



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs

OFFICIAL REPORT (Hansard)

Ship Recycling (Facilities and Requirements for Hazardous
Materials on Ships) (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2020:
Department of Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs

15 October 2020

preparation for exit day, in 2019, some amendments were made to the 2015 Northern Ireland regulations and to the EU regulation itself so that UK-flagged ships will need to use an approved ship-recycling facility on a United Kingdom list, which is to replicate the EU list. The 2019 amendments also replaced and updated some references to EU member states and references to the Commission and so on, but, because the EU regulation is listed in the NI protocol, some of the amendments made in 2019 needed to be revisited and, in some ways, reversed.

In summary, this SI reinstates the European list of facilities for EU-flagged ships in respect of Northern Ireland. The 2015 NI regulations are revived so that, as is the case now, Northern Ireland facilities are prohibited from accepting an EU-flagged ship for recycling unless the facility is on the European list. Along with ship-recycling facilities in the rest of the UK, Northern Ireland facilities will not be able to accept any UK-flagged ship after the implementation period completion day unless that facility is included on the UK list. It is important to recognise that the UK list will mirror the EU list.

One of the other changes in the SI is that the competent authorities in Northern Ireland, which will be the NIEA and the Health and Safety Executive, will need to inform the Secretary of State about the status of any NI facilities on the European list if the status changes — for example, if a ship-recycling permit has been renewed, suspended or withdrawn. There will then be an onus on the Secretary of State to notify the European Commission of any such changes. The SI also makes some very minor operability amendments to the retained version of the EU regulation covering reserved matters, but, again, that includes placing a requirement on the Secretary of State to inform the European Commission about any changes to facilities in NI.

At the moment and in the past couple of years, there has been only one NI site on the European list, which is Harland and Wolff, and the effect of this SI is that it can remain to be treated by the EU as a facility with an equivalent status to facilities that are located in an EU member state, whereas the facilities in the rest of the UK will have to go through a different process to get added onto the European list again. Ultimately, there will be no real change after the transition period. The positive impact is that it will be easier for NI facilities to gain access and remain on the European list in comparison with the facilities on the UK mainland. That is the crux and the basic impact of the changes in the SI. That is all I have to say at this stage. I am happy to hear comments or take questions from members.

The Chairperson (Mr McAleer): Thank you, Anthony. Is it right that, in the North, the only EU-recognised ship-recycling facility is Harland and Wolff?

Mr Courtney: That is right, yes. It is the only facility from Northern Ireland on the European list, yes.

The Chairperson (Mr McAleer): Right. No problem. Do members have any other questions about that?

Mr Harvey: I welcome that. To me, having read through it all, it seems like there is an opportunity for Harland and Wolff there. That should be good.

Mr Courtney: Yes, that is an important point. Essentially, it allows Harland and Wolff to continue to be on the European list, and therefore it should be open to taking on more business in recycling EU-flagged ships.

Mr Harvey: Thank you. Brilliant.

The Chairperson (Mr McAleer): Are members content to note that one?

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson (Mr McAleer): Anthony, thank you very much. I am glad that you got in there after the earlier technical hitches.

Mr Courtney: Thank you very much for your patience, Chairperson.

The Chairperson (Mr McAleer): No problem. Take care, Anthony. Thank you.