

Brussels, 3 February 2011

Commission poised to push for success at International Maritime Organization CO₂ talks

After meeting with a group of high level experts, European Commission Vice-President Siim Kallas, responsible for transport, and Commissioner Connie Hedegaard, responsible for climate action, said: "We are convinced that the shipping sector must deliver on the fight against climate change. We discussed how Europe can best progress in order for the maritime sector to contribute to cutting greenhouse gas emissions if there is no international agreement. But there should be no doubt: Europe must make every effort to help the IMO agree this year on global measures to curb greenhouse gas emissions from ships both now and in the long term."

International maritime transport accounts for close to 3% of global CO₂ emissions. Emissions from ships are expected to have more than doubled by 2050. The UN Specialized Agency, the International Maritime Organization (IMO), started looking at climate issues in the mid 1990s. However, agreement on reduction measures has until now proven impossible.

The two Commissioners today met a group of MEPs, government representatives and high-level advisors from different backgrounds to take stock of the situation and discuss the EU's strategic options in both the IMO and the parallel United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) negotiations. The meeting has shown that in a global sector such as maritime transport, measures which are the most environmentally effective and make economic sense can best be achieved through the IMO. The EU will continue putting efforts to achieve an international solution.

In the event that no satisfactory result on maritime transport emissions has been achieved by the end of 2011 at the IMO, the Commission will assume its responsibilities.

The group is expected to meet twice again in 2011.