PRESS RELEASE: Embargoed for release, November 06, 2021, 9:00 a.m. GMT

Global Cruise Activist Network
Warns: Cruise Ships are Super-Emitters of Greenhouse Gases;
Action towards Paris Agreement goals Proposed

Calls on UN COP 26 Climate Change Summit in Glasgow from 31 October to 12 November 2021, to accelerate steps that will reverse climate damage from cruise ships.

The Global Cruise Activist Network (GCAN) is calling on the UN delegates to take immediate steps to ensure that cruise ships in service anywhere in the world comply with standards that will achieve net zero emissions of greenhouse gases by the cruise industry by 2050.

Legal analysis shows international shipping emissions are included in the Paris Agreement and must be included in Parties’ Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to meet economy-wide absolute emission reduction targets to limit global warming to 2°C. GCAN recommends that at a minimum, standards for the cruise industry should require emissions reductions of 40% by 2030 and incremental reductions of 5% year-on-year thereafter. Imposing such standards would be consistent with the goals of the Paris Agreement and with the right of every country to control access to its ports.

“The shipping industry is seriously lagging in efforts to decarbonize. Cruise ships, in particular, are super-emitters of greenhouse gases. The cruise industry’s carbon footprint will only increase if it is allowed to continue operating as it has in the past. It’s time to abandon ‘cruising as usual’,” said Tom Siebens, a GCAN activist in New England, U.S.A.

“Cruise ships continue to exploit man-made wonders like Venice and natural wonders like the Great Barrier Reef while contributing to the climate change that destroys these treasures. Switching from burning the dirtiest of bunker fuels to natural gas (LNG) only serves to accelerate climate change. The cruise industry must make drastic reforms to decarbonize if they are to continue,” said Dr. Steve Gration, a GCAN activist on Australia’s Gold Coast.

1 “Shipping and aviation are subject to the Paris Agreement, legal analysis shows,” European Federation for Transport and Environment, October 12, 2021
Two Estonian owned cruise ships hired for accommodation during COP 26, the MS Romantika and the MS Silja Europa (the latter also rented for 10 days as a floating hotel in Falmouth, Cornwall for the G7 summit in June), will run on fossil fuels despite being equipped to use onshore power. Comparing cruise idling to truck idling using US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) formulas, the hotelling emissions from these two ships combined is the equivalent of 700 idling semi-trucks burning shipping fuel non-stop, and due to the higher content of sulphur in shipping fuel, the amount of sulphur dioxide is the same as 46,200 trucks idling non-stop in Glasgow, the most populous city in Scotland.

“The accommodation solution in Glasgow to use floating hotels is deeply disappointing and flies in the face of the purpose of the event to limit global pollution. Multiple reports and evidence are available which clearly state the risks to human health and the environment, including the peer reviewed scientific paper published in September this year “Environmental and human health impacts of cruise tourism: A Review” by Lloret et al, and the 2019 report published by the European Federation for Transport and Environment “One corporation to pollute them all”. The organizers of the G7 and COP 26 events ought to be very embarrassed by renting these super-polluters and disease incubators.” said Linda Clark, a GCAN activist in the Cayman Islands.

**Ship emissions will continue to grow.** The worldwide shipping industry produces over 3% of the planet’s greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide -- as much greenhouse gas as all of America’s coal plants combined. These emissions include micro-particles of black carbon, a proven human health hazard in cruise ports as well as a contributor to global warming.

---

3 “Update from the G7 Summit in Cornwall: Our Ship is In!” Landry & King Global Cruise Services, Press release, June 10, 2021.  
5 Coastal Conservation League, ‘How Do Cruise emissions and Truck Emissions Stack Up?’  
6 MS Romantika produces 6 MW of electricity, MS Silja Europa produces 8 MW, total for two ships 14MW of electricity. 50 gallons (US) of fuel per hr per MW is 14x 50 = 700 gallons (US) of fuel per hour. Comparing to idling semi-truck of 1 gallon (US) per hr is 700 gallons (US) per hr. Shipping fuel contains 66 times more sulphur, 66 x 700 15ppm idling semi-trucks = 46,200 trucks equivalent sulphur dioxide emissions.  
9 Fourth IMO GHG Study 2020 by the International Maritime Organization. 2021, p.1. “The share of shipping emissions in global anthropogenic emissions has increased from 2.76% in 2012 to 2.89% in 2018.”  
11 Black Trail film, June 1, 2021, a European Investigative Collaborations (EIC Network) documentary produced by Expresso, The Black Sea, SIC TV and Reporters United, in co-production with RTS and VG, with research and
Shipping industry targets for decarbonization must be tougher. The International Maritime Organization (IMO), the arm of the U.N. responsible for regulating global shipping, has set a goal of 50% reduction in shipping’s greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 compared to 2008 levels. Yet the IMO’s own projections anticipate growth of as much as 30% above 2008 levels by 2050, absent more immediate and effective efforts to decarbonize. The IMO’s actions to date do little to reverse this trend.

Cruise ships, in particular, are super-emitters of greenhouse gases and black carbon. Most cruise ships burn the cheapest and most carbon-intensive fuels. These ships are more carbon-intensive than cargo ships of similar size because they burn fuel constantly, even when in port, to power infrastructure for, typically, 3,000 up to as many as 10,000 passengers and crew.

reporting support from Financed Uncovered (UK). See discussion of mortality in neighborhoods close to the giant cruise ship port of Civitavecchia near Rome, and close to the port area of Genoa.

MEPC Resolution .304(72), adopted on 13 April 2018, Initial IMO Strategy on Reduction of GHG Emissions from Ships, Section 3.1.3.


Most commercial ships, including cruise ships, burn the dirtiest fuel available, heavy fuel oil (HFO). It is cheaper than other fuels, such as diesel, but also dirtier when burned, producing high levels of CO2 and chemicals directly hazardous to human health. HFO is a heavy residue from the oil refining process. In the process of refining, crude oil is separated into its components, or “fractions”, through distillation. Chemical compounds are separated by heating the crude to temperatures at which one or more fractions vaporize. Vaporized components are then condensed from their gas phase into liquid distillates. Fractions with low boiling points and high volatility vaporize and separate out first. These include kerosene and gasoline. Heavier components such as diesel fuel and lubricating oils are the next fractions to separate out. Fuel oils are part of the residue that remains and include the heavy fuel oil commonly known as “fuel oil no. 6” or “bunker C”. It has a boiling point above 400 F and is the highest boiling fraction of petroleum. Bunker C is a black liquid, sticky and similar in appearance and smell to asphalt. The only refining by-products denser than HFO are carbon black feedstock, used in tires and as a color pigment in plastics and paint, and bituminous residue, commonly known as asphalt, used for paving roads and sealing roofs.

Some ships use fuels a bit lighter than HFO, such as marine gasoil (MGO). MGO is similar to diesel fuel but has a higher density. It is produced with a lower sulphur content than HFO and has less particulate matter and soot than HFO. Low sulphur marine gasoil (LS-MGO) with a sulphur content of less than 0.1% can be used in ports of the European Union and in Emission Control Areas (ECAs).


“‘These ships burn as much fuel as whole towns,’ Bill Hemmings, the director of aviation and shipping at Transport & Environment, told the Guardian earlier this year. ‘They use a lot more power than container ships and even when they burn low sulphur fuel, it’s 100 times worse than road diesel.’”;

“Cruise ships still using ‘dirtiest of all fuels’ must be banned in European ports, says environmental group” by Josh Gabbattiss, The Independent, August 22, 2018. See also, Black Carbon and Fuel Use in Global Shipping 2015, published by ICCT, 2017, p. vii. “Outside the group of container ships, bulk carriers and oil tankers, cruise ships accounted for a disproportionately large amount of black carbon (BC), emitting 6% of BC emissions despite accounting for only 1% of ships and less than 1% of dwt in the global fleet. In fact, as shown in Figure ES-2, cruise ships emitted 10 t per ship per year, or nearly triple that of a typical container ship. On average, one cruise ship emits as much black carbon as 4,200 Euro V [emission standard] heavy-duty trucks operating 100,000 km over one year. Further, cruise ships emit the most BC per unit of fuel they burn: the average cruise ship emits 0.34 kg of BC for every tonne of fuel, compared with 0.26 kg/t for a container ship.”
The cruise industry’s recovery post-Covid should be truly carbon responsible, not “business as usual”. The cruise ship industry is desperately returning to “business as usual” following its shutdown during the Covid-19 pandemic. This will lead to more cruises to more destinations in ever-larger ships . . . and more greenhouse gas emissions. The cruise industry’s stated goal of reduced carbon intensity for each ship is meaningless in the face of continued industry growth. Yet the industry can take effective measures now to reduce its carbon footprint.

The UN COP 26 summit should promote faster action toward ship emissions accounting, economic incentives to decarbonize the industry, and development of clean power practices, shore power and alternative fuels. In addition to net zero emissions standards, multiple initiatives already underway or in development would, in combination, have a significant impact on reducing the greenhouse gas burden that shipping imposes on our world. They need to be pursued with far greater urgency.

These initiatives include:

- operating fewer cruises and using only the most fuel-efficient ships;
- slow steaming, which leads to dramatic reductions in fuel consumption;
- mandating the use of shore power;
- systematically measuring and policing the carbon intensity of ships;
- powering ships with wind, solar and non-fossil fuels to eliminate or reduce the burning of carbon fuels;19
- adding a levy on ship fuel to fund alternative energy research;
- promulgating a carbon tax to incentivize greater fuel efficiency;
- halting the construction of new cruise piers and terminals worldwide in order to stop further damage to the natural and built environment of ports; and
- imposing a “clean ship standard” that progressively reduces the carbon intensity of each ship to zero.20

---

17 “CLIA Sets 2030 Carbon Emissions Targets”, The Maritime Executive, Dec. 19, 2018. “While this sounds like a huge step in the right direction, it will likely prove virtually meaningless, as the reductions are intensity reductions, not absolute reductions,” said international environmental organization Stand.earth.
18 NABU Cruise Ship Ranking 2020 – Industry not on track for climate protection” by Daniel Rieger, Beate Klünder & Malte Siegert of NABU.
20 Norway has already done so. In 2018, to protect its fjords, Norway passed a law requiring zero-emissions cruise ships and ferries by 2026 in two UNESCO Heritage site fjords, and all of Norway’s fjords by 2030. All Aboard, p.8. See also, “Catching Cruise Off-Guard: Norway’s zero emissions fjord cruises”, Marine Link, May 23, 2019. In 2020
Cruise ships are a luxury that cause serious climate damage. The industry and its regulators must give priority to decarbonizing ships and promoting the long-term health of the atmosphere, the marine environment, and port communities. It’s time to abandon “cruising as usual”.

About GCAN: The Global Cruise Activist Network formed during the Covid-19 pandemic to demand changes to the cruise industry’s business model. GCAN’s members, consisting of cruise port residents, civil society organizations, and labor & crime victim advocates, are aligned around the values of health, safety, security, conservation, and equity. Learn more, including GCAN’s 12 Principles of Responsible Cruise Tourism, at globalcruiseactivistnetwork.com.

GCAN’s logo features two international maritime flags representing the letters K and L, which communicate “I wish to communicate with you” (K or Kilo) and “You should stop your vessel immediately” (L or Lima).

Media Contacts:
- Linda Clark, GCAN coordinator, Cayman Islands gcan@globalcruiseactivistnetwork.com
- Jane da Mosto, a GCAN activist and Executive Director of We Are Here Venice Venice, Italy +39 348-895-4642; jane@weareherevenice.org
- Dr. Steve Gration, a GCAN activist and President of Save Our Spit Alliance, Inc., Gold Coast, Australia steve.gration@alumni.griffithuni.edu.au
- Tom Siebens, a GCAN activist, New England, U.S.A. tomsiebens@gmail.com

---

the requirements for the two UNESCO sites were postponed from 2026 to 2030 by the Norwegian Maritime Directorate to have equal regulations for all Norwegian Fjords. See “The Norwegian Maritime Directorate will postpone emission requirements in UNESCO fjords” (Title translated), enerWe April 28, 2020. In another context, after the Exxon-Valdez tanker disaster, the United States used its “port control” to require oil tankers calling in U.S. ports to be double-hulled. Today, the 12,000 oil tankers in the world are all double-hulled.