

Priority must be given to ratify IMO conventions

Letter To The Editor - Monday 5 February 2007

From Tony Mason

SIR, Your editorial on January 30 commented on the absence of an international liability regime for damage caused by spillage of non-toxic materials from ships.

This may well be an issue, but it should not divert attention from the far more pressing need, highlighted by the MSC Napoli casualty, to ratify Conventions already agreed by IMO such as the HNS Convention 1996 and the Bunker Oil Pollution Damage Convention 2001.

As we have recently announced, ICS and its member national shipowners' associations are pressing for these and other IMO Conventions to be ratified by governments as a matter of urgent priority.

Fortunately, MSC Napoli was not carrying large quantities of hazardous and noxious cargo on board but, in the event it had been, no clear liability and compensation structure would have been in place to respond to it. This is the issue on which governments should now be focused.

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Article from Lloyd's List:

www.lloydslist.com/art/1170169537506

Published: 5/02/2007 GMT

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