



2018-IP14: Strategy to Reduce Shipping Emissions Agreed

Nations meeting at the United Nations International Maritime Organization (IMO) in London have adopted an initial strategy on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from ships, setting out a vision to reduce GHG emissions from international shipping and phase them out, as soon as possible in this century¹.

Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from international shipping currently contribute an estimated 2.2% of global GHG emissions in 2012. By contrast, in 2007 before the global economic downturn, international shipping is estimated to have emitted 885 million tonnes of CO₂, that is, 2.8% of the total global CO₂ emissions for that year². Emissions are projected to increase between 50% and 250% by 2050³ to accommodate raising volumes of international trade in goods and resources. Reducing emissions from international shipping is therefore crucial to achieve the objectives of the Paris Agreement.

Shipping like aviation was exempted from the Paris Agreement because it involves an international activity whereas the agreement was based on a system of national emission reduction targets. If, however, shipping were ranked as a country, it would be the 6th highest emitter⁴.

The IMO vision sets out their commitment to reducing GHG emissions from international shipping and, as a matter of urgency, to phasing them out as soon as possible¹.

More specifically, under the identified “levels of ambition”, the initial strategy envisages that total GHG emissions from international shipping, should peak as soon as possible and to reduce by at least 50% by 2050 compared to 2008, while, at the same time, pursuing efforts towards phasing them out entirely.

The Initial Strategy identifies levels of ambition for the international shipping sector noting that technological innovation and the global introduction of alternative fuels and/or energy sources for international shipping will be integral to achieve the overall ambition. Reviews should take into account of: updated emission estimates, emissions reduction options for international shipping, and the reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Levels of ambition directing the Initial Strategy are as follows:

1. Carbon intensity of the ship to decline through implementation of further phases of the energy efficiency design index (EEDI) for new ships
To review with the aim to strengthen the energy efficiency design requirements for ships with the percentage improvement for each phase to be determined for each ship type, as appropriate;
2. Carbon intensity of international shipping to decline
To reduce CO₂ emissions per transport work, as an average across international shipping, by at least 40% by 2030, pursuing efforts towards 70% by 2050, compared to 2008; and
3. GHG emissions from international shipping to peak and decline
To peak GHG emissions from international shipping as soon as possible and to reduce the total annual GHG emissions by at least 50% by 2050 compared to 2008 whilst pursuing efforts

¹ <http://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/PressBriefings/Pages/06GHGinitialstrategy.aspx>

² <http://www.imo.org/en/OurWork/Environment/PollutionPrevention/AirPollution/Pages/GHG-Emissions.aspx>

³ http://www.ieaghg.org/docs/General_Docs/Publications/Information_Papers/2016-IP26.pdf

⁴ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-43759923>



towards phasing them out as called for in the Vision as a point on a pathway of CO₂ emissions reduction consistent with the Paris Agreement temperature goals.

The strategy includes a specific reference to “a pathway of CO₂ emissions reduction consistent with the Paris Agreement temperature goals”.

Comment

This is a significant international development in a sector where emissions have been growing. Emissions reduction is needed urgently across all sectors if we are to achieve the Paris Agreement goals.

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