

Report of the 94th session of the IMO Maritime Safety Committee

The 94th session of the IMO Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) was held at the IMO headquarters in London, between Monday 17 to Friday 21 November, 2014. IALA was represented by the Secretary-General, Dr Nick Ward of the GLAs RRNAV, Mr Omar Frits Eriksson of the Danish Maritime Authority, Mr Cho of the IALA Secretariat, and Mr Anders Brodje of the Swedish Maritime Administration.

Of the many agenda items to be discussed during this session of the MSC, IALA had a particular interest in the topic of e-Navigation. Other matters which were closely monitored by the team included the review and modernisation of GMDSS, LRIT, maritime safety information, the use of AIS, and the Polar Code.

Following some more general remarks of the Chairman of the Committee, **Mr** Christian Breinholt **of Denmark**, and **Mr** A. **Winbow** of the IMO, the IMO Secretary General, Mr Koji Sekimizu, made his opening address to the meeting. Mr Sekimizu pointed to the very important work of the Committee, touching upon some of the major areas for discussion and decision by the Committee. Toward the end of Mr Sekimizu's opening address, the Secretary General in particular highlighted the topic of e-Navigation and its future developments. In particular the Secretary General stressed how special resources in this domain and the historical legacy within the IMO required IMO to lead in this area. The Secretary General requested the MSC to move into an implementation phase with the adoption of the e-Navigation Strategy Implementation Plan (SIP) as forwarded by the NCSR-1. The Secretary General also referred to other domains where ICT is playing a greater role by the day, stressing how the world has moved on since the first ideas of e-Navigation were established. The Secretary General further stressed the risk of the development of un-harmonised regional solutions in this domain, where several initiatives are already seen around the globe. The Secretary General hoped the Committee would have a fruitful discussion on the matter and that the Committee would ensure the IMO would stay in a coordinating role for the development of e-Navigation.

With the very pressing agenda of the Committee, the Committee moved somewhat back and forth between agenda items, depending on time available. The Chairman reminded the Committee of the importance of handling policy decisions rather than specific technical issues in the Committee. By the end of Thursday afternoon, the MSC Chairman, and the Vice-Chairman Captain Segar, Singapore, were re-elected to their positions.

Developments on e-Navigation

Under agenda item 94/4, the Committee approved the e-Navigation SIP, thereby providing the basis of a framework for the necessary coordinated development of the identified e-Navigation solutions, as presented in the SIP, namely:

- improved, harmonised and user-friendly bridge design;

- means for standardised and automated reporting;
- improved reliability, resilience and integrity of bridge equipment and navigation information;
- integration and presentation of available information in graphical displays received via communication equipment; and
- improved communication of Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) Service Portfolio (not limited to VTS stations).

As part of and complementing the e-navigation SIP, the Guideline on "Harmonisation of test beds reporting" was approved by the Committee. Since the Guideline was developed within the IALA ENAV Committee, this was of particular interest to IALA and a success for the work of the organisation and its members.

A further discussion on the development of e-Navigation followed later in the week, as a result of the intervention (MSC 94/18/8) submitted by Australia and co-sponsored by Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Sweden, IHO, IALA, ICS, BIMCO, CIRM, InterManager and the Nautical Institute. Introduced by Mr Nick Lemon of AMSA, the intervention was submitted with the aim of ensuring the IMO properly considered how it should continue to lead the implementation of e-Navigation. In response, Singapore was first among member states and organisations to respond to the intervention, thanking Australia and the co-sponsors for the submitted document. Singapore, fully in line with the intervention by Australia et al., stressed the importance of IMO maintaining its lead in the harmonised development of e-Navigation solutions worldwide. However, Singapore also concluded that some of the 18 tasks listed in the SIP were nearly completed or, as in the case of the Guideline on harmonised test beds reporting, already completed. Thus, Singapore proposed a detailed review of the tasks with the purpose of further reducing the number, and that those tasks remaining be prepared in SMART terms as required by Annex 3 of resolution A.1062(28). From this, a comprehensive prioritised plan of work, including the time required for the completion of each output should be prepared and a proposal put before MSC 95 for consideration with a view to inclusion in the post biennial agenda of the Committee.

The discussion that followed proved widespread support for the idea of IMO maintaining its lead in coordinating the augmentation of e-Navigation. However, the discussions also noted the already heavy workload of the NCSR Subcommittee, hence needing prioritisation of the proposed tasks enabling IMO to focus its efforts. Norway offered to coordinate taking the solutions and tasks from the SIP and to convert these into unplanned outputs through the IMO's process at MSC 95, which is the first week of June, 2015.

IALA will continue its work on e-Navigation at the 16th meeting of its ENAV Committee in April 2015.

[Work on Voluntary Guidelines on cyber security](#)

A proposal on the development of voluntary guidelines on cyber security practices was considered by the Committee, with the purpose of increasing the resilience of so called cyber systems supporting maritime operations. It was agreed that future work on this

matter be coordinated with the Facilitation Committee. Member states as well as observer organisations were invited to consider the matter and submit proposals to the next meeting of the Committee. However, it was also noted that, although a highly important matter, the IMO should not by itself take action on this matter without coordinating its efforts with other UN bodies and relevant international organisations.

Satellite communications systems

There was discussion on the proposal that Iridium should become an integrated part of the GMDSS infrastructure. In particular, concerns were raised that the implementation of Iridium as part of GMDSS may not be compatible with other systems. It was agreed that the International Maritime Satellite Organization (IMSO) should gather a group of experts in order to assess technical and operational aspects of integrating Iridium as part of the GMDSS infrastructure.

Satellite positioning systems

The Committee recognised the BeiDou Navigation Satellite System (BDS), as operated by China, as a component of the World-Wide Radionavigation System (WWRNS).

LRIT

The Committee approved several amendments to LRIT-related circulars, with the aim of improving LRIT functionality and operations. There was also discussion on the intervention made by Liberia (MSC 94/9/6) on the reduction of the position update frequency, primarily regarding the cost of such position updates. However, this did not result in any further decision by the Committee.

Polar code

The Committee adopted the International Code for Ships Operating in Polar Waters (the Polar Code for short) along with the related amendments of SOLAS chapter XIV on “Safety measures for ships operating in polar waters”. Through the adoption of the Polar Code, the Preamble, Introduction and Part I-A (safety measures) became mandatory.