

News from IMO

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This contribution presents a compilation of information on current work of selected IMO bodies in the period preceding the publication of this issue of ToMs. The outcome of IMO bodies responsible for safety and environment protection has been covered, aiming at informing readers on the decisions taken, as well as on the IMO instruments and/or their amendments that have entered into force.

KEY WORDS

- ~ IMO
- ~ Safety
- ~ Environment protection

INTRODUCTION

Since the last issue of ToMS, the Maritime Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) met at the Organization's London Headquarters for its 68th session from 11 to 15 May 2015, and the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) held its 95th session from 3 to 12 June 2015. Selected decisions and outcome of discussions of both Committees have been presented in this review.

Complete information on the outcome of various IMO bodies is available in their reports, which can be found on the Organization's IMODOCS website (<http://docs.imo.org/>). More information and highlights on the work of the Organization can be found on its public website (<http://www.imo.org>), including press briefings and meeting summaries available in "Media Centre" area, whilst most of the Organization's technical and operational data, some of which is available to the public, is stored in the Global Integrated Shipping Information System (GISIS) (<https://gis.imo.org>), which is also accessible via the public website.

68th session of the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 68)

Polar Code environmental requirements adopted

The MEPC adopted the environmental requirements of the International Code for ships operating in polar waters (Polar Code), and the associated MARPOL amendments to make the Code mandatory, following the adoption of the safety part of the Code by the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) in November 2014. The Polar Code is expected to enter into force on 1 January 2017.

MARPOL Annex I amendments relating to oil residues adopted

Amendments to regulation 12 of MARPOL Annex I, concerning tanks for oil residues (sludge) were adopted. The amendments update and revise the regulation, expanding on the requirements for discharge connections and piping to ensure oil residues are properly disposed of.

Extension of Great Barrier Reef and Torres Strait PSSA adopted

The MEPC adopted a resolution to extend the eastern limit of the current Great Barrier Reef and Torres Strait Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA) to encompass the south-west part of the Coral Sea, part of Australia's Coral Sea Commonwealth Marine Reserve (CMR), a remote ocean ecosystem which provides refuge for a wide range of threatened, migratory and commercially valuable species.

Ballast water management status and technologies reviewed

The MEPC reviewed the status of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments (BWM Convention), 2004, which is close to receiving sufficient ratifications to meet the remaining entry into force criterion (tonnage). The number of Contracting Governments is currently 44, representing 32.86 % of the world's merchant fleet tonnage. The BWM Convention will enter into force 12 months after the date on which not fewer than 30 States, the combined merchant fleets of which constitute not less than 35 % of the world's gross tonnage, have ratified it.

Among other decisions, a "Roadmap for the implementation of the BWM Convention" was agreed, which emphasises that early movers, i.e. ships which install ballast water management systems approved in accordance with the current Guidelines (G8), should not be penalized.

Further ballast water management systems that make use of active substances were granted Basic Approval (five systems) and Final Approval (one system).

Further development of energy-efficiency guidelines for ships

The MEPC continued its work on further developing guidelines to assist in the implementation of the mandatory energy-efficiency regulations for international shipping and adopted amendments to:

- the 2014 Guidelines on survey and certification of the Energy

Efficiency Design Index (EEDI) and endorsed their application from 1 September 2015, at the same time encouraging earlier application;

- the 2013 Interim Guidelines for determining minimum propulsion power to maintain the manoeuvrability of ships in adverse conditions, for the level-1 minimum power lines assessment for bulk carriers and tankers, and agreed on a phase-in period of six months for the application of the amendments; and
- the 2014 Guidelines on the method of calculation of the attained EEDI.

Text agreed for further development of a data collection system to analyse the energy efficiency of ships

The MEPC agreed the text to be the full language for the data collection system for fuel consumption of ships, which can be readily used for voluntary or mandatory application of the system, and noted that a purpose of the data collection system was to analyse energy efficiency and for this analysis to be effective some transport work data needs to be included, but at this stage the appropriate parameters have not been identified.

Revised air pollution guidance and requirements agreed

The MEPC considered a number of amendments and revisions to existing guidance and requirements related to air pollution measures and, inter alia, adopted amendments to:

- the 2009 Guidelines for exhaust gas cleaning systems (resolution MEPC.184(59)); and
- the 2011 Guidelines addressing additional aspects to the NOX Technical Code 2008 with regard to particular requirements related to marine diesel engines fitted with Selective Catalytic Reduction (SCR) Systems (resolution MEPC.198(62)).

Fuel oil availability review to be initiated this year

The MEPC agreed terms of reference for the review, required under regulation 14 (Sulphur Oxides (SO_x) and Particulate Matter) of MARPOL Annex VI, of the availability of compliant fuel oil to meet the global requirements that the sulphur content of fuel oil used on board ships shall not exceed 0.50 % m/m on and after 1 January 2020. The IMO Secretariat was requested to initiate the review by 1 September 2015, with a view to the final report of the fuel oil availability review being submitted to MEPC 70 (autumn 2016) as the appropriate information to inform the decision to be taken by the Parties to MARPOL Annex VI.

95th session of the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC 95)

IGF Code adopted

The MSC adopted the International Code of Safety for Ships using Gases or other Low-flashpoint Fuels (IGF Code), along with amendments to make the Code mandatory under the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), with the expected date of entry into force of 1 January 2017.

The use of gas as fuel, particularly liquefied natural gas (LNG), has increased in recent years due to lower sulphur and particulate emissions than fuel oil or marine diesel oil. But gas and other low-flashpoint fuels pose their own set of safety challenges, which need to be properly managed. The IGF Code aims to minimize the risk to the ship, its crew and the environment, having regard to the nature of the fuels involved.

The IGF Code contains mandatory provisions for the arrangement, installation, control and monitoring of machinery, equipment and systems using low-flashpoint fuels, focusing initially on LNG.

The Code addresses all areas that need special consideration for the usage of low-flashpoint fuels, taking a goal-based approach.

The MSC also adopted related amendments to the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW), and STCW Code, to include new mandatory minimum requirements for the training and qualifications of masters, officers, ratings and other personnel on ships subject to the IGF Code. The amendments also have an entry into force date of 1 January 2017, in line with the SOLAS amendments related to the IGF Code.

IMSBC Code amendments adopted, guidance approved

Amendments to the International Maritime Solid Bulk Cargoes (IMSBC) Code were adopted and related guidance approved. The amendments include those intended to improve the requirements relating to the provisions for concentrates or other cargoes which may liquefy; amendments to provisions for specially constructed cargo ships for confining cargo shift; the addition of new individual schedules such as iron ore fines, among others, and amendments to a number of existing ones, including a revised schedule for iron ore.

Unsafe mixed migration by sea

During a special session, the MSC agreed that urgent action was needed to prevent huge losses of life given the forecast

increase in unsafe mixed migration by sea. The Committee stressed the need for the international community to make greater efforts to address unsafe migration through more safe and regular migration pathways, and taking action against criminal smugglers.

To progress work on aspects of this humanitarian disaster that come under the purview of IMO, the Committee agreed to place an agenda item on its work programme and initiated related actions by the Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue (NCSR) and the Facilitation Committee.

Passenger ship safety - draft SOLAS amendments on evacuation analysis approved

As part of the ongoing work programme to improve passenger ship safety, the MSC approved draft amendments to SOLAS regulation II-2/13 to extend the requirements for evacuation analysis to all passenger ships, not just ro-ro passenger ships.

Also MSC approved draft amendments to SOLAS regulation II-1/22, along with the related guidelines, to clarify when watertight doors may be opened during a voyage (applicable to all ships).

Cyber security matters referred to MSC 96 and FAL 40

The MSC considered a number of submissions relating to cyber security, agreeing that it was an important and timely issue. The MSC noted that the shipping industry round table (including the Cruise Lines Industry Association (CLIA), was developing guidance on cyber security on board ships, to be submitted to the next Facilitation Committee (FAL 40) and MSC 96 in 2016.

Circular on definition of "high risk" piracy area agreed

An MSC Circular on Best Management Practices (BMP) for Protection against Somalia Based Piracy was approved, calling on the BMP authors to amend the coordinates of the High Risk Area (HRA) in BMP 4 (promulgated as MSC.1/Circ.1339), following a proposal by Egypt to remove the Gulf of Suez and the Red Sea from the HRA definition.

The MSC also approved Revised Interim recommendations for flag States regarding the use of privately contracted armed security personnel on board ships in the High Risk Area (to update MSC.1/Circ.1406/Rev.2) to recommend that Private Maritime Security Companies (PMSC) employing privately contracted armed security personnel (PCASP) on board ships should hold valid, accredited, certification to ISO 28007-1:2015 or meet applicable national requirements.

Ship-routeing measures adopted

In addition to the extension of Great Barrier Reef and Torres Strait PSSA, as adopted by MEPC 68 in May 2015, the MSC adopted new ship-routeing measures aimed at protecting sensitive areas in the south-west Coral Sea off Australia, including an "area to be avoided" (ATBA) and two new, five nautical mile wide, two-way routes. Five recommendatory ATBAs in the region of the Alaska Aleutian Islands were also adopted. The new measures will be implemented on 1 January 2016 at 0000 hours UTC.

Goal-based standards - work plan for further work on GBS-SLA agreed

The MSC approved a work plan for continued work on goal-based standards safety level approach (GBS-SLA), over the next three sessions and approved the MSC.1/Circ.1394/Rev.1 on the Generic guidelines for developing IMO goal-based standards. GBS are defined as high-level standards and procedures that are to be met through regulations, rules and standards for ships.

The MSC noted that, by the end of March 2015, all five GBS verification audit teams had delivered their interim reports, which

included 13 interim reports on relevant recognized organizations (ROs); and two interim reports on IACS Common Packages.

Under the GBS standards, construction rules for bulk carriers and oil tankers of classification societies which act as ROs, or national Administrations, must be verified, based on the Guidelines for verification of conformity with goal-based ship construction standards for bulk carriers and oil tankers (resolution MSC.296(87)) (GBS Guidelines).

Amendments to IMO instruments that have entered into force

- 2012 amendments to the Protocol of 1996 to amend the Convention on Limitation of Liability for Maritime Claims, 1976 (amendments to the limitation amounts set out in article 3) (resolution LEG.5(99)) have entered into force **on 8 June 2015**.
- 2014 amendments to MARPOL Annex VI and the NOX Technical Code 2008 (resolution MEPC.251(66)) have entered into force **on 1 September 2015**.