**IMO** Bulletin

NOTICE TO SEAFARERS.

On 8th of September 2017 .the Ballast Water Management Convention was proposed to come into Force There is now 60 member states who have ratified the BWM Convention representing 68.45 % of world tonnage. However at MEPC 71 the committee made a compromise that gives a further 2 years for owners of existing tonnage to implement and effectively come into force 2019. This gives them until 2024 to fully comply. This is now 20 years since the 2004 BWM Convention was introduced Seafarers due to the ongoing revision of the guidance for systems (G8) may find equipment installed in good faith under the initial requirements may no longer be acceptable . Seafarers should, where unsure, seek assurances from their company and the flag state administration

**August 2017**

**Marine Environment Protection Committee, MEPC 71.**

MEPC 71 once again endeavoured to respond to the outcomes of the United Nations Climate Change Conferences held in Paris December 2015. The industry whilst accepting the need to reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) tried to move away from setting fixed caps for decarbonisation and instead agree aspirational goals of nil carbon by the end of the century The ship owners pointed out that there has been major changes in trade that could adversely affect any fixed caps. This was rejected and the meeting continued a discussion on how the maritime industry can finance the technological changes needed. The issue remains the different interpretation of a ‘Common but Differential Responsibility’ between developed and developing countries ashore compared to the FOC system of the shipping industry requiring ,’no more favourable solution’ for all member states. The IMO continues with a three stage process; the first stage being the collection of data. Prior to MEPC 72 , there will be a second intersessional to find agreement on how to progress beyond stage one Meanwhile the emphasis is on collecting and verifying more confidential data on worldwide fuel consumption of shipping without identifying the ships that are reporting or those who don’t.

The IMO has now provisionally agreed that phase 2 reductions of the Energy Efficiency Design Index (EEDI) is enforced by 2020. As most of the ships recently built are well in compliance with phase 2 and generally phase 3 requirements there continues heavy pressure from the environmentalist to bring phase 3 reductions forward to 2022. The MEPC 71 meeting rejected this as we have yet to determine the minimum power requirements for safe manoeuvring of vessels and members believe before any further reduction in power a number of safety issues including manoeuvring, must be fully addressed.

Although many of the ‘experts’ involved in the discussion believe that the required efficiencies can be achieved by other improvements other than power reduction, particularly in phase 3, ( hull design, coatings, solar and wind power etc) these usually give only 3 to 5% where power reduction are usually in the region of 20%. It has been proposed that there is a further phase 4 reduction on all ships but based on evidence to date this is unlikely.

With the implementation of a maximum 0.50% sulphur content in fuels after 1 January 2020 there are still concerns regarding availability in all areas as a solution blended fuels or low flash point bunker fuels have been . The use of bunker fuels with flash points below 60 C was rejected as unsafe except where the ships comply with all the provisions of the IGF code and the dangers of blended fuels were reiterated. Other problems and safety issues of low sulphur fuels are yet to be considered although mandatory implementation goes ahead in 2020.

**Maritime Safety Committee, MSC 98.**

**Autonomous Ships:** The most significant decision at MSC 98 is the introduction of a new work item ‘ ***A regulatory scoping exercise to determine what revisions are required to international regulations to allow unmanned ships to operate in international trades***.

The paper was proposed by nine flag states including the UK and US but surprisingly this paper was only commented on by a paper from the ITF. The ITF submission did not reject the need for a work program item but questioned a number of assumptions including the safety and reliability of autonomous ships. The ITF was of the opinion that any scoping must consider safety from a human element and technical perspective as well as the legal implications for ‘operators’ and specifically the legal authority under the provisions of UNCLOS. Despite the lack of papers submitted there were 57 interventions over a period of a 2 hour debate and the majority reflected the concerns expressed by the ITF. The lack of consideration of the human element was universally criticised and is sure to be a major consideration but the legal status may at this time be left to work being carried out by the CMI Many issues were raised including areas of safety, security, pilotage, interactions with ports and the marine environment. In particular an ITF early requirement for clear definitions to clarify the various terminology being used and levels of automation was opposed by a few the flag states. What was evident was the scepticism of the shipowner representatives who basically did not accepted the fully unmanned ship would be financially viable. Even Maersk in a Danish presentation recognised that whilst their ships could be fully compliant in 15 years the cost of system redundancy would prohibit totally unmanned ships.

The IMO have set aside 4 sessions of MSC for this work which should identify the required regulation to change but at this stage make no further amendments to current regulations.It would be naive however to believe that flags will not offer up new proposed of text or draft code.

*Liberia alleged that 60-70% of piracy and armed robbery are under-reported, particularly in the Gulf of Guinea. Masters should report directly to the IMB piracy centre.*

*Somalia is still active with 8 attacks this year*

Whilst the ITF received overwhelming support for its position much of the wording in the meeting report was only noting or taking into account the concerns made and we should not be complacent that they will appear for full consideration in the terms of reference of a working group. The IMO have called for the submission of substantive proposals for a work plan at the next session in May 2018 and the setting up of a working group has been tentatively agreed. This gives us limited time for NF members to lobby and ensure that support at MSC 98 is converted into papers and positive interventions at MSC 99.

**Carriage of Industrial Personnel**: The carriage of over 12 industrial personnel transported or accommodated on ships in international waters continues to work towards a new chapter in SOLAS and an Industrial Personnel Code. The primary problem remains ensuring that definitions of Industrial Personnel adopted at MSC 97 remain the basis for development of the mandatory instrument without subtle changes. Our main concern is primarily the industrial personnel ability to work on board the transporting vessel which raises the possibility that such work would include seafarers’ duties. With the issue of the operation of unmanned or reduced manning vessels the use or misuse of industrial personnel could become very important The working group continues at the SDC Subcommittee under the watchful eye of George Quick

**Lifeboats: T**he Industry Lifeboat Group at MSC 98 successfully introduced revised guidelines for the simulated launching of free-fall lifeboats, separating testing from the operation and making drills safer for seafarers . There is however a growing feeling that in some cases the lifeboat is not fit for purpose both on the basis of safety and habitability and to date there are no internationally accepted goal based construction standards for survival craft. The Goal Based Standards GBS process is being used for the review of the Lifeboat Safety Appliance Code as a trial for all future IMO regulations At the July meeting of the Industry Lifeboat Working Group it was generally accepted by both the NGOs and flag states that the Goal Based Standards process is not clear with concern that it may allow reduced regional and local industry regulation standards to be applicable. It was agreed that the ILG should seek clarification and greater understanding of the expected outcomes of the review. Given that the basis of this GBS process is to allow alternative solutions with non-prescriptive regulations in shipbuilding, it is imperative that the safety of seafarers is not compromised by those wishing to facilitate new standards for purely economic reasons.

The ILG work in the past had emphasis on making lifeboats safer for crew during abandon ships drills. We are still experiencing injuries and fatalities in lifeboat drills, particularly recently with the failure of relatively new wires on lifeboat falls. Both the UK and CLIA (for passenger ships) are investigating all aspects of past failures and have commented there is a sad lack of regulation and information in this area of various wire types. The wider problems regarding capacity, design and ventilation of lifeboats also needs the IMOs attention and we will lobby with the ILG for it to be addressed in the IMO new work item agreed at MSC 98 ‘ ‘*Revision of SOLAS chapter III and the LSA Code to remove gaps, inconsistences and ambiguities based on safety objectives, functional requirements and expected performance’,*  This should be a wide enough item for the ILG to introduce a range of our concerns regarding habitability, seating sizes and expected realistic survival time for lifeboats to function in both Polar and Tropical conditions

**Measures to Enhance Maritime Security**: MSC98 decided that it was imperative to get companies and ships to make provision to protect themselves from cyber crime. With increased digitalisation the dangers to ship safety and trade are increasing. After some consideration it was decided that the appropriate way to ensure the awareness of the necessary protection from cyber crime to be in place should be through the International Safety Management Code (ISM Code) The Committee recognised raising companies and seafarers’ awareness was a matter of urgency.

Passenger ship safety is still being addressed with regard to damage stability support for the master with a new work item’ *Computerised stability for the master in case of flooding for existing passenger ships’*. Another ongoing consideration is the ‘*availability on passenger ships of electrical power in case of flooding from side raking damage’.* These and a number of other issues such as watertight doors open in navigation and mandatory evacuation analysis were identified in the IMO casualty analysis working group particular with respect to the Costa Concordia disaster.

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