



**KOMMUNENES INTERNASJONALE MILJØORGANISASJON
LOCAL AUTHORITIES INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL
ORGANISATION**

PRESS RELEASE

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KIMO AGREES ACTION ON LOST CONTAINERS

There is now wide spread concern, after a recent spate of accidents in European waters, as to why so many containers are being lost over the side of so many ships. A number of global carriers have suffered incidents over the years, many of which go largely unreported. Up to 10,000 containers a year could be lost worldwide through accidents of one form or another, according to a recent industry estimate, of which about a quarter are washed overboard. Recent incidents have involved a NYK Line ship losing about four dozen containers in the English Channel in November 2007 and the P&O Nedlloyd Mondriaan lost 58 containers over the side off the Dutch coast, and then another 50 a couple of weeks later in the Bay of Biscay.

Bad ship design, damaged containers, broken twist locks, bad stowage, shoddy maintenance, poor seamanship, top heavy container stacks, mis declared cargo, weather, commercial pressure, communication failure or a combination of these factors all contribute to an increasing amount of incidents. The audit of the containers removed from the MSC Napoli and the deadload calculated on departure, indicated that the declared weights of many of the containers carried by the vessel were heavier than had been declared¹



KIMO first raised the issue of pollution from containerships and the related lack of robust compensation regimes with regard to this sector of the shipping industry in 1995 at the 4th North Sea Ministerial Conference in Esbjerg and subsequently at the 5th Ministerial Conference in Bergen 2002 where Ministers agreed to “*To make coordinated efforts within IMO*”

¹ MAIB Report No 9/2008 on MSC Napoli - April 2008

to review, strengthen and introduce, if appropriate, further compensation and liability regimes.”

The current position is that materials from containers that have polluted the coastlines, whether from a major shipping accidents or from individual containers, creating an environmental, operational and financial burden on coastal authorities unless the ship owner’s insurance has been willing to meet the cost.

At its Annual General Meeting on the 5th October in Tønder, Denmark KIMO agreed to take further action to address this issue at an EU level. Delegates to the meeting agreed to put pressure on the European Commission and parliament to:

- Ensure that all containers are weighed before shipment and are reconciled with the ships manifest
- Attach automatically activated beacons to all containers so they can be identified and retrieved if they are lost overboard
- Review the construction criteria for containers with regard to current stacking heights
- Review specifications and maintenance regimes for twistlocks
- Introduce financial penalties and compensation regimes for the retrieval of lost containers

KIMO President Albert de Hoop stated *“With the rapid rise in the industry capacity and vessel size incidents like those experienced in the Netherlands are going to become much more common increasing the burden on coastal communities. It is important that we address both the number of lost containers and compensation from instances of pollution from containerships. KIMO will be working to ensure policy makers at the EU level are aware of this issues and take action to address them.”*

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