

International Maritime Organisation (IMO)**63rd SESSION OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION COMMITTEE (MEPC)**

The 63rd session of the Marine Environment Protection Committee meets from 27 Feb - 2 Mar 12. The following notes maybe of interest.

Agenda Item 1: (Adoption of the Agenda)**Agenda Item 2: Harmful aquatic organisms in ballast water**

A number of papers have been submitted to MEPC 63, including basic and final type approvals, for ballast water management systems. Other papers continue to focus on guidance, treatments systems, and the availability and status of ballast water management systems when the Convention enters into force.

The Convention has not yet entered into force as all the ratification criteria have not been met. It is unclear when the requirements will be met as there is still some concern within the international community with regards to ability of Port State Control to effectively and fairly enforce the standards. Discussions continue at MEPC, especially with regards to sampling, performance standards and their application.

Agenda Item 3: Recycling of ships

The work of the Correspondence Group has continued since MEPC 62 developing guidelines on worker and environmental safety, authorisation of facilities and survey and certification. A Working Group will convene at MEPC 63.

Agenda Item 4: Air pollution and energy efficiency

The output from an intercessional meeting on Energy Efficiency Design Index will be pursued at MEPC which will hopefully lead to the adoption of guidelines.

Agenda Item 5: Reduction of GHG emissions from ships

At MEPC 63, the focus of the work on reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from ships will be on market-based measures and what is needed in order to make an evidence-based comparison between them.

A number of submissions concerning market-based measures have been deferred from MEPC 62, where so much effort was devoted to the Energy Efficiency Design Index (EEDI) that there was not enough time to consider the papers on market-based measures, and further submissions have been made to MEPC 63. It is anticipated that these will be discussed in plenary.

Two particularly important papers are MEPC 63/5/2 and 63/5/4, both of which have been submitted by the Chairman of MEPC. MEPC 63/5/4 provides the draft text of the MEPC Resolution on capacity-building, technical assistance and transfer of technology which was promised at MEPC 62 as part of the EEDI package. MEPC 63/5/2 proposes that IMO undertake an impact assessment which will compare the market-based measure proposals to assess the extent to which they could address GHG emissions from international shipping and, in particular, to identify the possible impacts on least developed countries and Small Island developing states. The draft terms of reference and criteria for the impact assessment are annexed to the paper. The paper proposes the launch of the impact assessment following MEPC 63, with the aim of delivering a final report to MEPC 65 in July 2013.

Agenda Item 6: Consideration and adoption of amendments to mandatory instruments

This agenda item will consider a draft resolution clarifying the use of regional arrangements for waste reception under the MARPOL convention. Additionally under this agenda item a draft resolution is attached proposing the adoption of the Baltic as a special area under Annex IV, despite some misgivings about the process this is expected to be adopted with minimal comment by the committee.

Agenda Item 7: Interpretations of, and amendments to, MARPOL and related instruments

Matters still to be considered include definitions of the levels at which cleaning agents and cargo residues should be regarded as harmful to the environment. It is possible that the work of the Correspondence Group on draft revised guidelines for the implementation of MARPOL V and development of garbage management plans might be passed to the Drafting Group for agenda items 6 and 7 at this session.

There is no Working Group for this subject and the nine other papers which are of a technical nature will have to be dealt with in Plenary.

Agenda Item 8: Implementation of the OPRC Convention and the OPRC-HNS Protocol and relevant Conference resolutions

No papers submitted for this session and no significant discussion expected.

Agenda Item 9: Identification and protection of Special Areas and Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas

No papers submitted for this session and no significant discussion is expected.

Agenda Item 10: Inadequacy of reception facilities

MEPC 62 did not have time to deal with this subject and the outstanding papers will be presented at this session. The one paper presented last time was on preparation of an ISO standard.

Agenda Item 11: Reports of sub-committees

The Committee will receive reports of the outcomes of IMO Sub-Committees relevant to its work. This includes BLG.

Agenda Item 12: Work of other bodies

The Committee will receive reports of the outcomes of FAL, Council and Assembly relevant to its work.

Agenda Item 13: Status of conventions

MEPC 62 did not have time to deal with this subject. This session will review the status of Conventions under the remit of MEPC.

- International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004
- Nairobi WRC 2007 Nairobi International Convention on the Removal of Wrecks, 2007 (WRC 2007)

- Hong Kong SRC 2009 International Conference on the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships

Agenda Item 14: Harmful anti-fouling systems for ships

MEPC 62 did not have time to deal with this subject. No papers submitted for this session and no significant discussion is expected.

Agenda Item 15: Promotion of implementation and enforcement of MARPOL and related instruments

No papers have been presented for this session and no significant discussion is expected.

Agenda Item 16: Technical Co-operation Sub-Programme for the Protection of the Marine Environment

This item is mainly concerned with a number of status reports on activities related to projects and co-operative agreements. No significant discussion is expected.

Agenda Item 17: Role of the Human Element

MEPC 62 did not have time to deal with this subject and the papers from that session will be presented at MEPC 63.

A joint paper (MEPC 62/17) was presented by Panama and the United States among others proposing that Human Element matters be moved to and put under the responsibility of the STW Sub-Committee or, alternatively, to discontinue the MSC/MEPC Human Element Working Group. The proposal recognises the high workload of the main committees and the relatively low workload of STW after the Manila conference.

There is a concern that the remit of the Human Element working group could be limited by the STW agenda whereas it needs to continue to consider all aspects of individual and organisational behaviour throughout the industry.

Agenda Item 18: Noise from commercial shipping and its adverse impacts on marine life

This subject was approved for consideration at MEPC 58. It has been dealt with by a Correspondence Group led by the US. There are no papers submitted for this MEPC and there has been little discussion of machinery or propeller noise in sub committees. That said it should be noted that the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive is taking a very close interest in underwater noise and pollutant sources including sonic hull cleaning/antifouling and echo sounding depth instruments.

Agenda Item 19 (Work programme of the Committee and subsidiary bodies)

MEPC 63 will be invited to consider and agree on the work programme of the Committee and subsidiary bodies, and on the items to be included in the agenda of the Committee for its forthcoming three sessions. MEPC 63 will also be invited to consider any proposals to include new outputs in the biennial and post-biennial agendas of the Committee and relevant sub-committees.

Agenda Item 20: Application of the Committees' Guidelines

No papers have been presented for this session and no discussion is expected.

Agenda Item 21: Election of the Chairman and Vice Chairman for 2012

- a. Chairman. It is very likely that the current Chairman (Andreas Chrystostomou - Cyprus) will be available and willing to stand for re-election.
- b. Vice Chairman. The then Vice Chairman, Manuel Nogueira (Spain), did not stand for re-election at last session pending his imminent retirement. The Committee agreed to conduct the election at this session.

Agenda Item 22: Any other business

There will be discussion of the Basel Convention covering waste on board and ship recycling

Agenda Item 23 (Report of the Committee)**MEPC 63 - WORKING AND DRAFTING GROUPS**

The following Working and Drafting Groups are expected to be established:

Working Groups

WG	Title
1	Air Pollution and Energy Efficiency
2	Guidelines for Ship Recycling
3	TBC

Drafting Groups

DG	Title
1	Amendments to Mandatory Instruments
2	TBC

Review Group

Title
Ballast Water Review Group