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HAVEP shows importance of regular realistic fire and abandon ship drills on passenger ships

Preliminary results from the Harmonized Verification Programme (HAVEP) on passenger ships, carried out between 1 January 2013 and 31 December 2013 in the Paris MoU region show that:

Two passenger ships were detained over the 12 month period as a direct result of the HAVEP for deficiencies related to operation control and emergency preparedness. Whilst the results of the HAVEP indicate reasonable overall compliance with SOLAS requirements for passenger ships, both from an operational point of view and hardware, it should be noted that in 19 out of 232 inspections (8.19%) a deficiency was recorded against a fire drill and in 20 inspections (8.62%) a deficiency was recorded against an abandon ship drill.

The objective of the HAVEP was to obtain a view of emergency preparedness on passenger ships following the Costa Concordia incident in January 2012.

“The two main areas of concern on a passenger ship are fire and flooding and if the situation escalates out of control the ship must be able to be safely abandoned. The results of the HAVEP indicate that masters and operators must pay attention to carrying out regular realistic fire and abandon ship drills, says Patrick Dolby, head of the Inspection Operations Branch of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCGA) and leader of the Paris MoU Task Force with regard to the HAVEP.

The HAVEP questionnaire was completed during 232 inspections on 225 individual ships. A total of 130 HAVEP-related deficiencies were recorded and 2 ships were detained as a direct result of the HAVEP.

Analysis of the recorded deficiencies shows that most deficiencies relate to abandon ship drills (8.62%), conducting fire drills (8.19%), closing devices/watertight doors (7.76%) and SAR co-operation plan for passenger ships

(7.76%). Other deficiencies relate to the fire control plan (5.17%), evaluation of crew performance (training fire drills) (4.74%) and the muster list (4.31%).

Most inspections were carried out on ships under the flags of Bahamas with 67 inspections, Malta with 40 inspections and Turkey with 24 inspections.

The flags with HAVEP-topic related detentions were Bahamas (1 detention) and Malta (1 detention).

The detailed results of the campaign will be further analysed and findings will be presented to the 47th meeting of the Port State Control Committee in May 2014, after which the report will be submitted to the International Maritime Organization.

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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 public website.

The Secretariat of the MoU is provided by the Netherlands Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment 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 defects to be put right, and detain the ship for this purpose if necessary. It is therefore also a port State's defence against visiting substandard shipping.