

Press release

4 June 2021

PARIS MOU 54TH COMMITTEE MEETING, MONITORING THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

The Paris Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control (Paris MoU) held its 54th Committee meeting by virtual means from the 17th to the 21st of May 2021. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Brian Hogan.

Due to the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, a priority element discussed was the ongoing impact of the pandemic on port State control in the region. Although ship calls and inspections have increased in the period since the last Committee meeting in October 2020 to May of this year, port State control efforts are still being impacted.

The Committee underlined the importance of adapting the temporary Paris MoU guidance related to COVID-19 for port State control authorities, published in PSCircular 97, to the changing circumstances. This guidance refers to the latest ILO Information note on maritime labour issues and Coronavirus. The Committee also considered the work of a task force that had addressed the impact of the pandemic on the harmonised risk based approach of the Paris MoU. One of the most notable elements was an increase in the number of cases where the requirements of the Maritime Labour Convention, especially regarding Seafarers Employment Agreements (SEAs), were not complied with. The Committee expressed its concern about this and confirmed the need for further and ongoing monitoring.

The Committee acknowledged that there is a clear momentum to explore the need and feasibility of a port State control regime for fishing vessels, looking at fishing vessels accident statistics and expected future developments such as the expected entry into force of the Cape Town Agreement. The Committee agreed to establish

a new task force to consider the matter further and to advise the Committee at its next meeting.

The Committee recalled its earlier decision, due to COVID-19, that concentrated inspection campaigns (CICs) would be postponed by a year. This resulted in a new schedule whereby the CIC on Stability will be held in 2021 and a CIC on STCW in 2022. The Committee also approved the questionnaire for the Inspection Campaign on the Polar Code scheduled for June and August 2022. Other MoUs were invited to make use of the developed Inspection Campaign program, where appropriate.

The Committee adopted the 2020 Annual Report, including the White, Grey and Black list of flag States and the performance list of Recognized Organizations. These lists will be taken into account for the calculation of the Ship Risk Profile from 1 July 2021. The report will be published 1 July 2021 on the Paris MoU website.

The virtual meeting was attended by the members of the Paris MoU, the European Commission, EMSA, Montenegro, observers from the Black Sea MoU, Caribbean MoU, Indian Ocean MoU, Mediterranean MoU, US Coast Guard, Tokyo MoU, Viña del Mar Agreement and representatives from ILO.

On behalf of the maritime authorities, Mr. Hogan concluded the meeting by remarking that significant progress has been made on port State control issues both regarding the COVID-19 situation and on the longer term during this meeting. This second virtual meeting proved to be successful again. He thanked all member authorities, the European Commission, EMSA, the Paris MoU Secretariat and the observers for their contribution and the spirit of co-operation shown by all who attended the virtual meeting.

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Notes to editors:

Regional Port State Control was initiated in 1982 when fourteen European countries agreed to coordinate their port State inspection effort under a voluntary agreement known as the Paris Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control (Paris MOU). Currently 27 countries are member of the Paris MOU. The European Commission, although not a signatory to the Paris MOU, is also a member of the Committee.

The Paris MoU is supported by a central database THETIS hosted and operated by the European Maritime Safety Agency in Lisbon. Inspection results are available for search and daily updating by MoU Members. Inspection results can be consulted on the Paris MoU public website and are published on the Equasis website.

The Secretariat of the MoU is provided by the Netherlands Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management and located in The Hague.

Port State Control is a check on visiting foreign ships to verify their compliance with international rules on safety, pollution prevention and seafarers living and working conditions. It is a means of enforcing compliance in cases where the owner and flag State have failed in their responsibility to implement or ensure compliance. The port State can require deficiencies to be corrected, and detain the ship for this purpose, if necessary. It is therefore also a port State's defence against visiting substandard shipping.