

Brussels, 29th March 2007

New EU rules to crack down on sea pollution come into effect

Starting in April, the 27 Member States of the European Union will display their common determination to tackle unlawful discharges at sea by giving full effect to legislation adopted in 2005¹. Europe will at long last have a sufficiently dissuasive system of penalties to prevent and deal with maritime pollution more effectively. Illicit discharges at sea are, alas, still being made² and preventing them is now more than ever a priority for Europe.

"We must get tough on illegal discharges and gross negligence must be fought at all cost: the threat of criminal penalties hanging over polluters' heads will help to protect our coasts. We cannot tolerate deliberate pollution or gross negligence by a minority of operators who tarnish the image of the shipping industry," said Jacques Barrot, Commission Vice-President in charge of transport.

Directive 2005/35 on ship-source pollution and the introduction of penalties for infringements is intended, in line with international law, to impose penalties on any party – master, owner, charterer, classification society, etc. – found to have caused or contributed to illegal pollution deliberately or as a result of gross negligence.

The Directive tackles discharges in all sea areas, including on the high seas. It applies to all ships calling at EU ports, whatever flag they fly. The scheme also provides for cooperation between Port State Authorities to enable action to be taken at the next port of call.

The Directive is also designed to enhance cooperation between Member States to detect illegal discharges and develop methods to identify a discharge as originating from a particular ship. The European Maritime Safety Agency will assist the Commission and Member States in this task.

The Member States are obliged to incorporate this Directive into their national law by 31 March 2007. The Commission will leave no stone unturned to ensure that it is implemented.

¹ [IP/05/888](#).

² As can be seen from the following information gathered recently following a ship inspection campaign under the Paris Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control:

The 25 Maritime Authorities of the Paris Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control (Paris MoU) carried out a concentrated inspection campaign (CIC) with the purpose of ensuring that vessels entering the ports of the Paris MoU comply with the regulations in MARPOL Annex I. The CIC was conducted between 1 February 2006 and 30 April 2006. During the three-month campaign 4616 ships were inspected, and 128 ships were detained for very serious deficiencies. On 86 ships illegal overboard connections of sludge tanks were found.

<http://www.parismou.org/ParisMOU/Whats+New/News/xp/menu.3941/default.aspx>