

COURTESY TRANSLATION

OPINION
of the
Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs
of the
House of Representatives
of the
Republic of Cyprus

on the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions “Integrating maritime transport emissions in the EU's greenhouse gas reduction policies”
COM(2013) 479

The Standing Committee of Foreign and European Affairs has examined, in a meeting held on the 4th October 2013, the communication of the European Commission concerning the integration of maritime transport emissions in the EU's greenhouse gas reduction policies. The Committee, by majority, supports the European Union's ambitious endeavours to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the transition to a low carbon emissions economy, contributing to the effort of countering the threat of climate change. Following a thorough examination of the above mentioned communication, the Committee, by majority, expresses the following positions with regard to the integration of maritime transport emissions in the EU's greenhouse gas reduction policies:

- Even though the Committee does not oppose the implementation of technical and market-based measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from maritime transport, the Committee stresses that such measures should be taken at the international level, within the framework and the principles of the International Maritime Organization (IMO). The Committee expresses its concern that unilateral action taken by the EU could create adverse competitive conditions for vessels registered in EU member states, which will be subjected to the increased costs of reducing their emissions.
- The Committee stresses that in the case where market-based measures for greenhouse gas emissions reduction in the maritime transport sector are taken, the said measures should be implemented in parallel with the creation of an international subscription fund for climate change within the framework of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), whereas the contribution of international maritime transport to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions should not exceed its share of responsibility.
- The Committee expresses its opposition to the adoption of regional measures for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from ships performing international transports, since such a development is expected to have a detrimental impact on their competitiveness.
- In the event that the European Union should decide to proceed with the unilateral adoption of regional measures for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in maritime transport, the said measures should be independent of the flag of each ship, should not affect the competition and should also be in line with the international conventions regulating maritime transport currently in force.

The AKEL – Left New Forces party, expressed a different position than that of the majority of the members of the Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs. The said party does not support the philosophy of commercializing emissions, indicating that the said philosophy has proven not to facilitate the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions. Furthermore, it points out that the dysfunction of the European Union's Emissions Trading System (EU-ETS) has been a matter of discussion both at the European Commission and the European Parliament and that the only period where a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions has been logged was a period of economic recession. The said party also points out that the emissions trading system favours large multinational companies who have the ability to benefit from emission rights auctions, by purchasing such rights and polluting more.

AKEL – Left New Forces, notes that the Kyoto protocol to which both the European Union and Cyprus are signatories, includes provisions for the reduction of emissions from the maritime sector, which, theoretically can be attained within the framework of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO).

The said party further notes that in the roadmap for moving to a competitive low carbon economy, it is clear that an economically advantageous and gradual transition to a low carbon economy demands a domestic reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of 40% as a landmark for the year 2030 and of 80% for 2050, with 1990 being the reference year. Therefore, it is stated that with the above decision, the EU does not pursue measures that will hamper its competitiveness but rather pursues measures that will strengthen its competitiveness, through the unconditional support of a global approach to the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions from maritime transport, led by the International Maritime Organisation and based on the principle of the application of the same rules for all countries.

AKEL – Left New Forces, expresses its disagreement with regard to the use of market mechanisms to promote the protection of the environment, since in its opinion, market mechanisms do not constitute the solution to the problem. The said party, supports the adoption of strict targets and specific restrictions aimed at the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from the maritime sector, based on the principle of equal but differentiated responsibility of each country. The achievement of the said targets should be pursued outside of the EU Emissions Trading System (EU-ETS).