

Germans stall over new crewing decree

GERMAN owners and the Verdi trade union have again delayed their decision on a possible amendment of the German crewing decree, *writes Katrin Berkenkopf in Cologne.*

Industry sources suggested the parties wanted to wait until the German parliament passes a resolution on the country's maritime industries. The resolution is expected to be passed on January 31, with no legal implications.

It may point the way to how the crewing decree will be handled in future, though. Currently, the decree requires the master of a Ger-

man-flagged vessel to speak German.

Owners want temporary exemptions at least for individual ships in order to overcome a shortage of officers. Union representatives have stuck their neck out over the resistance to such plans and it seems difficult to find a wording they can agree to.

An agreement was expected to be made at the National Maritime Conference in early December.

The number of German-flagged vessels has fallen over the past year, which owners attribute to the lack of domestic masters.