

International Regulations Briefing for Marine Environment Protection Committee 71st Session

03 to 07 July 2017

1 Adoption of the agenda

The seventy first session of the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) was held at IMO Headquarters from 03 to 07 July 2017, chaired by Mr. A. Domínguez (Panama). The Vice-Chair of the Committee, Mr. H. Saito (Japan), was also present.

The Secretary-General welcomed participants and delivered his opening address, the full text of which is available at the IMO website at the following link:

<http://www.imo.org/MediaCentre/SecretaryGeneral/Secretary-GeneralsSpeechesToMeetings>

The Committee adopted the agenda for the session.

2 Decisions of other bodies

MEPC noted the decisions MSC 97 (MEPC 71/2), C 117 (MEPC 71/2/1), LC 38/LP 11 (MEPC 71/2/2), FAL 41 (MEPC 71/2/3) and LEG 104 (MEPC 71/2/4) with regard to its work, agreed to take action as appropriate under the relevant agenda items.

MEPC noted that, owing to the close proximity of MSC 98 and MEPC 71, the general outcome of MSC 98 would be considered at the next session except where this was needed to progress or complete the work on certain issues at this session.

MEPC noted in particular the outcome of LC 38/LP 11 (MEPC 71/2/2) on the development of advice on the disposal of fibreglass vessels and invited delegations and international organizations to forward information that could be of assistance, for example, on best practices, guidance or case studies on the recycling and/or destruction of fibreglass vessels.

3 Consideration and adoption of amendments to mandatory instruments

MEPC was invited to consider and adopt proposed amendments to MARPOL Annex VI related to the designation of the Baltic Sea and the North Sea Emission Control Areas for NOX Tier III control and the information to be included in the bunker delivery note. Other than that this item is of no further interest to World Sailing.

4 Harmful aquatic organisms in ballast water

MEPC noted that the BWM Convention would enter into force on 8 September 2017, noted that the current number of Contracting Governments was 60, representing 68.46% of the world's merchant fleet tonnage.

The remainder of this item concerned type approved convention shipping ballast water management systems and proposed amendments to the BWM Convention; as such there was little of concern for World Sailing.

5 Air pollution and energy efficiency

This item continued the work on the Impact on the Arctic of Black Carbon emissions from international shipping; guidelines for exhaust gas cleaning systems; air pollution from ships; energy efficiency and catalytic reduction systems among other things. There is little of interest to World Sailing.

6 Further technical and operational measures for enhancing the energy efficiency of international shipping

This item is little of interest for World Sailing.

7 Reduction of GHG emissions from ships

This item is little of interest for World Sailing, but is complex and of immense importance to the delegations at IMO. It is also not without its political problems.

8 Identification and protection of Special Areas and PSSAs

Nothing significant to report at this time, however a number of concerns were expressed that these may pose risks to the safety of navigation in the Traffic Separation Schemes.

9 Pollution prevention and response

Nothing of interest in this work item for World Sailing.

10 Reports of other sub-committees

Under this item MEPC took action on issues arising from the third session of the Sub-Committee on Carriage of Cargoes and Containers and the fourth session of the Sub-Committee on Ship Design and Construction. There were no matters of interest for World Sailing.

11 Technical Cooperation Activities for the Protection of the Marine Environment

Under this item, the Committee noted information related to five thematic priorities for the Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme (ITCP) for the 2018-2019 biennium all of which were related to the protection of the marine environment. These included:

- Implementation of the MARPOL Convention and related instruments, in particular energy efficiency measures for ships, consistent implementation of the 0.50% sulphur limit, environmental requirements of the Polar Code, waste management, port reception facilities and Special Areas and PSSAs.
- Strengthening effective and consistent implementation of the BWM and AFS Conventions and the Biofouling Guidelines.
- Strengthening and fostering cooperation for the ratification and effective implementation of the Hong Kong Convention on Ship Recycling.
- Implementation of the Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation (OPRC) Convention
- Assisting with the ratification and implementation of the 1996 Protocol to the International Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Waste and Other Matters (London Protocol).

12 Capacity building for the implementation of new measures

This item considers resources related to the amendments to mandatory instruments and the new outputs related to proposed new measures approved at MEPC 71. As such this item is of no interest to World Sailing.

13 Application of the Committees' Guidelines

MEPC 71 approved the revised Rules of Procedure for MEPC.

14 Work programme of the Committee and subsidiary bodies

The Committee noted that MEPC 72 and MEPC 73 had been tentatively scheduled to take place from 9 to 13 April 2018 and from 22 to 26 October 2018, respectively.

The following groups would be established at MEPC 72:

- Working Group on Air pollution and energy efficiency;
- Working Group on Reduction of GHG emissions from ships;
- Drafting Group on Amendments to mandatory instruments;
- Ballast Water Review Group; and
- Technical Group on PSSAs.

15 Election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman for 2018

The Committee unanimously elected Mr. H. Saito (Japan) as Chair and Mr. H. Conway (Liberia) as Vice-Chair, both for 2018.

17 Any other business

There were no items of additional business of interest to World Sailing.

18 Action requested of other IMO bodies

The actions in this item were addressed to the Council, the Technical Cooperation Committee and to MSC; nothing under this item affects World Sailing.

Stuart Carruthers

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