

# Port State Control blackmail the 'elephant in the room': Intercargo



**Blackmail and corruption in Port State Control is like "an elephant in the room" according to Greek shipowner Nicky Pappadakis, "no-one wants to talk about it".**

The vice chairman of Intercargo was commenting on one of the major concerns raised during the international shipowners' association agm gathering in Athens, 12 – 13 October

Intercargo chairman, John Platsidakis said "It's a fact of life" and the problem so great shipping's Roundtable wrote to all MoUs a year ago concerning blackmail in some ports."

As a result a of this intervention a mechanism is being set-up so blackmail can be reported to the MoU involved. However, said Platsidakis, "It's regrettable all the MOUs came back and said that they don't have a problem and that it is a flag state problem."

Still, Platsidakis said shipowners know when their vessels are set to call in certain ports, they will have 'deficiencies' unless they agree to pay inspectors.

Pappadakis raised an example where he asked an agent in an unnamed port for run down on charges he could expect when his ship called at the port and it included "a charge of \$6,000 to help avoid problems". Though this case was in "Spanish speaking port", the Black Sea was mentioned as a problem area, though Intercargo said the MoU is addressing the issue.

Intercargo said corruption occurs "anywhere in the world" but tended to happen in specific ports. The association's secretary general, David Tongue said bulker owners are more exposed to blackmailing as their vessels go to a wider variety of ports compared with tankers and container ships which tend to trade to a smaller number of special terminals on a regular basis.

Port state control and corruption were among issues discussed, at the Athens gathering and Intercargo's technical and executive committees prior to the agm. Other issues raised included ballast water management, air emissions, lifting appliances, piracy, armed robbery and casualty reporting.

"There are serious challenges with regulators out of touch, introducing regulations which can not be met by today's technology. Ballast water management is the biggest of these, with hundreds of millions of dollars being spent on equipping ships without knowing if the systems installed will be accepted at a later time," said Platsidakis.

Source: Seatrade [http://www.seatrade-maritime.com/news/americas/port-state-control-blackmail-the-elephant-in-the-room-intercargo.html?utm\\_campaign=Newsletters&utm\\_medium=Email](http://www.seatrade-maritime.com/news/americas/port-state-control-blackmail-the-elephant-in-the-room-intercargo.html?utm_campaign=Newsletters&utm_medium=Email)