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US authorities probe Spain's alleged blocking of US-flagged ships

- 09/12/2024
- by Shipping Telegraph

The Federal Maritime Commission (FMC) has initiated an investigation into regulations or practices by the government of Spain which appear, as the authority claims, to bar certain vessels, including U.S.-flagged vessels, from calling at ports in that country.

According to FMC, information indicates that Spain has refused entry to certain vessels on at least three separate occasions this year. The two most recent instances involved U.S.-flagged vessels.

Laws administered by the Commission empower it to investigate whether regulations or practices of foreign governments result in conditions unfavorable to shipping in the foreign trade of the United States.

The Commission can levy significant remedies, including substantial daily fines and barring foreign vessels from calling at U.S. ports, if it finds that such conditions are taking place.

The Commission's investigation will commence with information gathering through a 20-day public comment period.

During this comment period, the FMC requests information about when vessels have been barred or may be barred from calling in Spain, which vessels have been denied entry, and the explanation or justification provided by the Government of Spain for such denials.

The Federal Register notice announcing the investigation contains instructions to enable the submission of relevant information.