

# Russian ship adrift in Atlantic an 'environmental hazard'

February 20 2013, by Sandra Ferrer

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An undated handout picture of former Russian cruise ship MV Lyubov Orlova. The Lyubov Orlova, a Russian-built cruise ship adrift in the Atlantic after a failed bid to tow it to a scrapyard, poses an "imminent" environmental threat, a French green group warned.

The Lyubov Orlova, a Russian-built cruise ship adrift in the Atlantic after a failed bid to tow it to a scrapyard, poses an "imminent" environmental threat, a French green group warned Wednesday.

The 100-metre-long rusting vessel, named after a Russian movie star from the 1930s, is floating free in international waters off Canada after two towing accidents. It has no crew or warning lights.

"In case of a collision or sinking or any accident, the Lyubov Orlova will immediately release fuel, pyralene and other toxic liquids, asbestos ... mercury and other non-degradable floating waste," [environmental group](#) Robin des Bois said in a statement.

It poses "an imminent [environmental threat](#)," the group said.

The 1976-built ship left Canadian shores on January 23 to be towed to a scrapyard in the Dominican Republic. But the cable snapped a day later leaving it stranded in international waters.

It was then secured by the Atlantic Hawk, a supply vessel in the offshore oil industry, which managed to take the ship under tow again but it drifted off again.

"The Lyubov Orlova has not been located," Robin des Bois, which translates as Robin Hood, warned. Experts say it could be drifting towards Ireland.

Canada's transport authority has said the ship—abandoned for two years—was no longer its concern having left the country's waters but underscored that the owner was responsible for its movements.

"The vessel has drifted into international waters, and given current patterns and predominant winds, it is very unlikely that the vessel will re-enter waters under Canadian jurisdiction," Transport Canada said in a statement.

It said the authority had decided not to pursue the vessel as the operation

could pose a safety risk to Canadian sailors in choppy waters.

According to Canadian media reports the owner is Reza Shoeybi. He told Canada's [public broadcaster](#) CBC that he is hoping the derelict vessel will be safely snagged by another ship as it gets close to Europe.

"I'm trying my best. I'm talking to a few people in Ireland—salvage companies—perhaps to partner up with them and retrieve her," Shoeybi told CBC News.

The ship has repeatedly made headlines for the wrong reasons. Canadian firm Cruise North Expeditions wanted to charter the ship for summer cruises in the Arctic but due to a financial dispute with the Russian ship owners, the Lyubov Orlova was seized when it arrived in St. John's, Newfoundland, in September, 2010.

Locals then donated food to the stranded crew of 44 until they could be repatriated to Russia three months later.

The ship was tied up at the harbour in St. John's for more than two years before being sold in February 2012 to be broken up.

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Citation: Russian ship adrift in Atlantic an 'environmental hazard' (2013, February 20) retrieved 23 June 2024 from

<https://phys.org/news/2013-02-russian-ship-adrift-atlantic-environmental.html>

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