

PRESS RELEASE

BLACK SEA MOU HELD ITS TWENTY-FIRST PORT STATE CONTROL COMMITTEE MEETING VIRTUALLY

Istanbul, Turkey - Representatives of the Port State Control Committee, the governing body under the Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control in the Black Sea Region (BS MOU), met by virtual means for the Twenty-first session from 13 to 15 April 2021. The 21st Committee meeting, which was originally scheduled to be held in Constanta, Romania in March 2020, was postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic and afterwards was organized virtually as agreed by all member Authorities. The meeting was chaired by Captain Alexandar ILIEV-Harbour Master of Port Burgas, Bulgaria.

The Chair made a welcome speech and officially declared the opening of the meeting. In his opening speech, Mr. Alexandar ILIEV stressed the important role of port State control for promotion of safer shipping and cleaner seas and the responsibilities of both flag States and port States. The port State control activities have been heavily affected by the circumstances arising from the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. He expressed gratitude and appreciation to all the Black Sea countries for their valuable support which contributed to the success of the initiative. Moreover, he encouraged BS MOU to further enhance and improve its activities so as to promote safety of navigation, protection of the marine environment and the labour conditions on board ships. He also conveyed his condolences to Captain Hüseyin YÜCE, the ex-Secretary of the Black Sea MOU Secretariat, who passed away on 07 January 2021. Lastly, he reaffirmed the commitment and continuous support from all member states to the BS MOU and declared opening of the meeting officially.

The BS MOU was concluded on 7 April 2000 and came into operation on 19 December 2000 after the first preparatory meeting in Varna in 1999. At present, the BS MOU consists of 6 member Authorities: Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, the Russian Federation, Republic of Turkey and Ukraine. The Maritime Authority of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Republic of Moldova, the United States Coast Guard, the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Paris, Mediterranean, West and Central Africa and Riyadh MOUs as well as the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution are associated with the BS MOU as observers.

The twenty-first meeting of the Port State Control Committee held virtually was attended by the member States of Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, the Russian Federation, Republic of Turkey and Ukraine. Republic of Azerbaijan, Representatives of IMO, the Paris MOU, MED MOU and ABUJA MOU attended to the meeting. Republic of Kazakhstan, Republic of Moldova, ILO, Riyadh MOU, USCG and the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution were unable to attend.

The main objective of the Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control in the Black Sea Region is to establish an effective PSC regime in the Black Sea region through cooperation and harmonization of the PSC activities of the member Authorities. It aims protection of the unique Black Sea natural resources at eliminating sub-standard shipping, so as to promote maritime safety, to protect the marine environment and to safeguard working and living conditions on board.

One of the most discussed topics was the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic to activities of the BS MOU. The Committee agreed to keep the National measures of member Authorities on the Covid-19 updated regularly and to establish an extraordinary intersessional working group on impact of the Covid-19 crisis to prepare interim guidance for port state control activities relating to the Covid-19 circumstances.

The Committee considered BS MOU and Members performance analysis using regional MOUs BGW list and targeting system data presented in the respective annual reports. The Committee agreed further global analysis of the performance of the member States ship fleet using inspection and detention data of the PSC regimes.

The Committee also discussed matters related to the methodological issues and the possibility to implement Banning Procedures of BS MOU relating to protection of the unique Black Sea natural resources at eliminating sub-standard shipping. The Committee agreed to establish a working group on it. The Committee also agreed to amend and update the Port State Control Manual of BS MOU.

The report of the CIC on the Emergency Systems and Procedures, carried out in September to November of 2019, was discussed. The Committee agreed to decide by the mid of July to whether carry out CIC on Stability in General during the period of 01st September - 30th November 2021 joint CIC with the Paris MOU and Tokyo MOU due to the effects of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

The Committee observed with satisfaction the continuous progress achieved in the implementation of regional and interregional Port State Control Officers Exchange programme. In this regard, the Committee expressed appreciation to the Authorities for their support, participation and co-operation.

Since it is difficult to foresee the situation of Covid-19, the Committee agreed to decide later to elect new Chairman, date and venue of next Committee Meeting and also the manner of the meeting according to the ongoing pandemic.

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