

Marine Environment Protection Committee 82nd session (MEPC 82), 30 September – 4 October 2024

Action Required: IR Commission members are invited to note the relevant outcomes of MEPC 82.

MEPC 82 highlights**Emissions Control Areas**

Amendments to MARPOL Annex VI were adopted to establish ECAs in the Canadian Arctic and Norwegian Sea for sulphur oxides (SO_x), nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and particulate matter (PM).

Compliance will be required by 2026-2027.

Relevance to World Sailing: applicability currently limited to commercial shipping, but this could change.

Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions

Mid-term GHG reduction measures were a major focal point of the meeting, particularly refining the regulatory text on the Carbon Intensity Indicator (CII) and Energy Efficiency Existing Ship Index (EEXI) regimes.

A further Intersessional Working Group on GHG measures is scheduled for February 2025, with follow-up meetings before MEPC 83 in March 2025 to continue the review of the short-term measures (CII and EEXI).

The review will include addressing challenges such as the penalization of ships during idle time or adverse weather and the lack of an operational behavioural incentives for reducing GHG emissions.

Relevance to World Sailing: applicability currently limited to SOLAS vessels over 500 Gross Tons, but this could change.

Ballast Water Management

Amendments were made to ballast water record-keeping, reporting, and approval processes for Ballast Water Management Systems (BWMS).

Relevance to World Sailing: applicability currently limited to vessels (of all types) with BWM systems.

Black Carbon Emissions

Guidelines were adopted to reduce black carbon emissions in the Arctic, including recommendations for new 'polar fuel' standards and revised emissions monitoring.

Relevance to World Sailing: applicability currently limited to vessels over 500 Gross Tons.

The Hong Kong convention for the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships

The Hong Kong Convention targets larger ships (>500 Gross Tons) for recycling; however, future regulations might be expected to evolve to include larger yachts. Of related relevance, the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal deals with the transboundary movement of hazardous waste, including from vessels. Since modern recreational boats made of Fibre Reinforced Plastic (FRP) can contain hazardous materials, their disposal may eventually fall under the Basel Convention's jurisdiction if the associated waste crosses borders. In light of the Hong Kong Convention's scheduled entry into force on 26 June 2025, the IMO Secretariat's guidance addressed the challenges and opportunities posed by the transboundary movement of ships for recycling. The guidance proposed by the Secretariat aimed to offer clarity on how Member States should navigate the overlap between these two international Conventions. This received general support from the Member States, who recognized the importance of having clear procedures in place before the Convention comes into effect.

Relevance to World Sailing: likely to become a significant issue for the end-of-life disposal of recreational vessels of FRP construction.

Marine Plastic Litter

Best practices for cleaning plastic pellet spills were approved, and the committee agreed to work on developing mandatory regulations for the carriage of plastic pellets.

Relevance to World Sailing: these specific plastic pellet measures are not applicable to smaller and recreational vessels, although the wider issue of marine plastic litter is likely to involve vessels of all types and sizes as time goes on.

Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas – PSSAs

The Nusa Penida and Gili Matra Islands in the Lombok Strait were designated as PSSAs to protect the marine environment. Work is ongoing to develop proposals for two further PSSAs off the coast of Peru. In the context of PSSAs and biofouling management, the MEPC encouraged Member States to include provisions for recreational vessels to record and manage their biofouling history.

Relevance to World Sailing: this is certainly an area to watch carefully, if and when Member States respond with new guidelines or regulations regarding biofouling records and/or management measures for recreational vessels.

Underwater Radiated Noise - URN: The committee discussed revised guidelines for reducing underwater noise from shipping, aiming to mitigate the impact on marine life.

Relevance to World Sailing: applicability currently limited to commercial shipping, but this could change as further research is undertaken.

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