

PAME II-2014 Agenda Item 4.6(a)

AMSA Recommendation II(D): Specially Designated Arctic Marine Areas.

**Iceland's Views on Recommendations in
DNV Report on "Specially Designated Marine Areas in the Arctic High Seas"**

Background

At the PAME I 2014 meeting, "PAME welcomes the valuable contribution of the final AMSA ii (d) requests the Secretariat to post it to the PAME website related to background documents. PAME invites member governments to submit to PAME ii-2014 their views on the report recommendations. As part of these views, member governments are invited to indicate whether and if so how, international protection for the high seas area of the Central Arctic Ocean might be pursued by Arctic States at IMO".

In the Report three options to protect the area from international shipping activities were identified.

Option # 1: The Arctic high seas area is designated as a PSSA in its entirety. Areas to be avoided are enforced in the PSSA.

Option # 2: The Arctic high seas area is designated as a PSSA in its entirety with a VTS with SRS is established to monitor traffic and offer guidance.

Option # 3: One or more core sea ice areas within the high seas area of the Central Arctic Ocean with Areas to be avoided as an addition.

In reviewing the report and the options identified, Iceland agree with the view that is it does not have added value to define the Arctic high seas as Special Areas in its entirety under MARPOL. As discussed in the report, the Polar Code will cover disposal of substances, such as oil and hazardous substances and will go further for protection of the environment than provisions generally can be found on Special areas within the annexes of MARPOL.

In reviewing all three proposed recommendations Iceland's view is that recommendation three appears as the most balanced option. It would not protect the whole area but a core area and by that not impede all sailing in the area. It is from our perspective the option that should be investigated if any of the three options should be pursued. In order to design a PSSA in the area within IMO, the designation has to be supported with extensive data as a necessary background to justify a PSSA proposal.

Therefore Iceland's view is that further studies are needed on shipping traffic for the high seas area of the Central Arctic Ocean to ascertain the current level of traffic and assess the prospects of traffic in the area as well as expected accident frequencies before a decision is taken on which, or if any of the three options should be chosen.