

Agenda item 6 – Report by the Secretary-General

6.3 Host Nation support

6.3.1 Recent actions and present status

Note by the Secretary-General

Background

During the 59th session of the IALA Council in December 2014, some Councillors raised questions on the implementation of the MoU signed on 20th March 2012 between IALA and the French Directorate for Maritime Affairs (DAM). In particular this concerned support to foreign IALA staff members.

Consequently, the IALA Secretary-General and DAM decided to submit a common paper describing recent actions and the present status.

Supportive actions by France towards IALA

Supporting actions provided for in the MoU are implemented as follows.

- Providing assistance with processing applications for visas and associated documentation necessary for delegates and others intending to attend meetings and other events organised by IALA in the Host Nation:

DAM informs, and IALA agrees, that IALA no longer encounters difficulties with visa applications. Thanks to contacts established within the appropriate division of the Department of Foreign Affairs, visas are now processed smoothly.

- Providing assistance with the employment by IALA of non-residents of the Host, such as fast tracking required visa applications and obtaining necessary work permits to the fullest extent possible in accordance with the law of the Host Nation:

It is worth noting that the law has been made more flexible during the last five years:

- Citizens of the European Union (EU): There are now no special formalities required in respect of the free movement of workers. In particular before any EU recruitment is instigated, the future employer is not obliged to ensure, , that French residents, seeking a job matching the required profile, are available;
- Non-EU citizens: although obtaining a work permit remains compulsory, it is worth noting that the obligation to go through a French language examination has been abolished, and that highly qualified executives and employees (such the IALA Secretary-General) can benefit from the “blue card”.

- Providing practical advice and assistance for the spouse and family members of IALA employees before joining IALA from outside the Host with processing applications for employment, school enrolment and other local arrangements;

In 2013, DAM, noting IALA's special status, and its wish to employ foreign nationals, liaised with local authorities and the Ministry of Internal Affairs to clarify their position. This resulted in DAM informing IALA in May 2014 that there was a requirement to start the residence permit renewal process for foreign nationals whose permits would expire at the end of that year.

In 2015, DAM, noting the difficulties that were still being encountered with the recruitment of foreign Secretariat staff or their spouses and families, nominated an individual within the French Lighthouse Service that the IALA Secretariat staff could contact when support was required. Such support would ease the relationship with administrations and, where appropriate, the point of contact could accompany the foreign staff concerned to facilitate the procedures required by the local authorities and administrations.

- Engaging in a regular communication strategy to be established between the Secretary-General of IALA and the Director of Maritime Affairs:

A regular and efficient liaison process has now been established between DAM and the Secretary-General of IALA. This has resulted in a number of very positive outcomes including facilitation of an aids to navigation manager course for French and Francophone participants.

- Supporting IALA towards the costs of relocation to a new building (2010-2012):

In addition to the payment of a substantial subsidy (1 Million Euros) DAM arranged for the secondment of a qualified project manager from a State administration who negotiated the contracts and supervised the works.

- Assisting with translation services into the language of the Host and the working language of IALA as required:

Assistance with the translation of documents into the French language is running smoothly. In addition to the regular translation of IALA Recommendations and Guidelines, faultless assistance with translations was provided before the last IALA General Assembly.

Supportive actions by IALA towards France

The MoU is a bilateral agreement, by which IALA is committed to cooperate with the Host in the conduct of IALA's activities. The status as of May 2015 is as follows:

- IALA, in acknowledging the use of the French language, will, with the support of the part-time worker supplied by the Host, handle all related issues within IALA:

Since 1st January 2012, IALA has benefited from the services of a part-time employee on the staff of the IALA World-Wide Academy who is funded (in part) by DAM. Since its establishment on the same date, the Academy has carried out a number of missions to developing Francophone countries. These missions, using documentation in French language and facilitated by the French member of staff enhanced regional capacity and led to 6 new members (3 National and 3 Associate) joining IALA from Francophone countries.

- The IALA Council will propose to the General Assembly an amendment to the IALA Constitution in order to provide for the Host to have a seat on the Council:

Such amendment was proposed and accepted by vote of the 12th IALA General Assembly at A Coruña, Spain, in May 2014.

Conclusion

Communication between IALA and its Host, and implementation of the MoU signed in 2012, are working most satisfactorily. It is expected that the quality of the positive relationship will continue in the future.

Action requested from Council

The Council is invited to note the above.