

Relevant for ship owners and managers, flag administrations and port state control.

December 2021

The 32nd session of the IMO Assembly (A 32), the highest governing body of the IMO, was held remotely from 6 to 15 December 2021. The Assembly elected 40 member states for the Council for the next biennium, added the human element as a new strategic direction for the IMO, and adopted updated port state guidelines and harmonized survey guidelines.



Meeting highlights

- Election of 40 member states for the 2022–2023 biennium
- Updated strategic plan for the 2022–2023 biennium with an additional Strategic Direction on the human element
- Updated procedures for port State control and harmonized survey guidelines

The Assembly is the highest governing body of the IMO. It consists of all Member States and meets once every two years in regular sessions. The Assembly is responsible for approving the work programme, voting the budget and determining the financial arrangements of the Organization. The Assembly also elects the Council.

Strategy, planning and reform

The Assembly updated the plan for the 2022–2023 biennium, adding a new strategic direction on the human element. This is the third biennium of the strategic plan for the IMO for the six-year period from 2018 to 2024.

Election of members of the council

The following 40 IMO member states were elected to the Council for the 2022–2023 biennium:

Category A (states with the most significant stakes in international shipping services): China, Greece, Italy, Japan, Norway, Panama, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, United States of America. No changes from the last biennium.

Category B (states with the biggest share of international seaborne trade): Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, India, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, and the United Arab Emirates. Sweden replaces Argentina.

Category C (states which have special interests in maritime transport or navigation and ensure representation in all key geographical regions of the world): Bahamas, Belgium, Chile, Cyprus, Denmark, Egypt, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kenya, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Morocco, the Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Thailand, Turkey and Vanuatu. Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Vanuatu replace Kuwait, Peru and South Africa.

Important resolutions and circulars

The following lists the most relevant resolutions adopted by the Assembly. Please note that the list and document references are provisional.

Resolution A.11xy(32)

Procedures for port State control, 2021.

The amendments are mainly related to Appendix 7 of the guidelines for control of operational requirements. Also, Appendix 4 includes guidelines on the endorsement of the electronic cargo record book for MARPOL Annex II, by using a stand-alone form or a copy of the surveyor's report to accompany the electronic record book entry.

Resolution A.11xy(32)

Survey Guidelines under the Harmonized System of Survey and Certification (HSSC), 2021.

The revised guidelines include requirements related to:

- Operational readiness, maintenance and inspections for lifeboats and rescue boats, launching appliances and release gear, means of escape for passenger ships and helicopter facilities
- System commission testing of the ballast water management system
- Harmonization of survey periods of cargo ships not subject to the ESP Code
- Check of two-way VHF using expired primary batteries
- Electronic record books under MARPOL
- Helicopter facility foam firefighting appliances

Resolution A.11xy(32)

2021 Non-exhaustive list of obligations under instruments relevant to the IMO Instruments Implementation Code (III Code).

Resolution A.11xy(32)

Guidelines for Vessel Traffic Services.

Resolution A.11xy(32)

Prevention and suppression of piracy, armed robbery against ships and illicit maritime activity in the Gulf of Guinea.

Resolution A.11xy(32)

Comprehensive action to address seafarers' challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The resolution consolidates issues related to crew changes, access to medical care, "key worker" designations, and vaccinations, as highlighted by the following MSC instruments:

- Resolution MSC.473(ES.2) on "Recommended action to facilitate ship crew change, access to medical care and seafarer travel during the COVID-19 pandemic"
- MSC.1/Circ.1636/Rev.1 on "Industry recommended framework of protocols for ensuring safe ship crew changes and travel during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic"
- MSC.490(103) on "Recommended action to prioritize COVID-19 vaccination of seafarers"

Resolution A.11xy(32)

Strategic Plan for the Organization for the six-year period 2018 to 2023.

The following resolutions were revoked:

A.658(16) – Use and fitting of retro-reflective materials on life-saving appliances

A.739(18) – Guidelines for the authorization of organizations acting on behalf of the Administration.

A.789(19) – Specifications on the survey and certification functions of Recognized Organizations acting on behalf of the Administration.

The latter two resolutions are replaced with references to the mandatory parts of the code for Recognized Organizations (RO Code).

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