



# Türk Tabipleri Birliđi

— Turkish Medical Association —

François ARNAULT, Dr  
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Dear Dr. François ARNAULT,

I write this letter on behalf of the Turkish Medical Association (TMA). As the top physician organization in your country, we want to express our serious concerns about the exportation of the now unused Brazilian Aircraft Carrier SĂO PAULO (once in use in the French Navy as FOCH) from Brazil to Türkiye for dismantling and kindly ask you to warn authorities in your country who will let this carrier sail. Since the carrier is already on its route dragged by a towboat, we write this letter to you as an urgent matter.

Like other related professional organisations in Türkiye, environmental and occupational safety specialists from TMA too examined the documents on the Inventory of Hazardous Materials (IHM) of the carrier SĂO PAULO and the Recycling Plan (designed by a shipyard) that is required in case of any transboundary sailing. This examination revealed that the sending of SĂO PAULO to Türkiye for dismantling is not in compliance with relevant international agreements including the Basel Convention.

Türkiye banned the importation of hazardous materials and informed all parties about this ban as per paragraph (a) of Article 4 in the Basel Convention. Further, Article 11 in the Law on the Environment prohibits the entry of hazardous wastes into the country. Besides bans introduced by national legislation, Türkiye is also subject to the binding rules and protocols of the Barcelona Convention. One of the well-known protocols to the Barcelona Convention is the İzmir Protocol titled “Protocol on the Prevention of Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal” signed in İzmir in 1996 and took effect in 2011. The paragraph (4) under article 5 of this protocol reads as follows:

*'Subject to the specific provisions relating to the transboundary movement of hazardous wastes through the territorial sea of a State of transit, referred to in Article 6.4 of this Protocol, all Parties shall take appropriate legal, administrative and other measures within the area under their jurisdiction to prohibit the export and transit of hazardous wastes to developing countries, and Parties which are not Member States of the European Community shall prohibit all imports and transit of hazardous wastes.'*

The last sentence above has its critical importance stating that Türkiye is to prohibit all imports and transit of hazardous wastes. As stated above, this protocol under the Basel Convention introduces a ban of the importation of hazardous wastes (including such hazardous wastes as asbestos in building processes and end-of-life vessels containing poisonous paints). The transit countries on the route of the aircraft carrier SÃO PAULO cannot and must not breach this agreement that Türkiye is a Party to even if Türkiye may seem to have forgotten her obligations.

Paragraph (1) in Basel Convention Article 6 requires a written shipment documentation that classifies wastes in terms of their nature and quantity. When ships are concerned, wastes in the ship are classified in the Inventory of Hazardous Materials (IHM). Although this term is not used in the Basel Convention it is still a legal requirement characterising wastes that are in transboundary movement. Below we summarize some questions/problems that must be inquired in relation to this documentation.

- **Asbestos:** The Sao Paulo was named as “Foch” when it was a part of the French Navy. Foch was the sister ship of asbestos loaded CLEMENCEAU which had been built with the same design as Foch only two years earlier. In 2006, the Greenpeace assigned Aage Bjorn Andersen, a specialist in the field of detecting hazardous materials in ships, who was closely engaged in the development of International Labour Organization, Basel Convention and IMO directives on ship recycling, to assess the quantity of asbestos and other hazardous materials remaining in CLEMENCEAU. Andersen estimated 760 metric tons of asbestos in the ship. However, the latest IHM assessment related to Sao Paulo made by Grieg Green came up with only 9.6 tons of asbestos! This is simply not possible.
- **PCBs:** Before their prohibition in the mid-70s, PCBs were used beyond measure in ship floors, cables, gaskets, rubber parts, insulation materials and paints. It is impossible to believe that identified PCBs do not exist in a ship built long before, in 1957. As noted by Andersen, compared to Oriskany, a similar aircraft carrier built in 1946, calculations suggest that 165 tons of material in CLEMENCAU contain PCBs at levels of concentration higher than 50/ppm. This inconsistency in an assessment made on a sister ship built only two years after points out to a serious mistake. We want to repeat: An examination of records related to wastes extracted from CLEMENCEAU will eliminate any need for estimation games. These records will tell which materials were used in building SÃO PAULO.
- **Radioactivity:** It was surprising for us to learn that only visual examination was made on a warship that might have its uranium armour or might have been exposed to waste fallout when it took part in tests conducted in the Pacific by using atmospheric nuclear bombs: "Smoke/heat detectors were visually checked, and no radioactive effluence was found." Radiation testing instruments (Geiger

counters) are not so expensive. Isn't it clear why it was not done? / Why were these clarifying tests not conducted?

- **Other remarks about the Inventory of Hazardous Materials:** Even if we consider what is documented in the Inventory of Hazardous Materials fully reliable, we still learn that there are 10,000 mercury loaded fluorescent tubes in this inventory. What will happen to these in Türkiye? Aren't the ballasts of these tubes of the type that widely uses PCB as cooling medium? We also see from calculations in the report that paints in the ship have 644 tons of lead-type heavy metal content. This is a huge amount of lead paint. Also estimated is 20 tons of highly toxic organotin compound. Such amounts require a serious recycling process. Even in countries that are well advanced in waste management, these materials necessitate quite sophisticated waste management infrastructure for any shipyard. And Türkiye is certainly not one of these countries.

In conclusion, we expect you to ask the government of United Kingdom to take relevant measures as required by international conventions and to give a warning that SĂO PAULO should not be permitted to use UK as a transit country. The sending of the aircraft carrier SĂO PAULO from Brazil to Aliġa/Türkiye is in contrast with the Basel Convention. Initially, there is a breach that no notification has been made to transit countries and this means illegal traffic under Basel Convention Article 9. Secondly, as a party to the İzmir Protocol, which is in effect, Türkiye prohibits the importation of all kinds of hazardous waste accompanied by the Basel Convention prohibiting the exportation of hazardous wastes to Turkey. Given these flagrant violations, the aircraft carrier SĂO PAULO can be stopped, and its inventory of hazardous materials can be properly examined. We therefore kindly ask you to warn your government and would appreciate your assistance in making our concerns public there.



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