

International Maritime Information

Regulations on single hull oil tankers are being strengthened in respond to the Prestige incident



The 50th session of the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC50) was held on December 1 and 4, 2003, and the MARPOL 73/78 Convention was amended in response to the Prestige accident in November 2002. The amendment will enter into force on April 5, 2005.

A summary of the amendments are as follows:

1) Acceleration of phasing out of single hull oil tankers:

Single hull oil tankers of 5,000 dwt and above shall be gradually phased out by 2015 under the current MARPOL regulations, but the new schedule will phase them out by 2010. It is also agreed that the Administration of the flag state may extend the deadline up to 2015 for tankers of 25 years and younger on a case-by-case basis, while another country has a right to deny such tankers from entering its ports.

2) Introduction of new regulations on heavy grade oil transportation:

A new regulation on "prevention of oil pollution from ships carrying heavy grade oil" was introduced. In this regard, heavy grade oil means (i) crude oil heavier than 900 kg/m³, (ii) fuel oil either heavier than 900 kg/m³ or more viscous than 180 mm²/s, and (iii) bitumen, tar and their emulsions.

From April 5, 2005, tankers of 5,000 dwt and above carrying heavy grade oil

shall have double hull construction, and from 2008, this also applies to tankers of between 600 dwt and 5,000 dwt.

The Administration of the flag state may grant an exemption on a case-by-case basis, while another country has a right to deny such tankers from entering its ports. Domestic transportation may also be exempted from this regulation.

3) Expanded application of the Condition Assessment Scheme:

The Condition Assessment Scheme (CAS) had been introduced following the ERIKA incidents so that the Administration of the flag state would review and confirm the results of a survey on a single hull tanker conducted by a classification society. Under the current MARPOL regulations, CAS only applies to single hull tankers of around 25 years or older and of larger than 20,000 dwt (for crude oil tankers) or 30,000 dwt (for product tankers).

In the amendments at MEPC50, the application of CAS was expanded to apply to single hull tankers of 15 years and older and of 5,000 dwt and above. In principle, the first CAS survey will be conducted in conjunction with the first CAS after April 5, 2005.

Adding to plenary meetings of MEPC on December 1 and 4, working group meetings and drafting group meetings were also held on December 2 and 3,

and extensive discussions were made among delegates. EU member countries, which had already introduced regional regimes in October, took an initiative in order to introduce global measures in line with their regional regulations, while some other countries expressed difficulties on implementation. The MEPC chairman, Mr A. Chrysostomou (Cyprus), the drafting group chairman, Mr G. Maplebeck (Australia), and the delegation from Japan made a great effort to reach a compromise among the EU and other countries.

It took only one year from the Prestige incident to amend the MARPOL 73/78 Convention, and it seems to be the fastest track. Each time a major oil spill incident from single hull tankers occurred, regulations on such tankers were strengthened. Responding to the Exxon Baldiz incident in Alaska in 1989, double hull requirements for oil tankers and phasing out regulations of single hull tankers 25 or 30 years old were introduced in the MARPOL 73/38 Convention. Responding to the ERIKA incident in 1999, a cut-off date of 2015 for phasing out single hull tankers was introduced. This shall be the final amendment on single hull tankers, which are soon to be phased out.

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Essays

WORLD MARITIME UNIVERSITY - AS SEEN BY A CITIZEN OF MALMÖ

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Dr. Stormby with his wife Yukie

The southern Swedish city of Malmö, crammed between Copenhagen and the old university town of Lund is not known as a cultural hub or a major teaching center although its Latin school was instituted already by the pope Innocentius V, in 1406. However, in Malmö there is a glittering jewel, a solitaire, unique among teaching institutes all over the world - the WORLD MARITIME UNIVERSITY. This important establishment in its modest setting just at the coastline reflects both the waves of Öresund - the busy straits between Denmark and Sweden - and the utmost global importance of maritime matters.

WMU is young. It was established in 1983 on the initiative of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), a specialised agency of the United Nations, in close cooperation and with decisive backing from the City of Malmö. Being a success from the beginning it has ever since been forcefully supported by a number of nations, including Sweden, Norway, Canada, Denmark, UK, France and others, and bodies like the International Transport Federation. Important contributions have been provided by companies such as Inmarsat, and last but not least, extensively by the Nippon Foundation and the Ship and Ocean Foundation of Japan.

The number of students and graduates is now close to 2000, originating from nations all over the

world, like Bangladesh, the Philippines, Kenya, Ghana, India, Chile and many more. Particularly interesting and of great importance is the increasing number of women, signalling a turn of the tide in maritime professions, earlier fully dominated by men. This shift is particularly obvious at the yearly graduate ceremony at WMU.

On the other hand, Malmö has been looking at WMU scholars from the Far East, which, for us Europeans, is still felt to be quite a remote world. And since the late Dr. Kensaku Nomoto, the first Japanese professor at WMU, the presence of Japanese teaching staff has shown that the quality of maritime and academic society in Japan can stand in comparison with their counterparts in Europe and the US. The international touch thereby given to Malmö is of general value in a city seeking a more global future.

Thus, there is more than good reason for the City of Malmö and its inhabitants to proudly look at this jewel. Malmö, itself a melting pot with diversified social structures and a large number of immigrants, has experienced substantial integration problems. The World Maritime University actually is an extremely good example of how students, men and women from all over the world, can be successfully amalgamated into an organization with teaching and learning as a common denominator. A detailed overview of all WMU activities can be seen at

<http://www.wmu.se>

It's true that WMU is a well-known organization for some professionals and politicians. However, as an important hub for knowledge and a superb example of how individuals from so many racially, religiously, politically and economically different countries can work and enjoy working together, WMU is not enough known or appreciated by the common citizens of Malmö. The university plays a great role for the city of Malmö - the inhabitants of Malmö should also play a greater role for WMU. We living here should take the opportunity to learn about all the nations represented by the students when they are here and take them closer to our heart. Although the time for studies is concentrated, hard, and short, we should never hesitate to be innovative and find out what we can do for the students, inviting them occasionally to different activities and our homes. The reward will be unexpectedly great.

Secretariat's Note

Since the foundation of WMU, Dr. Stormby has given continuous support to Japanese teaching staff and Japanese students working and learning at WMU. For his contribution over many years in promoting amicability between Japan and Sweden he was decorated by the Japanese Government with The Order of the Rising Sun in autumn, 2003.

The Celebration Message was sent from Mr. Sasakawa.

The Öresund Bridge seen from Lernacken in the evening

