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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Approval of Bill C-30 (C.E.T.A.) will severely weaken bargaining position for Canadian Seafarers and help cause the disappearance of the Canadian Merchant Marine.

MONTREAL, QC, FEBRUARY 7TH -Approval of Bill C-30, implementing legislation for the Canada -Europe Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (C.E.T.A.), by the Parliament of Canada could occur at any time.

Approval of C.E.T.A. in the European Parliament will likely occur on Wednesday, 15/2/17.

Once Approval occurs in both, C.E.T.A. will be considered provisionally approved and more than 90% of it's provisions will come immediately into effect, including those of the Maritime Transport Chapter.

This will permit European registered ships to load cargo destined for international market in Canada and carry it to other Canadian ports (called Cabotage), a trade until now reserved for ships registered in Canada and their Canadian crews.

Because European registered ships are generally operated by low wage flag of convenience crews (who are paid at 1/10 and 1/3 the rate of Canadian crews and often subject to lower working and safety standards), Canadian ships will not be able to compete economically and disappear, I think, within 5-10 years of C.E.T.A.'s implementation.

Contract negotiations for unlicensed (non-officer rank) seafarers, represented by the Seafarers International Union (S.I.U.) of Canada, with Canada Steamship Lines and Algoma Central Marine (the 2 largest ship owning and seafaring employers in Canada) will be severely weakened by C.E.T.A.'s imminent approval as well as those with other Maritime Unions, the Officer's Guild, and all Canadian seafarers.

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Proponents of C.E.T.A. claim that effects on Canada's Merchant Marine will be limited to permitting empty containers to be re-positioned between Halifax and Montreal on a non-revenue basis by European registry ships (as in Reservation II-C-14, pages 1209 and 1210).

The Maritime Transport Chapter appears to grant such vessels the much broader rights of carrying all

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types of international cargo (described in Articles 14-3.1 and 14-3.2 as well as the definition of “ Feeder service” in Article 14-1) between any port in Canada, particularly should the constraints in Reservation II-C-14 are removed in a subsequent amendment of the agreement.

Such rights could see Canadian ships reflagged as European and their Canadian crews replaced with low wage flag of convenience crews.

Due to such circumstances, the Implementation of Bill C-30 and C.E.T.A. could lead to the rapid disappearance of the Canadian Merchant Marine and it’s thousands of Canadian seafaring jobs.

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