

COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS**of 22 December 2003****A European Union strategy to reduce atmospheric emissions from seagoing ships**

(2004/C 8/03)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION:

1. RECOGNISING that atmospheric pollution at local, regional and global levels represents one of the major threats to human health and the environment;
2. RECOGNISING ALSO that atmospheric emissions from seagoing ships contribute to acidification, eutrophication, the formation of tropospheric ozone and particulate matter, as well as to global climate change and to the depletion of the stratospheric ozone layer, and NOTING that international and EU legislation does not cover this matter sufficiently;
3. RECALLING that in the context of a new Protocol to the MARPOL Convention 73/78, the International Maritime Organisation adopted in 1997 an annex (Annex VI) containing regulations to reduce air pollution from ships;
4. RECALLING that the Kyoto Protocol states that Parties shall pursue the limitation or reduction of emissions of greenhouse gases working through the International Maritime Organisation (IMO);
5. RECALLING the Clean Air for Europe Programme, CAPE, which was established in order to elaborate a thematic strategy on major air pollution sources;
6. RECALLING the objectives of the 6th Environment Action Programme, and, in particular, the achievement of air quality levels not dangerous for human health and the environment and the reduction of GHG emissions in the transport sector, in particular by identifying and undertaking specific actions for marine shipping if no such action is agreed within the International Maritime Organisation by 2003;
7. NOTES that the Commission is actively pursuing its work on measures to promote modal shift, taking into account their relevant impacts, and REQUESTS that the environmental performance of all modes of transport is improved;
8. CONSIDERING that Directives 1999/30/EC and 2002/3/EC require that plans or programmes should be developed to ensure compliance with limit values in ambient air for SO₂, NO₂, PM10 and ozone by the date or dates laid down therein;
9. CONSIDERING that Directive 2001/81/EC on national emission ceilings for certain atmospheric pollutants commits the Commission to specify a programme of actions which could be taken at international and community level as appropriate to reduce emissions from the international maritime traffic;
10. WELCOMES the Commission proposal for a Strategy to reduce atmospheric emissions from seagoing ships in order to protect human health and the environment and UNDERLINES that the Strategy has to be the driving force for international, regional and local long-term policies in this field;
11. UNDERLINES the importance of promoting international actions to effectively address the environmental problems caused by emissions from seagoing ships of all flags on a global scale; therefore BELIEVES that international solutions should be pursued working closely with key shipping nations at IMO and that, in this context, the adoption of Annex VI to the MARPOL Convention represents a key step and URGES the EU Member States which have not yet ratified this important international instrument to do so as soon as possible to allow its entering into force;
12. CONSIDERS that it is essential to reinforce the consideration of EU Member States' positions at IMO negotiations in particular to PROMOTE, in the revision phase of Annex VI of IMO MARPOL Convention, the adoption of more ambitious measures as regards a tighter global sulphur cap for heavy fuel oils burned by ships and tighter nitrogen dioxide emission standards for these engines used in ships;
13. CALLS FOR THE PROMOTION, in the revision phase of the IMO SOLAS Convention on the safety of life at sea, of the decommissioning before 2008 of halon fire fighting systems on board ships built before 1994 and TAKES NOTE OF the Commission's aim to study the use of halons in existing cargo ships operating in EU waters;

14. SUPPORTS the development of an IMO Strategy to limit greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) from shipping including a working plan towards 2005; UNDERLINES the need to improve the methodologies for estimating and reporting emissions from ships, and URGES the Member States and the Commission to work together at IMO to ensure that methodologies are improved and that the IMO GHG strategy is concrete and ambitious; UNDERLINES the importance of closer cooperation between UNFCC experts, IMO experts and IPCC experts;
 15. RECOGNISES that progress within IMO depends on the input of IMO member states and therefore URGES the EU Member States to submit concrete proposals on tighter NO_x standards under MARPOL Annex VI and on the different aspects of the IMO GHG Strategy.
 16. RECOGNISES the need to investigate specific EU actions with respect to the reduction of NO_x and GHG emissions by marine transportation; INVITES the Commission to consider a proposal for tighter NO_x standards by the end of 2006 if IMO has not made any proposals for tighter standards by that date; and also INVITES the Commission to report on possible actions on ship GHG in 2005;
 17. RECOGNISES that not all the environmental problems are properly addressed at international level and that, in particular, the contribution of seagoing ships to the concentration of particulate matter and of ozone and its precursors in ambient air needs further consideration and therefore INVITES the Commission to include these issues in the framework of the CAFE Programme ensuring that all emission sources are considered through an integrated evaluation model taking into account the costs and benefits of the possible reduction measures;
 18. UNDERLINES the need to promote the development and use of emissions abatement technologies and the use of market based instruments that can substantially contribute to the reduction of emissions and therefore REQUESTS the Commission to continue work in these respects and to develop corresponding proposals if appropriate;
 19. STRESSES ALSO the need to consider the geographical scale of air pollution problem linked to seagoing ships in identifying the most appropriate measures to be adopted at an appropriate level taking fully into account the subsidiarity and proportionality principle;
 20. RECALLING that Community legislation already in force on the sulphur content in marine fuels covers only gas oils, RECOGNISES the need to update the current legislation on sulphur content in liquid fuels to include marine fuels with the aim of addressing EU acidification and air quality problems in a cost-effective way; WELCOMES the work underway with the European Parliament on the Commission proposal to amend Directive 1999/32 as regards the sulphur content of marine fuels and AGREES to expedite progress on this issue;
 21. AGREES with the Commission proposal to further evaluate the cost-effectiveness of measures to regulate VOC emissions from loading ships in comparison to measures already mandatory for loading inland ships through Directive 94/63/EC (20 December 1994);
 22. WELCOMES the decision to involve acceding and candidate country representatives in consultations on the Strategy, including on the parallel proposal to amend Directive 1999/32/EC on the sulphur content of marine fuels.
-