

## **Decarbonization of the Maritime Shipping Sector: The Role of ASEAN member states**

Global shipping represents the engine of global trade. Over 80% of goods are transported via ships. Asia accounts for about 60% of all seaborne trade, and its share is expected to grow further in the future. However, the global fleet of over 50,000 ships is emitting a considerable amount of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (more than Germany). According to the Third IMO Greenhouse gas study (2014), international shipping is responsible for almost 3% of global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. As a major driver for global economic growth, the international shipping industry could successfully evade binding commitments for greenhouse gas emission reductions under the 1997 Kyoto Protocol and also the 2015 Paris Agreement. However, the mounting political pressure finally forced the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) to adopt an initial strategy on the reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from ships. In April 2018, for the first time IMO agreed to a 50% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 (compared with 2008 levels).

Unlike the European Union which implemented own regional mechanisms to curb pollution and greenhouse gas emissions from ships, ASEAN is very silent on the issue. In respect of its heavily populated coastlines and its vulnerability to extreme weather events caused by climate change, one would expect that GHG emission reduction from shipping receiving higher priorities in the region. Despite worsening air pollution in the region and rising GHG emission output, ASEAN member states fail to assign importance to the matter.

The paper discusses ASEAN's role in the formation of a greenhouse gas mitigation scheme for the global shipping industry under the IMO. First, it provides an overview of the role of the shipping industry for the region and the world. It then analyzes the recent decision by the IMO to set an emission target and discusses the implications for Southeast Asian economies. The paper then discusses the role of key players in the region in the development of a greenhouse gas mitigation scheme for the international shipping sector.

**Keywords:** International shipping, IMO, ASEAN, climate change, GHG emission reduction

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