

PRESS RELEASE

BLACK SEA MOU HELD ITS TWENTY-FOURTH PORT STATE CONTROL COMMITTEE MEETING IN BATUMI, GEORGIA

Batumi, Georgia – 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 in-person presence in Batumi, Georgia, for the twenty-fourth session from 26 to 28 March 2024. Those who were unable to attend were given the opportunity to participate online.

The meeting was chaired by Captain Cosmin Laurențiu Dumitrache, General Director of the Romanian Naval Authority.

Director of the Maritime Transport Agency of Georgia, Mr. Aleksi Akhvlediani delivered a welcome speech and officially declared the opening of the meeting. In his opening speech, Mr. Akhvlediani first welcomed all delegates to Batumi and emphasized the importance of collaboration among member states to ensure navigation safety in the Black Sea region. Mr. Akhvlediani highlighted the crucial role of port state control in maritime safety and environmental protection globally, with particular significance in the Black Sea and underscored Georgia's commitment to fulfilling its international obligations and improving transport connectivity, focusing on port infrastructure development and digitalization initiatives. The opening speech was concluded by expressing gratitude to the organizing committee and wishing for a productive meeting.

The twenty-fourth meeting of the Port State Control Committee was attended by all the 6 member Authorities of Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, the Russian Federation, Türkiye and Ukraine and observers of Moldova, the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the Abuja MoU, the Indian Ocean MoU, the Tokyo MoU and the Viña del Mar Agreement attended to the meeting. Observers of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Caribbean MoU, the Paris MoU, the Riyadh MoU, USCG and the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution were unable to attend.

For facilitating further harmonization among regional Port State Control regimes, the Committee acknowledged the achieved success of the Black Sea Memorandum of Understanding in obtaining observer status in all regional PSC Regimes.

Aiming to include a reference to Protocol of 1997 to amend the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships of 2 November 1973, as modified by the Protocol of 17 February 1978 (MARPOL PROT 1997, i.e. MARPOL Annex VI) and to clarify the implications of the "no more favourable treatment" clause, especially concerning financial liability conventions and automatic denunciation resulting from ratification of MLC, 2006, the Committee adopted amendments to the Memorandum text and its annexes.

The Committee considered and adopted amendments to the strategic plan, strategic directions and plan of actions for empowering the Black Sea MoU to meet the new challenges, e.g. monitoring the implementation of the newly entered into force Convention, the Hong Kong International Convention for the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships and further monitoring the entering into force of the International Convention for the Safety of Fishing Vessels, bilateral collaboration between PSC regimes on dual member Authorities for promoting joint initiatives and co-operation with other regional PSC regime and difficult situations proactively and effectively.

The Committee considered the Black Sea Port State Control Guidelines and technical procedures and adopted Guidelines for PSCOs for Onboard Blackout Test, Guidelines for Rectifying Deficiencies and Detentions in accordance with paragraphs 3.6 - 3.9 of the Memorandum, Guidelines for PSCOs on the Procedures for Checking Passage Plan, Additional Guidance for Inspection of Ships Below Convention Size, Residual Covid-19 issues in Relation to Ballast Water Management and further adopted several amendments/revisions. The Committee noted the considerations of IMO regarding prevention of illegal operations in the maritime sector by the "Dark Fleet" or "Shadow Fleet" and agreed to incorporate the IMO Resolution A.1192(33)-Urging Member States and all relevant Stakeholders to Promote Actions to Prevent Illegal Operations in the Maritime Sector by the "Dark Fleet" or "Shadow Fleet" into the BS MoU PSC Manual.

The Committee endorsed the Training Principles & Techniques for BS MoU Port State Control Officers and Learning Outcomes and subsequently agreed in principle to adopt the revised BS MoU Policies on the Training of New Entrant PSC Officers and the Professional Development Scheme for Port State Control officers.

The Committee agreed to adopt a technical solution for implementation of the enhancement of data accessibility and availability and approved the trial implementation of the function for flags and/or ROs to download PSC data of their own ships from 1 July 2024.

To investigate the opportunity of offering financial support mechanism by the Black Sea MoU on enhancing PSC training activities in the region and promoting closer cooperation and communication between Authorities and to investigate the possibility and necessity of the geographic criteria, introduction of the "co-operating membership" into the Memorandum, consideration of readjusting the target of inspection rate, consideration of being in the Ship Watch List as an overriding factor and other possible Memorandum amendments basing on experience gained and progress made in the implementation of the New Inspection Regime and selection scheme, the Committee agreed to re-establish Working Groups to continue its work intersessionally. The Committee further agreed to establish a Working Group on non-rectified outstanding deficiencies and a Working Group on Flag and RO Performance with the task to consider the calculation methodology for Flag and RO performances.

The report of the Concentrated Inspection Campaign (CIC) on Fire Safety, carried out from September to November of 2023, was discussed and approved by the Committee. This report will be published on the BS MoU website in the near future. The Committee further reviewed and approved arrangements and preparations for the joint CIC with the Paris MoU and Tokyo MoU; and agreed to carry out CIC on Crew Wages and Seafarer Employment Agreement under MLC with including relevant questions relating to financial security under 2014 amendments to MLC, during the period of 01 September - 30 November 2024. The Committee nominated the Maritime Administration of Bulgaria to act as campaign coordinator.

The Committee elected Ms. Kristina Rzgoeva, Deputy Director of the Maritime Transport Agency of Georgia, as the Chair and Mr. Hayri Hasandayioğlu, Head of Ship Inspection Department Republic of Türkiye, as the Vice Chair of the Committee.

On behalf of the member States, Capt. Dumitrache, concluded the meeting by remarking that significant progress had been made on the port State control issues during this meeting. He thanked the Maritime Transport Agency of Georgia for the exceptional arrangements they provided for this Committee meeting. He also thanked the member States and the BS MoU Secretariat for their contributions.

The 25th meeting of the Port State Control Committee is tentatively scheduled to be held in Türkiye in spring 2025.

03 April 2024

Contact

Black Sea MoU Secretariat
Beylerbeyi Mah. Abdullahaga Cad. No.16A
Uskudar - Istanbul 34676 TÜRKİYE
Telephone: +90 216 3425887
E-mail: secretariat@bsmou.org
Website: www.bsmou.org