



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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NOTE

from : General Secretariat
to : Delegations

Subject : Emissions from shipping (upcoming discussion in the Marine Environment
Protection Committee (MEPC) of the IMO)

Delegations will find annexed a note from the Netherlands delegation on the above subject, which will be dealt with under "other business" at the meeting of the Council (Environment) on 3 March 2008.

Emissions from maritime shipping

The Netherlands wishes to draw attention to the matter of maritime emissions, and air pollutants in particular, in advance of the next meeting of the IMO's Marine Environmental Protection Committee (MEPC) from 31 March to 4 April 2008. The meeting's agenda includes concrete proposals for reaching agreements to substantially reduce maritime shipping emissions. This meeting could therefore be crucial to the shipping industry's contribution to reaching our environmental quality targets.

Emissions from ocean-going vessels have a major impact on air quality. A Dutch study (MNP, 2007) has shown, for example, that emissions from North Sea shipping contribute significantly to air quality degradation in the Netherlands, and their impact is expected to grow. Unless new measures are taken, by 2020 maritime shipping will be responsible for 5% of the average concentration of particulate matter and 17% of the concentration of nitrogen oxides. Various new measures for maritime vessels are far more cost-effective than the current, more extensive measures aimed at reducing land-based emissions. Also, a recent IMO report (dated 20th December 2007) indicates that shipping emissions which cause air pollution, will grow even more than the CO₂ emissions in the years ahead. For this reason, the Netherlands considers it a matter of urgency to tighten international emission requirements for ocean-going vessels. This includes tightening NO_x standards for engines, as well as considerably reducing sulphur levels in fuel. The upcoming MEPC meeting is a crucial moment for decision-making in these areas.

Of total emissions in the EU, the share from maritime shipping is rising because European source control policy has resulted in significant reductions in emissions from other sources, such as road traffic, and this is set to continue in the coming years. Maritime shipping, a major source of emissions, has been excluded from such efforts until now.

As the maritime shipping industry continues to grow, without new measures its SO₂ and NO_x emissions in Europe will match the total emissions from all land sources in the EU by 2020. Its share of total particulate matter emissions will rise to 25%.

Agreements about source control policy and maritime emission reductions must be made if we hope to achieve the air quality targets.

If no measures will be taken to reduce shipping emissions, other sectors will have to do more in order to achieve a comparable environmental quality in the Member States and the air quality targets defined in the Thematic Strategy on Air Pollution (COM(2005)446).

The aim of the MEPC meeting in March/April 2008 is to hold substantive talks on a variety of far-reaching proposals which will provide a unique opportunity to reach a global agreement on emission reduction measures. If the IMO does not achieve results here, the EU will have to consider adopting its own measures. It is in the interest of the EU and for all EU Member States to take an ambitious line and form a united front to achieve a sharp reduction in emissions.
