



Date: 20<sup>th</sup> April 2007  
Ref: SAR0401

Transport Ministers  
UK, Netherlands, Italy, Malta, Belgium & Germany.

Dear Minister,

**Re. Ratification of the 2001 AFS Convention and preparations for national enforcement of TBT controls under Regulation (EC) No. 782/2003.**

Seas At Risk and WWF are deeply concerned that nearly six years after its adoption by the International Maritime Organisation your country has still not ratified the Anti-fouling Systems (AFS) Convention. Tributyltin (TBT) based antifouling coatings, which would be banned under the Convention, continue to pose a very great threat to the health of the world's oceans and action is urgently needed from your government.

You will see from the attached table that your country is one of a handful of EU countries that together could bring this important Convention into force. Ratification by Malta and as little as three other EU states would allow both the legal requirements of 25 countries and 25% of world tonnage to be met and bring the AFS Convention into force one year later.

In addition, as of 1st January 2008 it will under Regulation (EC) No. 782/2003, be an offence for any ship visiting an EU port to have an active TBT-based antifouling coating present on its hull; all EU flagged vessels and all other vessels visiting EU ports should be TBT-free by this date.

This welcome Regulation, however, will only protect Europe's seas from the continuing harm caused by TBT if it is properly enforced. As you are aware, enforcement is the responsibility of national authorities and with less than nine months to go Seas At Risk and WWF would be interested to hear what preparations you have been making to ensure that vessels with TBT on their hull do not pass through your ports without being detected. Specifically, are control authority staff being trained for the new procedures that will be required? Has the necessary sampling and testing equipment been sourced? What new resources are being made available for this enforcement work? And what proportion of visiting vessels do you hope to test for TBT?

Ultimately, effective implementation and control of TBT depends on the ratification of the AFS Convention and adequate national enforcement measures. We would, therefore, be grateful for your response to our questions and for your position on when your government will ratify the AFS Convention.

Yours sincerely,

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