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**IMO MEETING REPORT**

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| DATE: 12th December 2024 | COMMITTEE: MSC |
| ATTENDEES: Andy Williams | SUB GROUP: |

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| This was the 109th session of the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) held from the 2nd to 6th December 2024. I attended remotely on 5th December.  ITEMS OF INTEREST TO THE LEISURE/SUPERYACHT INDUSTRY  **Pilot transfer arrangements –** The Committee approved the draft amendments to SOLAS regulation V/23 and the associated draft MSC resolution on performance standards for pilot transfer arrangements (see NCSR 11 report). It is expected that these will be adopted at MSC 110 with an entry into force date of 1 January 2028.  The Committee also approved a revision of MSC.1/Circ.1428 on Required pilot transfer arrangements for pilots and other personnel with an effective date to be determined by MSC 110 (June 2025). The draft circular can be found at the annex to attached document MSC 109/13/5 “Revision of required boarding arrangements for pilots (MSC.1/Circ.1428)”, submitted by IMPA.  The amendment to this circular relates to the pictorial illustration of safe and compliant pilot transfer arrangements and is designed to complement the requirements of SOLAS V/23. It should be noted that in the illustration of the pilot ladder and man ropes for a ship’s side door arrangement (the most common arrangement for yachts where the pilot boards via the side bulwark door on the main deck), rigging the ladder from the deckhead is no longer permitted and the ladder should be secured on the deck.  **International Code of Safety for Ships Using Gases or Other Low-Flashpoint Fuels (IGF code) –** The Committee adopted MSC Resolution in Amendments to the International Code of Safety for Ships Using Gases or Other Low-flashpoint Fuels (IGF Code). The resolution provides details of the new provisions affecting vessels using natural gas as fuel. The amendments concern construction standards and specifications for fuel tanks, pipes and vents as well as structural fire protection.  The IGF code applies to cargo ships (including yachts) of 500 GT and above and these amendments will enter force on 1 January 2028. This means vessels:  • For which the building contract is placed on or after 1 January 2028; or  • In the absence of a building contract, the keels of which are laid or which are at a similar stage of  construction on or after 1 July 2028; or  • The delivery of which is on or after 1 January 2032.  The draft MSC resolution on amendments to the IGF Code can be found at annex 2 of the attached report of the drafting group in document MSC 109/WP.7.  **Development of a safety regulatory framework to support the reduction of GHG emissions from ships using new technologies and alternative fuels -** The Committee noted the verbal report of the correspondence group established at MSC 108 (see MSC 108 report).  The lists of alternative fuels and new technologies under consideration was updated to include a new category for “swappabletraction lithium-ion battery containers” to the list of new technologies. The lists are shown below:   |  | | --- | | **Alternative Fuel** | | Fatty-acid methyl ester (FAME) | | Hydrothermal liquefaction (HTL) | | Pyrolysis fuel | | Methyl/ethyl alcohol fuels | | Hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) | | Fischer-Tropsch (FT) diesel | | Ammonia | | Dimethyl Ether (DME) | | Ethane | | Hydrogen - (compressed, liquid, metal hydride) | | Methane/Natural Gas (compressed/CNG, liquefied/LNG) | | Propane/Butane (LPG) | | Fuel Blends/Mixtures (e.g. hydrogen - natural gas) |  |  | | --- | | **New Technology** | | Fuel Cell Power Installations | | Fuel Reforming | | Nuclear Power | | Solar Power | | Wind Propulsion | | Lithium-Ion Batteries  Swappabletraction lithium-ion battery containers | | Supercapacitor energy storage technology | | Other Battery Technologies | | High-Pressure Composite Cylinders | | Metal Hydrides | | Liquid Organic Hydrogen Carrier (LOHC) | | Wind Assisted Power | | Air Lubrication  Foils / Hydrodynamic Energy Saving Devices  Low-Friction Antifouling Paints  Hull Form Optimization  Optimal Routing  Propeller Optimization and Propulsion Improving Devices  Advanced Waste Heat Recovery  Ammonia Abatement  CO2 Abatement - onboard carbon capture and storage (OCCS, OCCU)  Methane Abatement  N2O Abatement  Onshore Power Supply / Cold Ironing |   Full details of the alternative fuels/new technologies, the instruments causing barriers to their utilisation and gaps in the regulations can be found in the attached report of the working group in document MSC 109/WP.9.  The Committee agreed to the draft amendments to the SOLAS Convention in relation to the application of the IGF Code to also allow gaseous fuels, including ammonia, with a view to adoption at MSC 110 (June 2025).  The Committee also agreed to invite interested Member States and international organizations to submit a formal proposal regarding amendments to the definition of "low-flashpoint fuel" in SOLAS regulation II-1/2.29, which should include detailed consequential amendments to SOLAS chapter II-1 and the IGF Code, to the future session of the Committee.  Finally, the Committee agreed to the recommendation that these amendments be approved at this session with a view to adoption at MSC 110 in June 2025 and that the four-year amendment cycle in MSC.1/Circ.1481 should be relaxed with a view to entry into force in 2027.  Full details of the SOLAS amendments in relation to the IGF Code can be found in annex 3 of the report of the working group in attached document MSC 109/WP.9.  **Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS) –** The Committee continued work on the development of the non-mandatory Code to regulate Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS) to ensure these autonomous ships operate safely and in coexistence with conventional ships. During this session, the working group finalised the following chapters of the code:  Chapter 7 – Risk Assessment  Chapter 12 – Connectivity  Chapter 18 – Remote Operation  The Committee agreed to the revised road map for developing a goal-based code as follows:    The Committee also agreed to re-establish the intersessional MASS Working Group to take place between MSC 110 and MSC 111. Meanwhile, work is continuing intersessionally via the correspondence group established at MSC 108. Full details on the status of this item can be found in the attached report of the MASS working group in document MSC 109/WP.9.  **Clarification of carriage requirement for MF radio installation for sea area A3 –** It may be recalled that the amendments to the GMDSS requirements of SOLAS Chapter IV (Radiocommunications) which entered into force on 1 January 2024 were of a technical nature and did not require any changes to the carriage requirements for radio equipment. Despite this, there has been some confusion regarding the carriage of MF/HF equipment and its duplication. This issue is detailed in attached document MSC 109/21/2 “Inconsistent implementation of SOLAS regulations IV/10 and IV/15 and COMSAR.1/Circ.32/Rev.2 relating to an MF radio installation for sea area A3” submitted by IACS.  Following the discussion of this item in plenary the Committee confirmed the understanding in paragraph 24 of document MSC 109/21/2 and requested the Secretariat to issue a revision of  COMSAR.1/Circ.32/Rev.2 amending footnote no. 6 of the table beneath paragraph 2.3 to read:  *"6 A single MF/HF radio installation may be accepted both as a primary MF radio installation and a duplicated MF/HF radio installation, as provided in this circular."*  Consequently, the Committee approved COMSAR.1/Circ.32/Rev.3 on Harmonization of GMDSS requirements for radio installations on board SOLAS ships, superseding COMSAR.1/Circ.32/Rev.2 with immediate effect.  **Piracy and armed robbery against ships –** The Committee considered attached document MSC 109/9 “Developments since MSC 108” submitted by the Secretariat. This paper reports on piracy and armed robbery incidents since MSC 108. In summary, 72 incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships had been reported to the Organization as having occurred or been attempted from January to June 2024, constituting a decrease of approximately 20% at the global level compared to the same period in 2023. The areas most affected during the period in 2024 were the Straits of Malacca and Singapore (37), the Indian Ocean (13) and West Africa (10). The number of incidents in the Gulf of Guinea (West Africa) had decreased in the first half of 2024 by four compared to the same period in 2023, constituting a decrease of approximately 29%.  During the discussion of this agenda item, one of the co-sponsors of Best Management Practices advised the Committee that, hat following the removal of the High-Risk Area in the Indian Ocean in January 2023, the development of a new more dynamic threat assessment process was almost complete. A new consolidated version bringing together the three existing regional volumes would be issued in January 2025, and would be supported by Maritime Industry Security Threat Overviews, which would provide detailed regional updates on specific threats to shipping.  **Draft report -** The draft report of the Committee is contained in attached documents MSC.109/WP.1.  **Circulars approved at MSC 109**  MSC.1/Circ.[…] Voluntary early implementation of the amendments to chapter 16 of the IGC  Code  MSC-FAL.1/Circ.[…] Guidelines concerning the recovery of deceased persons and of death after  recovery  MSC.1/Circ.[…] Unified interpretations of SOLAS regulations III/20.8.4 and 20.11, and  resolution MSC.402(96)  MSC.1/Circ.[…] Unified interpretations of SOLAS regulation II-2/4.5.6.1, and paragraphs  3.1.2, 3.1.4 and 3.5.3 of the IBC Code  MSC.1/Circ.[…] Unified Interpretations of SOLAS chapter II-2  MSC.1/Circ.1276/Rev.2 Revised unified interpretations of SOLAS chapter II-2  MSC.1/Circ.[…] Unified interpretation of SOLAS chapter II-1  MSC.1/Circ.1628/Rev.3 Revised standardized life-saving appliance evaluation and test report forms  (personal life-saving appliances)  MSC.1/Circ.1630/Rev.3 Revised standardized life-saving appliance evaluation and test report form  (survival craft)  MSC.1/Circ.1631/Rev.1 Revised standardized life-saving appliance evaluation and test report forms  (rescue boats)  MSC.1/Circ.1632/Rev.1 Revised standardized life-saving appliance evaluation and test report forms  (launching and embarkation appliances)  MSC.1/Circ.677/Rev.1 Revised standards for the design, testing and locating of devices to prevent  the passage of flame into cargo tanks in tankers  COLREG.2/Circ.[81] Traffic separation schemes and associated measures  SN.1/Circ.[344] Routeing measures other than traffic separation schemes  MSC.1/Circ.[…] Amendments to the IAMSAR manual  MSC.1/Circ.1460/Rev.5 Guidance on the validity of radiocommunications equipment installed and  used on ships  SN.1/Circ.297/Rev.1 IALA maritime buoyage system  SN.1/Circ.296/Rev.1 IALA risk management toolbox for aids to navigation and vessel traffic  services  MSC.1/Circ.[…] Interim guidelines for the safety of ships using ammonia as fuel  MSC.1/Circ.[…] Recommendations to national administrations to prevent collisions with  fishing vessels MSC.1/Circ.1164/Rev.29 International Convention on  Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers  (STCW), 1978  MSC.1/Circ.797/Rev.41 List of competent persons maintained by the Secretary General pursuant to  Section A-I/7 of the STCW Code  PRINCIPAL ISSUES:  The meeting agenda was as follows:   1. Adoption of the agenda 2. Decisions of other IMO bodies 3. Amendments to mandatory instruments 4. Goal-based new ship construction standards 5. Development of a goal-based instrument for Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS) 6. Development of a safety regulatory framework to support the reduction of GHG emissions from ships using new technologies and alternative fuels 7. Revision of the Guidelines on Maritime Cyber Risk Management (MSC-FAL.1/Circ.3/Rev.2) and identification of next steps to enhance maritime cybersecurity 8. Measures to enhance maritime security 9. Piracy and armed robbery against ships 10. Unsafe mixed migration by sea 11. Formal safety assessment 12. Ship systems and equipment (report of the tenth session of the Sub-Committee) 13. Navigation, communications and search and rescue (report of the eleventh session of the Sub-Committee) 14. Carriage of cargoes and containers (urgent matters emanating from the tenth session of the Sub-Committee) 15. Implementation of IMO instruments (report of the tenth session of the Sub-Committee) 16. Pollution prevention and response (report of the eleventh session of the Sub-Committee) 17. Domestic ferry safety 18. Application of the Committee’s method of work 19. Work programme 20. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair for 2025 21. Any other business 22. Consideration of the report of the Committee on its 109th session   Three working groups, one drafting group and one experts group were established as follows:   1. Working Group on Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS). The terms of reference of the group were to: 2. Further develop the draft non-mandatory MASS Code, based on annex 1 to document MSC 109/5, and in particular:   .1 further consider chapters 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 16 in part 2 of the draft MASS  Code, including principles, application and necessary definitions, to confirm their  need and ensure their alignment and consistency with part 3;  .2 further consider chapters 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27 and 28 in part 3 of the draft  MASS Code, taking into account the Generic Guidelines (MSC.1/Circ.1394/Rev.2) for  Tier I and Tier II, and to ensure consistency and that all necessary IMO instruments are  addressed, as appropriate   1. Consider the potential gap in the draft MASS Code on delegation of the master's tasks and duties, taking into account paragraph 17 of document MSC 109/5. 2. Update the revised road map, based on annex 16 of document MSC 108/20/Add.1. 3. Working Group on Development of a safety regulatory framework to support the reduction of GHG emissions from ships using new technologies and alternative fuels. The terms of reference of this group were to: 4. Further develop and update the list of alternative fuels and new technologies to support the reduction of GHG emissions from ships taking into account the interim oral report of the coordinator of the correspondence group and related comments made in plenary 5. Progress as appropriate the assessment for each identified fuel and new technology based on new submissions. 6. Continue identifying, and recording as convenient, safety obstacles and gaps in the current IMO instruments that may impede the use of alternative fuels or new technologies. 7. On the basis of document MSC 109/6 together with paragraph 20 of document CCC 10/10/3 (IACS), prepare draft amendments to SOLAS regulations II-1/2.29, II-1/56 and II-1/57 for consideration by the Committee. 8. Develop criteria for the assignment of work to Sub-Committees. 9. Develop a work plan that includes timelines, tasks and priorities on GHG Safety-related matters. 10. Submit a written report Part 1 to Plenary covering the above terms of reference .1 to .4 by Thursday, 5 December 2024, and submit part 2 of the WG Report to MSC 110 with the Group's outcome on terms of reference .5 and .6.   3. Working Group on Workload of the Committee. The terms of reference of this group were:     1. Consider measures to address the workload of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies, taking into account the initial considerations at MSC 108 (MSC 108/WP.9) and documents MSC 109/19/8, MSC 109/19/9, MSC 109/19/10 and MSC 109/12 (paragraph 2.32 only), and advise the Committee, as appropriate. 2. Subject to the outcome of the above, prepare draft amendments to the Committees' method of work (MSC-MEPC.1/Circ.5/Rev.5), including the amendments approved by the Committee regarding the assessment of capacity-building implications (MSC 108/20/Add.1, annex 22), as well as the decision-making process and safeguards agreed by the Committee concerning unified interpretations (MSC 108/20, paragraph 19.9), for approval by the Committee and concurrent approval by MEPC 83. 3. Consider if any consequential amendments would be necessary to any instruments (e.g. resolution A.1174(33), MSC.1/Circ.1500/Rev.3, MSC.1/Circ.1587, etc.) as a result of the above action, and advise the Committee, as appropriate. 4. Review the updated draft terms of reference of the CCC and III Sub-Committees, as set out in documents CCC 10/16, annex 6, and III 10/18, annex 6, respectively, and advise the Committee, as appropriate. 5. Consider the flexibility arrangements recommended by the III Sub-Committee (i.e. MSC 109/15, paragraph 2.16) from the workload point of view, including the possibility of applying similar arrangements across all sub-committees, and advise the Committee, as appropriate.   4. Drafting Group on Amendments to mandatory instruments. The terms of reference of this group  were:     1. Finalize the draft amendments to chapter 16 of the IGC Code, and the draft associated MSC resolution, based on annex 1 to document MSC 109/WP.5. 2. Finalize the draft amendments to parts A and A-1 of the IGF Code, and the draft associated MSC resolution, based on annex 2 to document MSC 109/WP.5. 3. Finalize the draft MSC circular on voluntary early implementation of the amendments to chapter 16 of the IGC Code, set out in sub-paragraph .1 based on annex 3 to document MSC 109/WP.5. 4. Assess the implications for capacity-building and technical cooperation and assistance of the new, or amendments to existing, mandatory instruments submitted for adoption at this session, against the procedures and criteria for identification of capacity-building implications set out in annex 2 to the Committees' method of work (MSC-MEPC.1/Circ.5/Rev.5), and advise the Committee as appropriate.   5. Experts Group on formal safety assessment. The terms of reference of this group  were: |
| 1. Taking into account the comments made and decisions taken in plenary, the Experts Group was instructed to prepare draft amendments to the Revised FSA Guidelines (MSCMEPC.2/Circ.12/Rev.2), together with the draft associated MSC circular, based on document MSC 109/WP.11, and taking into account documents MSC 108/11, MSC 109/11, MSC 109/11/1 and MSC 109/11/2. |
| ATTACHMENTS/SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION: |