

WRITTEN QUESTION E-4675/06  
by Yannick Vaugrenard (PSE)  
to the Commission

Subject: Shipbuilding

There is unanimous support for the European policy on shipbuilding as defined in Leadership 2015. A level playing field for all is the centrepiece of that policy. Yet what do we see?

While the countries of the Far East, through massive subsidies, are developing new construction capacities that represent a lethal threat to balances on the shipping market, in early October, Mr Verheugen, the Commissioner with responsibility for enterprise and industry told shipbuilders in Oslo with legitimate concerns over this subsidised competition that they just had to become more competitive.

While it is indeed up to undertakings to become more competitive, it is the duty of the European authorities to establish a level playing field for all.

Is it acceptable for the Commission to return from Asia and say 'sorry, we can't do anything because they do not want us to'?

Mr Borg, the Commissioner for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs has, for his part, laid down a few markers. It says in the Commission's green paper on Europe's maritime future that 'European shipyards, subject to the EC state aid discipline, have been facing unfair competition from a number of Asian countries, as WTO or OECD rules remain unimplemented. In this regard, it is important to use the anti-dumping rules of the WTO to the fullest extent possible.'

Why is the European Commission not trying to actually forge credible protective instruments in the face of competition from China and the Far East which is strongly supported by the State?