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Agenda item 3.4

Author(s) / Submitter(s) Secretariat

Report on IMO MSC 109

# Introduction

This report provides an overview of key outcomes from the 109th session of the IMO MSC 109, held from 2 to 6 December 2024, at the IMO Headquarters in London. The session was chaired by Mrs. Mayte Medina of the United States, with Vice-Chair Capt. Theofilos Mozas of Greece. IALA was represented by Minsu Jeon and Alisa Nechyporuk.

During this session, IALA co-sponsored the following document:

* MSC 109-19-3 - Proposal for a new output to realize the full potential of the S-100 ECDIS

# Outcomes of the meeting

**Roadmap for the Development of the MASS Code**

The Committee updated the roadmap for developing a code to regulate Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS). This initiative aims to ensure the safe integration of autonomous vessels into the maritime industry, addressing technical, operational, and regulatory aspects.

**Data distribution and connectivity of ECDIS using S-100 products**

The Committee discussed proposals for establishing a framework for data distribution and IP-based connectivity to fully enable the use of S-100 products in ECDIS, noting the urgency of implementation by 1 January 2026. Document MSC 109/19/3, supported broadly, proposed initial guidance, while comments from CIRM, Japan, and the United Kingdom offered additional perspectives. CIRM highlighted industry progress, cautioning against premature revisions to performance standards, while Japan and the United Kingdom emphasized secure connectivity and suggested amendments to SOLAS chapters IV and V.

The Committee recalled the NCSR 11 outcomes, including the need to revise ECDIS training (Model Course 1.27) and develop operational guidance for route exchange. Recognizing the importance of a stepwise approach, it was agreed to first develop the proposed guidance on data distribution and IP connectivity, with NCSR tasked for completion by 2026. Consideration of amendments to SOLAS or related instruments will follow once the guidance is finalized.

NCSR was authorized to report any urgent developments to MSC 110, and Member States and organizations were invited to submit proposals to address ECDIS competency requirements under the ongoing STCW review.

**Workload of the committee and its subsidiary bodies**

During the session the Working Group 3 on Workload of the Committee prepared draft amendments to the Committees' method of work (MSC-MEPC.1/Circ.5/Rev.5). The Group developed a definition for the new term "road map" and noted the general support for the establishment of a new standing body, referred to as the "Group of Chairs", to conduct a preliminary assessment of proposals for new outputs or expansion of the scope of outputs, to assist the Committees in making informed decisions on such proposals.

The Group prepared several other modifications to the Committees' Method of Work to, inter alia, address editorials, enhance consistency throughout the document, update procedures by aligning them with current practices and improve the document in general.

**IALA MBS (SN.1/Circ.297)**

The committee approved the draft SN circular on IALA Maritime Buoyage System, revising and revoking SN.1/Circ.297, and the draft SN circular on IALA Risk Management Toolbox for aids to navigation and vessel traffic services, revising and revoking SN.1/Circ.296.

**IALA Risk Management Toolbox (SN.1/Circ.296)**

The committee approved the draft MSC circular on guidance on the validity of radiocommunications equipment installed and used on ships, to be disseminated as MSC.1/Circ.1460/Rev.5 (paragraph 18.12 and annex 20);

Also the committee adopted the draft MSC resolution on performance standards for the reception of maritime safety information and search and rescue-related information by MF and HF digital navigational data (NAVDAT) system and draft resolution MSC.509(105)/Rev.1 on provision of radio services for the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS).

Also, the committee noted the consideration of the Sub-Committee on the identification of measures to improve the security and integrity aspects of AIS and adopt the draft MSC resolution on performance standards for a universal shipborne automatic identification system (AIS), revising annex 3 to resolution MSC.74(69) to enhance security aspects of AIS.

**Introduction of digital technology for VHF voice communications**

The Committee considered document MSC 109/19, proposing the development of a transition scheme for the introduction of digital technology for Very High Frequency (VHF) voice communications, as an urgent matter, to guide ITU regulatory developments taking into account the implementation impact on shipping.

Having noted general support for the proposal, the Committee agreed to include in the biennial agenda of the NCSR Sub-Committee for the 2026-2027 biennium and the provisional agenda for NCSR 13 an output on "Development of a transition scheme for the introduction of digital technology for Very High Frequency (VHF) voice communications," with a target completion year of 2027. In this regard, the Committee authorized NCSR 12 to initiate intersessional work on the output in 2025 through the Joint IMO/ITU Experts Group on Maritime Radiocommunication Matters.

**Reports of Sub-Committees**

The Committee approved various provisions from sub-committee reports, including:

* Descriptions of Maritime Services in the context of e-navigation (MSC.1/Circ.1610/Rev.1).
* Revised performance standards for Electronic Chart Display and Information Systems (ECDIS) (MSC.530(106)/Rev.1).
* Joint IMO/IHO/WMO Manual on Maritime Safety Information (MSC.1/Circ.1310/Rev.2), to be implemented from 1 January 2025.
* Draft SN circular on the IALA Maritime Buoyage System, revising and revoking SN.1/Circ.297.
* Draft SN circular on the IALA Risk Management Toolbox for aids to navigation and vessel traffic services, revising and revoking SN.1/Circ.296.

# Action requested of the Committee

#### **Note** the information provided.