

IMO STEPS UP TO THE CLIMATE CHANGE PLATE

The IMO is a bastion for corporate lobbying and economic interests. But this year it has also proved it is able to adapt and change in order to tackle climate change, writes **Chloé Farand**

In April, IMO members agreed to cut emissions from the global shipping industry by at least 50% by 2050.

The agreement was hailed "historic" after being reached despite strong opposition from countries such as Brazil, Saudi Arabia and the US. On the other side of the debate, EU countries and others had been calling for more ambitious targets to cut all emissions by mid-century in line with the Paris Agreement goals.

But the urgency for a rapid decrease of emissions from the shipping sector won over disagreements about the level of ambition and the text was approved.

One estimate from the International Council on Clean Transportation found that if treated as a country, global shipping would have been the sixth largest emitter of carbon dioxide in the world between 2013 and 2015 — roughly on a par with Germany.

Now the onus is on the industry to develop meaningful measures to achieve the first industry-wide emission reduction goal and for ports to help implement them.

New technologies, speed optimisation, alternative fuels and cutting the amount of time ships spend waiting outside ports are some of the range of initiatives the sector needs to plan for.

Leading the brainstorming work on the issue is the Global Industry Alliance (GIA) to support low carbon shipping.

CLEAR DEADLINE

Claes Berglund, chair of the GIA and director of public affairs and sustainability at Swedish shipping company Stena, told *GreenPort* that for the first time the shipping industry had a direction and a deadline for action.

He said the industry was now discussing the steps to take to achieve the IMO agreement.

"Firstly, we are looking at energy efficiency measures, which we can start working on now. The second stream of debate is around what the new fuel of energy source should be. We have to find a fuel that is carbon neutral," he said.

Mr Berglund added the discussion also focused on what to expect from ports which will play a key role in ensuring the emission reduction target is met by developing adequate infrastructure, providing electricity from renewable sources and being able to adapt to distribute a new type of fuel in the future.

For ports around Europe, the work of the GIA will be crucial in giving them a clear indication of how they can accommodate new technologies to help the sector reach its goal.

CLARITY NEEDED

Isabelle Ryckbost, secretary general of European Sea Ports Organisation, said ports now needed clarity on the measures the shipping industry will take "as soon as possible".

"Ports will try to accommodate and facilitate where possible the greening of the shipping industry. This may require new infrastructure and investments and we need the time to plan and finance these projects," she said.

Ms Ryckbost added it was important for these emission reduction measures to be made soon so they could be taken



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■ Isabelle Ryckbost,
secretary general,
ESPO

into account in the new legislative framework for the financing of transport infrastructure at EU level.

This financial framework which includes ports will set a financing direction for the period 2021-2027 in which important infrastructure projects to reduce emissions could be included.

Now that the target and the deadline is set, all eyes will turn to the IMO and its partners to deliver a clear and ambitious plan of action for the shipping industry to reach its goals and for ports to do their fair share in facilitating its success.