

Remarks by Commissioner Richard Burke at the opening  
of the Posidonia exhibition, Piraeus, Monday 2nd June 1980.

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Mr. Prime Minister, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to be here as your guest of honour, and to have the opportunity to view this fine exhibition. It is an exhibition which represents the glittering achievements of the Greek Merchant Marine, achievements which I salute and welcome, and which are, I believe, about to become of even greater significance for the European Community than they have been in the past.

The Commission naturally looks forward with the keenest anticipation to the entry of Greece into the Community next January. And there is perhaps no field where this further development of the Community is more exciting than in the field of shipping. We shall warmly welcome the presence in the Community of your great fleet and of your shipowners with their incomparable spirit of commercial enterprise. With Greece a member, the Community will represent 50% of all OECD shipping.

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Shipping is one of the areas to which I personally have been giving priority in the transport field during my time at the Commission. And you will know that over the last three years the Council of Ministers has adopted a series of legislative measures on such matters as shipping safety, the United Nations Code of Conduct for Liner Conferences, and non-commercial behaviour by the fleets of certain countries. It has been shown that in several areas the Community is able to take useful action where individual Member States might not be able to act effectively. We are looking forward to working together with Greece, in the Community of Ten, in identifying further areas where the Community can act usefully in the interests of our shipping and trade.

I would like to mention one of those areas which preoccupies me greatly at the present time. The next proposal which the Commission is likely to make to the Council on shipping will be designed to set a framework at Community level within which the Member States would have the task of identifying sub-standard ships entering their ports and requiring them to put deficiencies right. By "sub-standard" we mean sub-standard in relation to the requirements of the international Conventions on shipping safety and pollution

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(...prevention...)

prevention. Through this proposal we firmly intend to make the Community into an area which sub-standard ships, whether flying the flag of a Member State or not, would not find it in their interest to visit. We confidently expect the support of the Greek Government and Greek shipowners for this proposal, which we are certain is in the best interests of our coastal regions and of our shipping industry alike.

But this is not the moment to go into these matters in any detail. There will, no doubt, be time enough for that in the months ahead. For now I would like only to thank you again for inviting me, to applaud your achievements, and to wish this exhibition the great success it deserves.

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