**Memorandum**

5 March 2012

From Chair, IALA eNAV Working Group 6 (Information Portrayal)

To: IALA eNAV Working Group 6

Info: IALA eNAV Committee

As the work of WG6 has progressed, my opinion on what should be the approach taken for the portrayal of e-Navigation information has changed. Rather than developing prescriptive rules that attempt to define every single detail, I believe that WG6 should focus on "goal-based" standards (i.e., general guidelines and recommendations) whereby over-arching objectives are defined, but freedom to innovate is left to developers and users. There are several reasons for taking this approach.

Until it has been decided what will be the full scope of the proposed IALA Common Maritime Data Structure (CMDS), it would be premature to develop specific ways in which these types of data are portrayed as “information.” This includes both current as well as new types of e-Navigation related information (e.g., AIS Application Specific Messages, AIS AtoN, and virtual AtoN).

I also believe that it is inappropriate for IALA to establish specific e-Navigation portrayal standards for shipborne navigation systems. While e-Navigation is defined as: “the harmonized collection, integration, exchange, presentation, and analysis of maritime information aboard and ashore…,” this more a goal rather than an assigned task with a clear and agreed-upon outcome. Clearly, IALA has competence on shore-side aspects of e-Navigation. But, this does not mean that it should assume the lead on all aspects of e-Navigation portrayal.

We also need to learn from past mistakes. During the phased-in implementation of mandatory ECDIS carriage onboard certain classes of SOLAS vessels that will occur during the next six years, it is unlikely that existing type-approved ECDIS equipment will be able to display any newly defined types of e-Navigation related information. In looking back, I was an active participant in developing the IMO ECDIS Performance Standards, as well as the associated IHO and IEC standards for data, display and testing. Unfortunately, ECDIS was destined to a certain level of obsolescence the day fixed standards were established. Although it was considered an important new navigation system, it took 15 years before it became a SOLAS carriage requirement. Even as an optional shipboard system, the uptake and widespread use of ECDIS by the maritime community was slower than originally expected, and hampered by a number of factors. This included limited ENC data coverage, strict and prescriptive display and symbology standards, and tight restrictions that inhibited the display of supplemental information. As a result, this became a factor that has enabled ECS to proliferate.

The restrictions on the ECDIS display continue. For the ECDIS Colours and Symbols specifications in particular, we now live with the results of a group of persons sitting around a table before the equipment was even in beta form, deciding what should be done, how it should look, and then imposing their views on manufacturers and users. A similar process should not be allowed to occur for e-Navigation. Based on what I have experienced during the past 20 years, innovation should be encouraged -- not stifled by rigid presentation or display standards.

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