Mr. Henning Gramann, CEO at GSR Services GmbH, talks about latest developments concerning ship breaking, highlighting that proper planning and assistance by experts is required for the preparation of an Inventory of Hazardous Material (IHM), as per HKC and EU-SRR. IHMs are technical files which potentially create huge risks for the owners if prepared by inexperienced “experts”; thus Mr. Gramann urges shipowners to be wary of the quality of their IHMs if they would like to avoid being in the headlines due to an accident occuring during recycling on one of their formerly owned ships!

SAFETY4SEA: What are currently industry’s biggest challenges with respect to ship recycling?

H.G.: The biggest challenge I see is sufficient recycling capacity able to handle the big demand in a responsible manner. It has to be noted that China is closing down at the end of this year and Turkey is having troubles like free-falling Lira and withholds the by far biggest available in the Indian Sub-Continent side, economically viable options are willing to bear the costs. On the other side, recycling anyway and only few owners are the “expensive side” of ship recycling having troubles like free-falling Lira at the end of this year and Turkey is to be noted that China is closing down capacity able to handle the big demand.

H.G.: What is your key message?

S4S: What about US? What is currently happening to U.S. government vessels that are recycled?

H.G.: As far as I know they are all going to Brownsville - Texas. For the US it is a bit tricky to actively play a bigger role in international ship recycling as specific legislation prohibits the import of PCBs (polychlorinated bi-phenyls) above 2ppm whereas export of a concentration up to 50ppm is permissible. For import and export the owner has to proof to US-EPA that the limits are met and that can be very time-consuming and costly. However, the EU has inspected yards in US and we might find on the EU-List soon, if they can be really utilized by EU-flagged ships remain to be seen.

S4S: How should be the top priorities for the shipping industry stakeholders towards a more sustainable future for the shipping industry?

H.G.: That is relatively simple: seek help to investigate the good options available and only make use of proven HKC- and EU-approved ship recycling facilities. Currently the “green recycling yards” are not fully utilized as too many owners sell their ships to cash buyers without further restrictions on where the ships they sell shall end up or knowingly opt for top dollar. HKC-compliance comes at a very low cost and starts with getting the IHM prepared.

H.G.: That is like reading the big glass-bowl. Entry into force criteria of HKC are tough and I don’t think that it’ll enter into force soon even though quite a few countries are working on their ratifications.

S4S: What is the overall situation at EU ship breaking yards?

H.G.: The key market for EU-facilities are smaller and government owned ships where either re-positioning would be too costly compared to their scrap value or other political aspects don’t allow this. Except of specialized facilities, like for offshore units, I don’t see that their market share will increase greatly even though the legislators of EU-SRR seem to have tried hard.

S4S: How would you describe the situation in The Netherlands won’t be possible anymore.

S4S: What is your key message?

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