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Shipping should reject migrant compensation, Grimaldi urges

Taking payment would mean being seen as part of permanent solution

MERCHANT shipping has no part in a permanent solution for the Mediterranean migration crisis that will drag on for at least a decade, and thus should not accept compensation for participation in rescue efforts, the head of the Italian shipowners' association has argued, writes David Osler.

The case was made in a take-no-prisoners speech by Emanuele Grimaldi, president of Confitarma, at the Shipping & The Law conference in Naples.

Mr Grimaldi also blasted Green non-governmental organisations for seeking to extract cash from the industry and demanded exemption



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from incoming ballast water regulation for vessels trading purely regionally.

Mr Grimaldi said that

shipping was on the front line of migration issues and accepts its responsibility to save lives. But commercial

shipping cannot substitute for a proper search and rescue effort.

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“Let me be very clearly understood; compensation is not the answer,” he said unequivocally.

To take any proffered compensation would imply merchant shipping is a permanent part of a solution, which it cannot be.

Turning to the forthcoming United Nations Framework

Convention on Climate Change meeting in Paris in December, Mr Grimaldi acknowledged that shipping has a duty to play its part in fighting climate change.

But the industry has succeeded in reducing CO₂ emissions despite growth in world trade, and its voice must be heard.

Easy target

Mr Grimaldi alleged that environmentalist NGOs see shipping as an easy target for raising funds. Any levy imposed must be reasonable and proportionate, he insisted.

Finally, Mr Grimaldi called for the implementation of impending Ballast Water

Management Convention regulations to include exemptions for vessels that trade in only one region, and which are therefore unlikely to transfer organisms between different ecosystems.

All regulation should be backed by rigorous cost-benefit analysis, Mr Grimaldi said.