

SUBJET: **79th Session of the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 79)**

Date: 12 to 16 of December 2022

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The seventy-ninth session of the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 79) took place at the headquarters of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), in London, between 12 and 16 of December 2022.

Portugal was represented by the DGRM, through the Director of Maritime Administration Services and Deputy Permanent Representative of Portugal at the International Maritime Organization, Engineer Paulo Pamplona, by Engineer Alexandra Dias and Engineer Ana Teresa Cardoso, and by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, through Dr. Carlos Sequeira, from the Portuguese embassy in London.

The session was attended by delegates from Member States, representatives of United Nations programs, specialized agencies and other entities, observers from intergovernmental organizations with cooperation agreements, and observers from non-governmental organizations in a consultative capacity.

The Marine Environment Protection Committee of the International Maritime Organization concluded its 79th meeting with decisions that will contribute substantially to the prevention of pollution by ships and consequently to the protection of the Environment, having drawn up the following summary of participation:

I - Adoption of mandatory MARPOL 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 particular 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.

This is the fifth designated Emission Control Area for [Sulphur Oxides](#) and particular 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.

Information on the short-term GHG reduction measure to be submitted to the IMO Ship Fuel Oil Consumption Database

The MEPC adopted amendments to appendix IX of MARPOL Annex VI on the information which has to be submitted to the IMO Ship Fuel Ship Fuel Oil Consumption Database in relation to the implementation of the short-term GHG reduction measure, including on the attained values of the [EEXI, CII and rating](#).

Fuel flashpoint in bunker delivery note - amendments

The MEPC adopted amendments to appendix V of MARPOL Annex VI, to include flashpoint of fuel oil or a statement that the flashpoint has been measured at or above 70°C as mandatory information in the bunker delivery note (BDN). The amendments are expected to enter into force on 1 May 2024.

II - 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 decarbonisation of international shipping. (see [/Cutting-GHG-emissions.aspx](#)).

On 1 November 2022, the "short-term measure" to reduce ships' carbon intensity entered into force, introducing the Energy Efficiency Existing Ship Index (EEXI); the annual operational carbon intensity indicator (CII) rating and an enhanced Ship Energy Efficiency Management Plan (SEEMP). (see [CII-and-EEXI-entry-into-force.aspx](#)).

At MEPC 77, Member States agreed to initiate the process of revision of the Initial IMO GHG Strategy, towards adopting a strengthened revised Strategy in mid-2023 at MEPC 80.

The MEPC considered the report of the 13th sessions of the Intersessional Working Group on Reduction of GHG Emissions from Ships ([ISWG-GHG 13](#)), which met 5-9 December 2022.

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.

MEPC 80 (3-7 July 2023) is expected to adopt the revised IMO Strategy for Reduction of GHG Emissions from Ships.

Revised resolutions adopted on voluntary measures

The MEPC adopted revised resolutions on voluntary cooperation with ports and on national action plans. The amendments (to resolution MEPC.323(74) and resolution MEPC.327(75)) to include references to shipping routes to support decarbonisation.

The revised resolutions are:

- Invitation to Member States to encourage voluntary cooperation between the port and the shipping sectors to contribute to reducing GHG emissions from ships - includes addition of reference to "facilitating voluntary cooperation through the whole value chain, including ports, to create favourable conditions to reduce GHG emissions from ships through shipping routes and maritime hubs".
- Encouragement of Member States to develop and submit voluntary [National Action Plans](#) (NAPs) to address GHG emissions from ships, includes reference to "facilitating the development of infrastructure for green shipping, and facilitating voluntary cooperation through the whole value chain, including ports, to create favourable conditions to reduce GHG emissions from ships through shipping routes and maritime hubs".

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 decarbonisation 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.

Next steps - Intersessional Working Group on Reduction of GHG Emissions from Ships and MEPC 80

The MEPC agreed the terms of reference for the next sessions of the Intersessional Working Group on Reduction of GHG Emissions from Ships: ISWG-GHG 14 (20 to 24 March 2023) and ISWG-GHG 15 (26 to 30 June 2023).

The ISWG-GHG is invited to:

- further consider and finalize the development of the draft Revised IMO Strategy on reduction of GHG emissions from ships;
- further consider and finalize the assessment and selection of measure(s) to further develop in the context of Phase II of the Work plan for the development of mid- and long-term measures;
- further consider the revision of the IMO ship fuel oil consumption Data Collection System (DCS);
- consider the final report of the Correspondence Group on Marine Fuel Life Cycle GHG Analysis with a view to finalization of the LCA Guidelines; and
- submit a written report of ISWG-GHG 14 and ISWG-GHG 15 to MEPC 80.
- MEPC 80 (3-7 July 2023) is expected to adopt the revised IMO Strategy for Reduction of GHG Emissions from Ships.

Impact assessments of candidate measures

The MEPC approved the Revised procedure for assessing impacts on States of candidate measures, which takes into the experience of the comprehensive impact assessment of the IMO short-term GHG reduction measure and includes a new appendix largely following the methodology used for the comprehensive impact assessment of the short-term measure. The revised procedure will be issued as [MEPC.1/Circ.885/Rev.1](#).

Life Cycle GHG assessment guidelines (LCA Guidelines)

The MEPC considered the interim report of the Correspondence Group on Marine Fuel Life Cycle GHG Analysis. The MEPC agreed updated terms of reference for the correspondence group, which is expected to submit its final report to MEPC 80, including the draft LCA guidelines for consideration and adoption. The draft LCA guidelines will allow for a Well-to-Wake calculation, including Well-to-Tank and Tank-to-Wake emission factors, of total GHG emissions related to the production and use of marine fuels.

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.

Revision of the IMO Fuel Consumption Monitoring Data Collection System (IMO DCS)

ISWG-GHG 13 discussed a proposal on the future revision of the IMO Data Collection System of annual fuel consumption looking into possible future changes of the IMO GISIS reporting module, including enhanced transparency and additional reporting parameters. MEPC 79 noted the broad support by the Group to the proposal to include data on transport work, the possible use of innovative technologies and on the level of granularity of reported data. Interested Member States and international organizations were invited to further investigate technical and practical implications. The inclusion of data on transport work would allow to refine the CII rating mechanism by using new metrics such as EEOI or EEPI (a metric which takes into account ballast and loaded times).

III - Energy efficiency of ships

Fuel oil consumption data

The Committee approved the summary of the fuel oil consumption data submitted to the IMO Ship Fuel Oil Consumption Database for 2021. (Download [here](#).)

Updated EEDI guidelines

The MEPC adopted MEPC resolutions on:

- 2022 Guidelines on the method of calculation of the attained Energy Efficiency Design Index (EEDI) for new ships
- 2022 Guidelines on survey and certification of the Energy Efficiency Design Index ([EEDI](#)).

Possible EEDI Phase 4

The MEPC considered the report of the Correspondence Group on the Possible Introduction of EEDI Phase 4 as well as a number of commenting documents. ([Read more on EEDI](#)). The MEPC invited Member States and international organizations to submit further proposals on a possible EEDI Phase 4 to a future session.

IV - Air pollution prevention

Exhaust gas cleaning systems (EGCS)

The Committee agreed to refer a number of submissions related to discharges and residues from exhaust gas cleaning systems to the 2024 session of the Sub-Committee on Pollution Prevention and Response (PPR 11) for consideration.

In June 2022, the MEPC 78 approved:

- [MEPC Circular on 2022 Guidelines for risk and impact assessments](#) of the discharge water from exhaust gas cleaning systems, to provide information on recommended methodology for risk and impact assessments that Member States should follow when considering local or regional regulations to protect the sensitive waters/environment from the discharge water from EGCS.
- [MEPC Circular on 2022 Guidance regarding the delivery of EGCS](#) residues to port reception facilities, providing best practices intended to assist both ship operators and port States in assuring the proper management and disposal of EGCS residues and stored discharge water from EGCSs into port reception facilities.

In 2021, the MEPC adopted the updated [Guidelines for exhaust gas cleaning systems \(MEPC.340\(77\)\)](#), which specify the criteria for the testing, survey, certification and verification of EGCS as well as discharge water quality criteria.

Licensing schemes for bunker suppliers

Following discussion in a working group in relation to proposals on licensing schemes for bunker suppliers, the MEPC encouraged Member States to make use of the revised Guidance for best practice for Member State/coastal State set out in circular [MEPC.1/Circ.884/Rev.1](#); and invited interested Member States and international organizations to submit information on experience gained of the implementation of the guidance on best practice and relevant instruments to a future session.

Biofuels, biofuel blends and synthetic fuels

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

MEPC 78 had approved a unified interpretation of regulation 18.3 of MARPOL Annex VI facilitating NOx 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.

V - 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.

VI - 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.

VII - Other matters

Work programme proposals

The MEPC considered proposals for new outputs, and agreed to include in the post-biennial agenda of the Committee the following new outputs:

- "Amendments to MARPOL Annex II in order to improve the effectiveness of cargo tank stripping, tank washing operations and prewash procedures for products with a high melting point and/or high viscosity", with two sessions needed to complete the item, assigning the PPR Sub-Committee as the associated organ.
- "Revision of the Revised guidelines and specifications for pollution prevention equipment for machinery space bilges of ships (resolution MEPC.107(49)", with two sessions needed to complete the item, assigning the PPR Sub-Committee as the associated organ.

Portugal and the EU will, in the meantime, continue to work on these issues and in preparation for future IMO meetings.