

Turkey leads recycling drive



The ISRA is aiming to make scenes like this from the Indian subcontinent a thing of the past.

A number of Turkish yards have emerged as leading supporters of a new global association aimed at promoting safer and more environmentally sound shipbreaking practices.

Six outfits in Turkey along with the national Ship Association of Turkey are among a host of ship recycling plants looking to become members of the International Ship Recycling Association (ISRA).

The body, which is essentially a pressure group of yards and associations to be based in The Hague, has an ambitious brief of drawing more shipyards from developing nations such as India and Bangladesh into the fold. It also says that the potentially problematic issue of convincing owners and yards alike that going down the green route and still protecting returns on their investments "will also be looked upon."

Two Chinese outfits, Chine Jiang Xiajiang Changjiang Shiprepair Yard and Zhongxin Ship Recycling & Steel Co, join Turkish players OGe Gemi Sokum, Cemas Celik, Leyal Ship Recycling, Adem Simsek & Simsekler Group, Demtas and Dortel Ship Recycling as aspiring members of ISRA. Other interested parties are Sparrows Point Shipyard of the US and Scheepsloperij Nederland BV of The Netherlands.

The body is to be founded in The Netherlands under Dutch law and chaired by Liu Guohong.

"The association strives to promote the exchange of knowledge, experience, ideas, novelties and training programs," the ISRA said in an announcement, explaining it will issue guidelines and standards to members and promote alternative to the beaching of vessels, common practices on the Indian subcontinent.

Although welcoming the setting up of the ISRA, Ingvild Jenssen, project coordinator at the European NGO Platform on Shipbreaking, said it "believe[s] that there is a need for an independent third party certification and auditing system for ship recycling facilities globally. Only then will there be a true 'level playing field'; self-certification and auditing, be it in the form of criteria to join an association or by the ship recycling countries themselves, as the IMO draft convention suggests, will not change current practices.

"Independence and transparency are crucial factors when determining which yards meet required environmental and labour standards," Jenssen added.

Jenssen concedes that the ISRA is a pressure group but emphasised that it is an important one aimed at contributing a voice on an industry which exists.

Jenssen claims many shipowners are currently looking for more

environmentally friendly ways of dismantling their ships despite the fact that they will receive less money for the asset than if they sent the ship to be beached in a facility such as Alang. "A ship is an asset but there are parts of the ship which are not an asset", Jenssen explained, such as pollutant materials.

Turkish players have been at the forefront of a new drive for cleaner ship recycling practices with several facilities upgrading in recent year and the government introducing new legislation. Jenssen conceded, however, that some of these yards have lost out on contracts since they upgraded their facilities.

By ***Eoin O'Conneide*** in London

published: 10:16 GMT, 24 October 2007 | last updated: 10:19 GMT, 24 October 2007