



Annotation to agenda Item 4.2(a): AMSA I(B) IMO Polar Code

Update on IMO's Development of a Polar Code Summary paper by USA, Canada, Denmark, Finland & Norway

Background

AMSA Recommendation I(B) provides:

“That the Arctic states, in recognition of the unique environmental and navigational conditions in the Arctic, decide to cooperatively support efforts at the International Maritime Organization to strengthen, harmonize and regularly update international standards for vessels operating in the Arctic. These efforts include: Support the updating and the mandatory application of relevant parts of the Guidelines for Ships Operating in Arctic Ice-covered Waters (Arctic Guidelines); and drawing from IMO instruments, in particular the Arctic Guidelines, augment global IMO ship safety and pollution prevention conventions with specific mandatory requirements or other provisions for ship construction, design, equipment, crewing, training and operating, aimed at safety and protection of the Arctic environment.”

In 2009, the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) tasked the Ship Design and Equipment Sub-Committee (DE) with the development of a mandatory Code for ships operating in polar waters (Polar Code). The objective of the Polar Code is to increase marine safety and environmental protection in Polar Regions and is intended to address, among other things, ship design and equipment; operation of vessels; training of crew; search and rescue, and protection of the marine environment. Since 2010, the DE Sub-Committee has met on three occasions to negotiate the text of the draft Polar Code. Between sessions, an intersessional correspondence group continues the technical work of the DE Sub-Committee.

Recommendations for the attention of the PAME I-2013 Meeting

The co-sponsors of this report recommend that:

- ✓ PAME encourage member governments to support the joint proposal by the United States, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, and Norway at the 57th session of the IMO's Design and Equipment Sub-Committee meeting.
- ✓ PAME encourage IMO bodies that are actively working to develop regulations, policies, and guidelines on environmental issues relevant to the Polar Code, including among others, ballast water management, anti-fouling, and black carbon emissions, to consider the unique ecological characteristics of the Arctic with a view towards incorporating appropriate standards for ships operating in polar waters in their ongoing work.
- ✓ PAME review the AMSA II(C) report with a view towards identifying environmental protection gaps in areas of heightened ecological and cultural significance and identify and explore future research needs to inform the development of environmental protection regulations relevant to the Arctic in IMO instruments.
- ✓ In the context of future work on AMSA the II(D) project, PAME evaluate what operational measures may be warranted for commercial vessels operating in the high seas areas of the Arctic Ocean (including MARPOL Special Areas and voyage planning for the protection of marine mammals) which PAME could recommend to member governments for their consideration and possible action at IMO.