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## Economic impacts of the ballast water treaty: a case study for The Netherlands and Belgium

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On 8 September 2017, the Ballast Water Treaty was officially ratified by IMO. The goal of this Treaty is to protect the marine environment. Exceptions to this Treaty are allowed, on condition that the risk of inventurisation of species is not increased. This research focuses on the economic (and societal) cost-benefit analysis of possible exceptions to the Treaty, in particular the possibility to introducing a so-called 'Same Risk Area' (SRA). The research approach consists of two main steps: problem identification on the one hand, and economic impact analysis on the other. Step 1 entails unraveling what the operational side of the Treaty looks like, with focus on The Netherlands and Belgium. For step 2, an identification of the shipping origins, destinations and routes within the identified geographical area, as well as the fleet sailing on these routes and its characteristics, will be elaborated. That is the basis for an economic cost/benefit impact assessment of ballast water zones and exceptions to them, under three identified geographical scenarios. The results shed useful insight to national authorities and concerned shipping companies, so as to judge on the wider impacts the Treaty and its exceptions might generate.

**Primary author:** Prof. VAN HASSEL, Edwin (University of Antwerp)

**Co-authors:** Dr KUIPERS, Bart (Erasmus University Rotterdam); Prof. SYS, Christa (University of Antwerp); Dr STRENG, Martijn (Erasmus University Rotterdam)

**Presenter:** Prof. VAN HASSEL, Edwin (University of Antwerp)

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