

Club aims to rally troops

Adam Corbett

London

The North of England protection-and-indemnity (P&I) club is blaming governments for increasing claims and wants shipowners to help it in a co-ordinated fight against unfair regulation.

In a rallying call to owners to fight “ill conceived and locally biased shipping regulation”, North of England managing director Rodney Eccleston said: “If we start letting individual countries or supra-national bodies such as the EU [European Union] get away with introducing politically motivated, anti-shipping legislation and practices, societies global maritime delivery system is at risk of running aground.”

The North of England’s management report states record P&I claims are due to governments’ negative approach toward shipping and the “gradual replacement of fault-based compensation with strict liability”.

Eccleston points to the EU’s Ship Source Pollution Directive

and Third Maritime Safety Package as examples of legislation posing problems for the shipping industry.

He wants fellow members of the International Group of P&I Clubs and owners to join the North of England in co-ordinated lobbying for change and better legislation.

“Given our potentially considerable joint resources and influence, the shipping industry is more than capable of ensuring that patently unfair regulations and practices — and those who promote them — are stopped for good,” he said.

It is not the first time the EU’s maritime legislation has been taken on. Intertanko and other maritime organisations including Intercargo, the International Salvage Union and Lloyds Register recently challenged the Ship Source Pollution Directive in the UK High Court, claiming it clashed with existing maritime conventions. The case has been referred to the European Court of Justice.