

INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANISATION Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) – 79th session, 12-16 December 2022

Action Required: IR Commission members are invited to note the relevant outcomes of MEPC 79.

Adoption of mandatory MARPOL amendments

1. Designation of the Mediterranean Sea, as a whole, as an Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides and particulate matter
2. Mandatory garbage record books for smaller ships
3. Protecting Arctic waters - regional arrangements for port reception facilities
4. Information on the short-term GHG reduction measure to be submitted to the IMO Ship Fuel Oil Consumption Database
5. Fuel flashpoint in Bunker delivery note

Tackling climate change - cutting GHG emissions from ships

6. Revision of initial IMO GHG Strategy
7. Development of Mid-term measures including technical and economic measures
8. Adoption of the Revised Procedure of assessing possible impact on States of candidate measures
9. Development of Lifecycle GHG intensity of marine fuels guidelines
10. Proposals related to onboard CO₂ capture
11. Revision of the IMO Fuel Consumption Monitoring Data Collection System (IMO DCS)

Air pollution prevention

13. Licensing schemes for bunker fuel suppliers; NO_x emissions of biofuels and synthetic fuels; exhaust gas cleaning systems (EGCS), Black Carbon.

Ballast water management

14. Various proposals for amendments and unified interpretations; consideration of various operational matters affecting implementation of the BWM Convention; approval of ballast water management systems.

Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas

15. Proposal for designation of a particular sensitive sea area in the North-Western Mediterranean Sea to protect cetaceans from international shipping agreed in principle

Adoption of amendments

Designating Mediterranean Sea as an Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides

The MEPC adopted amendments to designate the Mediterranean Sea, as a whole, as an Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides and particulate matter, under MARPOL Annex VI.

In such an Emission Control Area, the limit for sulphur in fuel oil used on board ships is 0.10% mass by mass (m/m), while outside these areas the limit is 0.50% m/m.

The amendment is expected to enter into force on 1 May 2024, with the new sulphur limit taking effect from 1 May 2025.

Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention) and its Protocols agreed in December 2021 to bring forward the proposal to IMO.

This is the fifth designated Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides and particulate matter worldwide, the others being: the Baltic Sea area; the North Sea area; the North American area (covering designated coastal areas off the United States and Canada); and the United States Caribbean Sea area (around Puerto Rico and the United States Virgin Islands).

Mandatory garbage record books for smaller ships

The MEPC adopted amendments to MARPOL Annex V to make the Garbage Record Book mandatory also for ships of 100 gross tonnage and above and less than 400 gross tonnage. This extends the requirement for mandatory garbage record books to smaller ships, which will be required to keep records of their garbage handling operations, namely discharges to a reception facility ashore or to other ships, garbage incineration, permitted discharges of garbage into the sea, and accidental or other exceptional discharged or loss of garbage into the sea.

The move supports implementation of IMO's Strategy to address marine plastic litter from ships, which sets out the following outcomes as key goals: reduction of marine plastic litter generated from, and retrieved by, fishing vessels; reduction of shipping's contribution

to marine plastic litter; and improvement of the effectiveness of port reception and facilities and treatment in reducing marine plastic litter. Actions have been agreed, to be completed by 2025, which relate to all ships, including fishing vessels. The action plan supports IMO's commitment to meeting the targets set in the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG 14) on the oceans.

The MEPC considered the recommendations from the review of the terms of reference for the IMO Study on marine plastic litter from ships and invited proposals to the next session.

Capacity building to address marine plastic litter from ships

GloLitter Partnerships, a project between the Government of Norway, IMO and FAO is supporting developing countries, including Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs), in identifying opportunities for the prevention and reduction of marine litter.

Protecting seas in the Arctic - regional arrangements for port reception facilities

The MEPC adopted amendments to the MARPOL annexes to allow States with ports in the Arctic region to enter into regional arrangements for port reception facilities. The amendments relate to MARPOL Annexes I (oil), II (noxious liquid substances), IV (sewage), V (garbage) and VI (air pollution). The amendments are expected to enter into force on 1 May 2024. Related amendments to the 2012 Guidelines for the development of a regional reception facility plan (resolution MEPC.221(63)) were also agreed. **Tackling climate change - cutting GHG emissions from ships**

Background:

IMO is committed to cutting GHG emissions from ships. Mandatory energy efficiency measures were first adopted in 2011 and have been strengthened since the Initial IMO Strategy on Reduction of GHG Emissions from Shipping was adopted in 2018, setting out a clear pathway towards decarbonization of international shipping. (see [/Cutting-GHG-emissions.aspx](#)) .

A working group on Reduction of GHG emissions from ships was established during MEPC 79.

Revision of the initial IMO GHG Strategy

The Working Group further discussed the proposals for the revision of the Initial GHG Strategy.

The Committee reaffirmed its commitment to: adopt a revised IMO GHG Strategy, in all its elements, including with a strengthened level of ambition by MEPC 80; continue its work on

identifying the candidate GHG reduction measures to be developed in priority as part of a basket of measures consisting of both technical and economic elements by MEPC 80 in accordance with the Work plan; and undertake a comprehensive impact assessment of the basket of candidate measures ahead of their adoption in accordance with the Work plan and the revised Procedure for assessing impacts on States.

Mid-term measures including possible technical and economic measures

The MEPC 76 session adopted a work plan on the concrete way forward to make progress with candidate mid- and long-term measures, including measures to incentivize the move away from fossil fuels to low- and zero-carbon fuels to achieve decarbonization of international shipping.

The ISWG-GHG 13 reported on its progress in advancing towards the further development of a "basket of candidate mid-term measures" – integrating both various technical (for example, a GHG fuel intensity standard and/or enhancement of IMO's carbon intensity measures) and economic (for example, a "levy", a "reward", "feebate" or "flat rate contribution") elements to be further developed as a priority after MEPC 80.

Proposals related to onboard CO₂ capture

The MEPC considered proposals related to onboard CO₂ capture and agreed to further consider these proposals at MEPC 80. The MEPC invited interested Member States and international organizations to submit further information, comments and proposals on onboard CO₂ capture to that session.

Air pollution prevention

Biofuels, biofuel blends and synthetic fuels

MEPC 79 considered a number of proposals regarding the use of biofuels and biofuel blends and compliance with NO_x regulations.

MEPC 78 had approved a unified interpretation of regulation 18.3 of MARPOL Annex VI facilitating NO_x compliance process for blends up to 30% of biofuels. MEPC 79 agreed to expand this approach to synthetic drop-in fuels (e.g. e-methanol, e-ammonia, etc.), thus facilitating their use as low- and zero-carbon fuels.

Black Carbon

MEPC 79 considered several proposals on the reduction of the impact of Black Carbon emissions on the Arctic and agreed to refer a submission to PPR 10 (April 2023) for further consideration.

Ballast water management

The MEPC established the Ballast Water Review Group to consider a number of matters. Following discussion, the MEPC:

- approved draft amendments to appendix II of the Annex to the BWM Convention (Form of Ballast Water Record Book) with a view to adoption by MEPC 80;
- agreed that the BWM Convention does not preclude the temporary storage of grey water or treated sewage in ballast tanks and that this storage should be permitted, and that guidance should be developed by the Committee;
- approved a unified interpretation of paragraph 4.10 of the BWMS Code;
- approved a revised unified interpretation of regulation E-1.1.5 of the BWM Convention and the Form of the International Ballast Water Management Certificate - both unified interpretations will be incorporated in BWM.2/Circ.66/Rev.4, consolidating all existing unified interpretations to the BWM Convention;
- agreed on core elements to be used for the development of guidance for record keeping and reporting under the BWM Convention and for ships encountering challenging uptake water;
- granted final approval to two ballast water management systems which make use of Active Substances based on the outcome of GESAMP-BWWG 42

Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas

Designation of a particular sensitive sea area in the North-Western Mediterranean Sea to protect cetaceans from international shipping

The MEPC agreed in principle to the designation of the North-Western Mediterranean Sea as a PSSA, subject to the further development and approval of the proposed associative protective measures by the Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue (NCSR) and the Maritime Safety Committee.

The co-sponsors of the proposal, France, Italy, Monaco and Spain, are invited to further develop the proposed associated protective measures and submit to NCSR as the appropriate Sub-Committee for approval; and inform the Committee once the associated

protective measures have been approved and invite the Committee to designate the area as a PSSA at a future session.

The proposed measures include recommended measures, such as reducing speed, increased look out and reporting of cetacean sighting and any collisions.

The submitters state that the aim of the proposed NW Med PSSA is to protect cetaceans from the risk of ship collisions, ship-generated pollution and to increase awareness on a critically important area for the fin whale and the sperm whale. The proposed PSSA encompasses the whole Pelagos Sanctuary and the Spanish cetacean corridor, which are already designated as Special Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs) under the Barcelona Convention and the UN Mediterranean Action Plan dedicated to the conservation of cetaceans.

There were no other issues raised of relevance to World Sailing.