of their end-of-life vessels in modern facilities that operate off the beach.

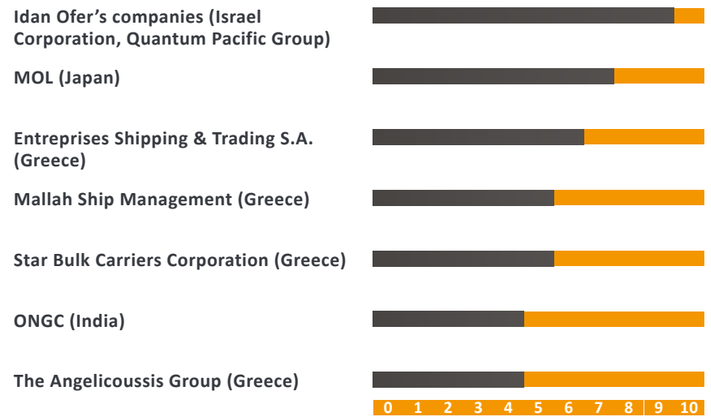
CALL FOR ACTION

The NGO Shipbreaking Platform calls upon all ship owners globally to use modern industrial platforms for ship recycling that can ensure clean and safe practices in line with international standards and not to sell their end-of-life vessels to beachbreaking yards. Starting from 2016, the Platform asks shipping companies to refer to the European list of ship recycling facilities. We call on cargo owners and ship financers to negotiate clean and safe ship recycling requirements with ship owners they do business with and to ensure that their business partners do not dump old ships in substandard yards.

SHIP DISMANTLING ON THE BEACHING YARDS OF BANGLADESH, INDIA AND PAKISTAN IS ASSOCIATED WITH SEVERE POLLUTION AND UNSAFE WORKING CONDITIONS. MEMBERS OF THE CLEAN SHIPPING NETWORK STRONGLY CONDEMN AND DISTANCE THEMSELVES FROM SUCH SHIP BREAKING PRACTICES. (…) SHIPPING COMPANIES, MENTIONED ON THE LIST FROM THE NGO SHIPBREAKING PLATFORM, ARE ASKED BY CSN MEMBERS TO REVIEW THEIR POLICIES AND PRACTICES REGARDING THE SELLING AND RECYCLING OF END-OF-LIFE VESSELS

CLEAN SHIPPING NETWORK, APRIL 2015

“WORST SHIP-DUMPING COMPANIES”



PUBLICATION OF ANNUAL LIST

In February 2015, we published our annual list of shipping companies revealing those that sold end-of-life ships to the substandard shipbreaking yards in South Asia and those that chose better alternatives. The list provides the most detailed publically available dataset on end-of-life practices, including the flags used by ship owners. The findings of the list were reported in the media in leading shipping nations. The information was also picked up by the Clean Shipping Network (CSN), a group of 32 multinationals, demanding sustainable sea shipping.

SHIP OWNERS’ ASSOCIATIONS

We continued to raise the problems of dirty and dangerous shipbreaking practices with various ship owners’ associations and other industry representatives. We presented and discussed intensively with the European Community Ship Owners’ Association’s (ECSA) Environment Committee, as well as with the French, Danish, Norwegian, German, and Italian Ship Owners’ Association and have thus enabled an exchange of information and ensured that the issue remains on the agenda of the associations.

POLSTEAM IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Together with the European Environmental Bureau (EEB), an umbrella organisation representing more than 160 members, we raised serious concerns about the Polish Government owned shipping company POLSTEAM’s dumping practices. The European Environment Commissioner, Karmenu Vella, sent a letter to the Polish government asking them to improve the end-of-life management of the POLSTEAM fleet in line with EU law.

MAERSK

In June 2015, we were invited to speak at Maersk’s Sustainability Conference where we criticised the shipping giant for selling vessels to other ship owners, integrating them back into their fleet under long-term charters – and then allowing or even incentivising the demolition of these vessels in some of the worst beaching yards in India and Bangladesh. We also engaged with Maersk Drilling, and advised the subsidiary on the demolition of the Maersk Endurer, an oil rig, at Zoushan Changhong International Ship Recycling in China.

INDUSTRY CONFERENCES

In March 2015, we spoke at the TradeWinds Ship Recycling Forum in Singapore. We focused on working conditions and the high number of accidents we have documented. For the first time, a full panel discussion was held amongst different representatives from the shipping companies themselves, partially prompted by the Platform’s dialogue with them. In June, we participated in Lloyds Annual Ship Recycling Conference in London. Several ship owners such as Stolt, Belgian Exmar and cruise travel agency TUI as well as Hapag-Lloyd, which had already committed to the Platform’s standard, discussed possible solutions. Major cash-buyer GMS introduced its “green ship recycling program”: – we strongly criticised this promotional greenwashing, knowing that GMS is behind about 60% of all sales to Bangladeshi breakers where, amongst other issues, child labour remains a problem. In October, we participated in the Danish Maritime Days in Copenhagen, and engaged with Danish ship owners, their association and Government stakeholders to advance on sustainable ship recycling. By attending these conferences we are able to counter industry arguments that seek to legitimise substandard low-cost methods for the sake of profits.

EXPOSING FACTS, INFORMING STAKEHOLDERS: OUR OUTREACH IN THE PRESS AND ON SOCIAL MEDIA

PRESS HIGHLIGHTS

3SAT – JANUARY

VICE MAGAZINE – FEBRUARY

RUSSIA TODAY – MARCH

NRK TV – DECEMBER

SÜDDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG – SEPTEMBER

BLOOMBERG VIEW – JULY

REUTERS – MARCH

DIE ZEIT – MARCH

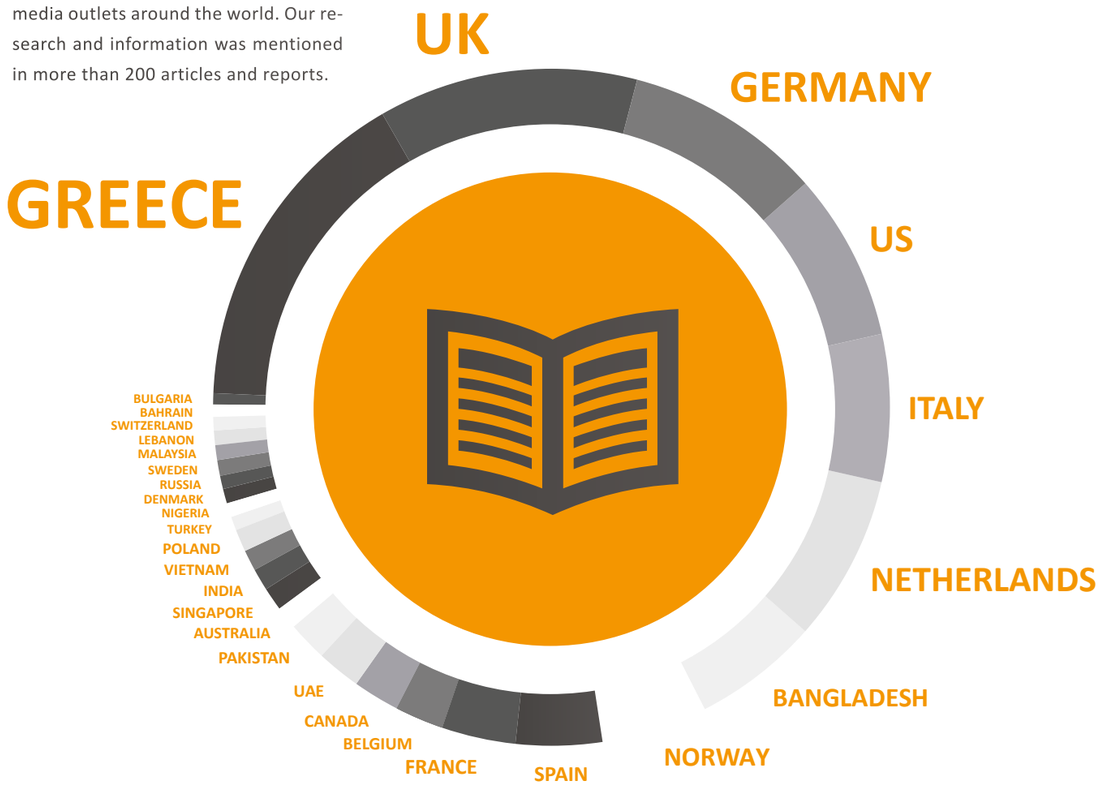
BLOOMBERG – FEBRUARY

TOP TWEET

TOP MENTION

TOP TWEET on SHIPBREAKING

In 2015, our work was featured in major media outlets around the world. Our research and information was mentioned in more than 200 articles and reports.



For first-hand information on the shipbreaking industry in South Asia check our quarterly updates.

SOUTH ASIA QUARTERLY UPDATE
Update on shipbreaking in South Asia from the NGO Shipbreaking Platform

A VIBRANT GLOBAL NETWORK: ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING IN IZMIR AND VISIT TO SHIPBREAKING YARDS

We held our annual general meeting in Izmir, Turkey, in June 2015, and used the trip for a field visit at the local shipbreaking industry at Aliaga. Representatives of our member organisations discussed the challenges faced by the Turkish yards in order to become EU-listed, in particular occupational health and safety provisions. Moreover, external experts such as prominent lawyers and labour rights activists joined the AGM and the visit.

SIGURD ENGE ELECTED AS NEW BOARD MEMBER

With the election of Sigurd Enge, from the Norwegian Bellona Foundation, the Board of Directors has further broadened its expertise. Sigurd has a maritime background as a navigator and captain in the fishing fleet. He joined the Bellona Foundation in 1988 and has worked on various maritime issues such as aquaculture, shipping and marine pollution. Currently, he is in charge of Bellona's work on shipping and environmental challenges in the Arctic. He works with business partners, politicians and science networks on the innovative use of technology for a green shipping industry.

PLATFORM WELCOMES NEW PARTNER ORGANISATION FROM TURKEY

In September 2015, we welcomed a new partner organisation from Turkey, Istanbul Health and Safety Labour Watch (IHSLW) – İstanbul İşçi Sağlığı ve İş Güvenliği (ISIG) Meclisi. We first met with IHSLW in June 2015 in Izmir, Turkey, when we visited the ship recycling yards at Aliaga. One of the main objectives is to raise together more awareness on labour conditions in the Turkish ship recycling yards, and to make sure the workers and the environment are fully protected. With the EU Commission considering applications from ship recycling yards worldwide to be listed as acceptable destinations for EU-flagged vessels, Turkish yards are under pressure to demonstrate they are in line with EU standards.

> ***WE ARE PARTICULARLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE HEALTH AND SAFETY RIGHTS OF SHIPBREAKING WORKERS IN ALIAGA. ELEVEN FATAL ACCIDENTS IN THE LAST 5 YEARS ARE A SAD PROOF OF INADEQUATE SAFETY STANDARDS, WHICH HAVE TO BE IMPROVED URGENTLY, NOT TO MENTION OCCUPATIONAL DISEASES, CONCEALED AT THE SHIPBREAKING YARDS CONCENTRATED IN A HEAVY INDUSTRY AREA IN ALIAGA.***
>
> **ASLI ODMAN, ISTANBUL HEALTH AND SAFETY LABOUR WATCH**

The IHSLW joins the network of partner organisations that support the Platform's work together with the ECCJ, EEB, EJOLT, Human Rights at Sea, Ikki-Ikki Asia Japan, Mediterranean SOS Network and Surfrider Foundation.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

INCOME 2015

Memberships fees and members' contributions	20.960
Fonds Maribel Social	32.754
European Commission LIFE Programme	161.477
Other / Travel reimbursement	5.329
Contributions from reserves	13.140
TOTAL INCOME	**233.660**

EXPENDITURE 2015

ACTIVITIES	
AGM 2015 and field visit Turkey	15.629
Other travel costs	7.163
Side event European Maritime Days Athens	576
Communication Material	4.526
Research and data collection	13.000
TOTAL ACTIVITIES	**40.894**
STAFF	
Salaries	169.402
Staff training and in-house training	4.000
Other salary costs (social bureau, insurances)	3.219
TOTAL STAFF	**176.621**
GENERAL COSTS	
Rent	4.379
Office costs	1.082
Communication costs	5.507
Subscriptions	1.360
External costs	3.817
TOTAL GENERAL COSTS	**16.145**
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	**233.660**

WHO WE ARE

PATRIZIA HEIDEGGER
Executive Director

INGVILD JENSSEN
Founder and
Policy Director

NICOLA MULINARIS
Communication and
Policy Officer
(since March 2016)

FRANCESCA CARLSSON
Corporate Liaison and
Policy Officer
(since April 2016)

ANITA WILLCOX
Intern
(since January 2016)

DELPHINE REUTER
Communication and
Research Officer
(until September 2015)

BOARD MEMBERS

The NGO Shipbreaking Platform's board members are international experts in a wide range of sectors related to maritime policies, waste management, environmental law and occupational health and safety. Their experience and know-how contribute immensely to the Platform's activities and successes.

Ritwick Dutta is a leading environmental lawyer practicing in the Supreme Court of India since 2001. Ritwick is the founder of the Legal Initiative for Forest and Environment (LIFE) in New Delhi, an organisation based on the concept of "environmental democracy". LIFE has obtained landmark decisions in the courts on various environmental issues.

Sigurd Enge has a maritime background as a navigator and captain in the fishing fleet. He joined the Bellona Foundation in 1988 and has worked on various maritime issues including aquaculture, shipping, and marine pollution. Currently, he is in charge of Bellona's work with the shipping industry as well as environmental challenges in the Arctic.

Robert Evans is a former British Member of the European Parliament (1999-2008) where he chaired the South Asia Delegation and actively dealt with the shipbreaking issue. He now works as a local Councillor and supports several NGOs with his special expertise on Bangladesh.

Syeda Rizwana Hasan, advocate at the Supreme Court of Bangladesh and the Director of the Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA), has initiated landmark rulings on the shipbreaking industry. She was able to forestall the import of toxic end-of-life vessels to her country. She received the prestigious Goldman Prize 2009 for her work on shipbreaking, as well as the Ramon Magsaysay Award 2012.

Merijn Hougee is the Director of the Clean Shipping Index (CSI) based in Gothenburg/ Sweden. Merijn has vast experience in working with ship owners and cargo forwarders on sustainable shipping, and has previously worked North Sea Foundation (Netherlands) and the ProSea Foundation.

Dr Muhammad Irfan Khan, Professor of environmental science, is the Chairman of the Department of Environmental Science at International Islamic University, Islamabad. He obtained his PhD degree from London University and was awarded a post-doctoral fellowship at Oxford University. He is qualified as an Environmental and Occupational Health and Safety Auditor.

Helen Périvier is a qualified navigation officer and has ten years of experience serving on ships as a maritime professional and in environmental research, advocacy and education tours. She successfully led the Greenpeace campaign on the European REACH chemicals legislation and has been working on the shipbreaking issue for more than a decade. She is one of the five founding members of the Platform.

Jim Puckett has been an environmental health and justice activist for 25 years. He is the founder of Earth Economics and the Basel Action Network (BAN). He has represented civil society at the Basel Convention since its inception in 1989 and has seen major traction with developing countries refusing the import of hazardous waste from industrialised countries. BAN has successfully set up the E-Stewardship Programme, a label for the environmentally safe and sound recycling of e-waste. Jim is one of the five founding members of the Platform.

MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

Basel Action Network (BAN) is focused on confronting the excesses of unbridled free trade in the form of "Toxic Trade" and its devastating impact on global environmental justice. It promotes sustainable and just solutions to our consumption and waste crises. Based in Seattle, USA.

Ban Asbestos is a network of local organisations monitoring anti-asbestos legislation where it exists and litigating for the abolition of asbestos where anti-asbestos legislation is lacking. Based in Paris, France.

Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA) is a true pressure group against environmental violations and is considered a pioneer in public interest environmental litigation (PIEL). Based in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

The Bellona Foundation is a recognised technology and solution oriented environmental defender. Altogether, some 40 ecologists, nuclear physicists, engineers, economists, lawyers, advisors and journalists support its objective. Based in Oslo, Norway.

Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS) is part of the labour movement and facilitates the links between trade unions and other civil society organizations. Established in 1995, it has the support and active participation of major National Trade Union Federations. Based in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

The Center for the Rule of Law – Islamabad (CRoLI) is a volunteer organization promoting a better understanding of the rule of law and human rights. Founded by former Judge Muhammad Majid Bashir, CRoLI conducts legal seminars. Based in Islamabad, Pakistan.

The Corporate Accountability Desk – The Other Media coordinate a corporate accountability and environmental health desk that extends technical, logistics, legal and strategic support to communities that are fighting corporate crime. Based in Cuddalore, India.

The European Federation for Transport & Environment, founded is Europe's principal environmental organisation campaigning on sustainable transport. T&E's primary focus is on European policy and its work is supported by 45 NGO member organisations working in 21 countries to promote an environmentally sound approach to transport. Based in Brussels, Belgium.

The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) includes 141 national human rights NGOs from all regions of the world. FIDH has a generalist mandate and consequently works on all human rights be they civil, political, economic, social, or cultural rights. FIDH carried out fact-finding missions on shipbreaking in India and Bangladesh. Based in Paris, France.

Greenpeace started its shipbreaking campaign by highlighting this environmental and human rights disaster in 1998. Since then the environmental organisation has been working for a global solution as well as in the shipbreaking countries such as India and Turkey. Based in Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

The International Ban Asbestos Secretariat (IBAS) is an independent body dedicated to the world-wide eradication of the continuing use of asbestos and the minimisation of dangers from asbestos products already within society. Based in London,

Legal Initiative for Forest and Environment (LIFE) comprises of groups of lawyers working on environmental democracy. It aims at creatively using the existing legal framework and institutions in protecting areas of vital ecological importance. Based in New Delhi, India.

The North Sea Foundation is a Dutch environmental NGO that searches for alternative solutions and seeks dialogue with decision makers. In 2002, the North Sea Foundation launched the 'Clean Ship' concept, which is a strategy towards zero-impact shipping. Based in Utrecht, the Netherlands.

The Bangladesh Occupational Safety, Health and Environment Foundation (OSHE) is a specialized labour foundation established in 2003 by workers initiative working on issues affecting employment, income, economy and environment and the livelihoods of working people. Based in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Prevention of Hazardous Shipbreaking Initiative is a coalition of environmental and labour rights NGOs based in Turkey. The group focuses on proper waste management and respect of labour rights at the shipbreaking sites in Aliaga, near Izmir. Based in Izmir, Turkey.

Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) is an independent, non-profit premier research organisation that focuses on sustainable development, globalisation, environment, education, health, trade, and has incorporated emergency work and rights-based work. Based in Islamabad, Pakistan.

Toxics Link is an Indian NGO working together for environmental justice and freedom from toxics. Based in New Delhi, India.

Young Power in Social Action (YPSA) is a social development organisation that promotes sustainable development. YPSA follows issues related to workers' rights, seeks to improve working conditions at Chittagong shipbreaking yards and advocates for the respect of human rights in the yards. Based in Chittagong, Bangladesh.

PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

With 21 member groups who represent over 250 organisations from 15 countries, the **European Coalition for Corporate Justice (ECCJ)** is the only European coalition bringing together European campaigns and national platforms of NGOs, trade unions, consumer organisations and academics to promote corporate accountability. Based in Brussels, Belgium.

The European Environmental Bureau (EEB) works to promote environmental issues on a European and global level and represent the demands of European citizens. Set up in 1974, the EEB is Europe's largest coalition of grassroots environmental organisations. They represent more than 140 member organisations from 31 countries with a membership base of more than 15 million individuals/households. Based in Brussels,

Environmental Justice Organisations, Liabilities and Trade (EJOLT) project is an FP7 project supported by the European Commission. The project supports the work of Environmental Justice Organisations.

The Human Rights at Sea (HRAS) initiative has been independently developed for the benefit of the international community, including the maritime industry, for matters concerning explicit engagement with human rights issues in the maritime environment. Based in London, United Kingdom.

IIKJ (NIK) – Ikki-Ikki Asia Japan (Ningen-Ikki Ikki-kengkukwai) is a community based network of volunteers bases in the Yamaguchi prefecture of Japan. Ikki-Ikki is a socially engaged group of people that deal with issues related to sustainable development, environmental protection, social justice and peace.

Istanbul Health and Safety Labor Watch (IHSLW) – İstanbul İşçi Sağlığı ve İş Güvenliği (ISIG) Meclisi was established in March 2011 in Istanbul, Turkey as an intra-professional and independent monitoring network faced with serialised fatal workplace accidents in almost all the sectors of the Turkish economy.

The MEDITERRANEAN SOS Network (MedSOS) is a Greek non-profit and non-governmental organisation, dedicated to protecting the environment and promoting sustainable development at the national and Euro-Mediterranean level since 1990. Based in Athens, Greece.

Surfrider Foundation Europe is a non-profit organization, dedicated to defending, saving, improving and managing in a sustainable manner the ocean, coastline, waves and the people who enjoy them.

SECRETARIAT

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