



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 22.3.2012
C/2012/ 1887 final

Dear President,

On behalf of the European Commission, I would like to thank you for the transmission of the Opinion of the Italian Senate on the Commission proposal for a revision of Directive 1999/32/EC relating to a reduction in the sulphur content of certain liquid fuels, {COM(2011)439 final}.

The Commission takes note in particular of your proposal to allow Member States to identify sensitive areas from an environmental point of view in which certain fuel provisions developed for Community ports apply.

International shipping is regulated by the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The Commission is guided by the principle that shipping is a global undertaking and that responsibilities and rules should be developed at the global scale. In line with this principle, the European Union ratified this convention on 1 April 1998. Article 211 of UNCLOS regulates pollution from vessels and parties to the Convention have committed themselves to establish international rules and standards to prevent, reduce and control pollution of the marine environment from vessels and promote the adoption of routing systems designed to minimize pollution damage to the related interests of coastal States acting through IMO, the competent international organization.

Where a coastal state considers that a particular area of their respective exclusive economic zone is an area where the adoption of special mandatory measures for the prevention of pollution from vessels is required, it may submit supporting evidence to the IMO. Following approval at the IMO, the coastal state may adopt regulations for the prevention, reduction and control of pollution for such a special area.

*Sen. Renato SCHIFANI
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I hope that these clarifications address the comments raised in the Opinion submitted by the Italian Senate.

I am looking forward to continuing our constructive political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President*