

SHIP RECYCLING

Turkey now up to mark on recycling

The nation already 'insists' on most of the Hong Kong Convention's requirements.

Geoff Garfield

London



Photo: Bloomberg News

Turkey handles only a small fraction of recycled ships but there is a general consensus that in terms of environmental awareness, it is close to the standards the new Hong Kong Convention seeks to achieve.

In fact, one leading yard, Leyal Ship Recycling, argues that the convention falls short of standards already implemented in Turkey and that it would like to have seen introduced.

Leyal's Dimitri Ayvatoglu says that as Turkey already insists on most of the convention's requirements, it hopes to benefit from the creation of a level playing field.

Leyal is industrial advisor to Turkey's national delegation on ship recycling and, consequently, individuals from the company, including Ayvatoglu, have been closely involved with the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), Basel Convention and International Labour Organisation (ILO) working groups.

As Turkey is the only one of the world's five main ship-recycling countries to belong to the OECD it should benefit from Basel and the

age employing between 40 and 60 people.

Nominal capacity for recycling is given as around one million ldt per year but it has never managed to operate to its limits because, it is claimed, of higher prices offered in the Indian subcontinent.

Nevertheless, some 200 or so ships approaching 500,000 ldt were handled in 2009.

Turkey is strategically positioned in terms of Europe and close to a big source of shortsea tonnage. Passengerships, ro-ro, car carriers, tankers and bulkers, as well as floating production, storage and offloading (FPSO) units have all ended their days in Turkey. And not all are smaller or damaged ships where it is uneconomic or impossible to sail to the subcontinent.

The industry in Turkey is keen to highlight the fact that three years ago a VLCC-size floating storage and offloading (FSO) vessel was recycled there.

The country's stricter environmental and safety standards, as compared with some of its rivals, puts it at a competitive disadvantage due to increased costs, says Ayvatoglu. And this is not just in the yards but also downstream waste-management overheads. Turkey has, for example, implemented into law the 1991 European Council directive on hazardous waste.

Ayvatoglu says an increasing number of European shipowners have been prepared to receive a lower price so that their ships are recycled in a more acceptable manner in Turkey.

TURKEY ADVISOR: Leyal is industrial advisor to Turkey's national delegation on ship recycling.

associated European Union (EU) directive banning the transboundary movement of wastes to non-OECD destinations.

But many commercial shipowners refuse to recognise the relevance of Basel. Its shortcomings are said by Ayvatoglu to have driven Turkey's support for an international agreement specific to global ship recycling.

It has taken part in not only the convention's drafting and adoption in Hong Kong but is also participating in drawing up the implementation guidelines.

Turkey has been recycling ships since the mid-1970s, when a presidential decree dedicated around 300,000 square metres, including a seafront of roughly 1.5 kilometres (0.93 miles) to the industry.

It is close to the town of Aliaga on Turkey's Aegean coast and is the only location where ship recycling is allowed.

Typically, around 20 companies operate the 29 plots, each on aver-



LEYAL SHIP RECYCLING: A partial view of the facilities at the Turkish ship recycler

Photo: Leyal (Turkey)