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PRESS RELEASE

BLACK SEA MOU CELEBRATES 25th ANNIVERSARY AT THE TWENTY-FIFTH PORT STATE CONTROL COMMITTEE MEETING IN ISTANBUL, TÜRKİYE

Istanbul, TÜRKİYE – The Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control in the Black Sea Region (BS MoU) commemorated its 25th anniversary during the Twenty-Fifth Meeting of the Port State Control Committee (PSCC25), held from 14 to 17 April 2025 in Istanbul, Türkiye, where the Memorandum was originally signed on 7 April 2000. Since its full entry into force on 12 December 2002 for all six maritime States, the Black Sea MoU has played a vital role in promoting maritime safety, environmental protection and the elimination of substandard shipping in the region.

The meeting was chaired by Ms. Kristina RZGOEVA, Deputy Director of the Maritime Transport Agency of Georgia. Director General of Maritime Affairs of Türkiye, Capt. Unal BAYLAN delivered the welcome address and formally opened the session. In his opening speech, Capt. BAYLAN first welcomed all delegates to Istanbul and highlighted the strategic importance of the Black Sea in global maritime trade and underscored the collective responsibility of member States in ensuring maritime safety and environmental protection. He emphasized Türkiye's pivotal role in the region's maritime sector and reiterated the importance of unified port State control practices, regional cooperation and joint efforts to keep substandard ships away from Black Sea ports. His speech also honoured the 25th anniversary of the Committee, celebrating the ongoing commitment of member States to uphold international maritime standards.

The twenty-fifth 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 Azerbaijan, Moldova, the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the Abuja MoU, the Mediterranean MoU, the Paris MoU, the Tokyo MoU, the Viña del Mar Agreement and the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution attended to the meeting. Observers of Kazakhstan, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Caribbean MoU, the Indian Ocean MoU, the Riyadh MoU and USCG were unable to attend.

A special commemorative session was held under the auspices of PSCC25, gathering the Heads of Maritime Administrations of the Member States. The session featured a short film reflecting on the achievements of the Black Sea MoU over the past 25 years. The Heads of Maritime Administrations of the Member States also shared congratulatory messages and reflections on the region's collective efforts in strengthening port State control. A commemorative publication, "*25 Years of the Black Sea MoU*" was launched and is available on the Black Sea MoU website.

During the PSCC25 session, the Committee adopted a number of substantive amendments to the Memorandum and its annexes, aimed at further harmonizing port State control procedures and enhancing the effectiveness of the Black Sea MoU's inspection regime. These amendments included the reflection of the Black Sea MoU New Inspection Regime (NIR) and its selection scheme within the Memorandum text; the introduction of the terms "anchorage" and "suspension of inspection"; and provisions to support gender equality within the port State control framework. Additionally, the Committee agreed to the removal of the IMO Member State Audit Scheme from the ship risk profile parameters. All these adopted amendments to the Memorandum and its annexes will enter into force on 1 January 2026.

Furthermore, the Committee approved, in principle, the incorporation of the Hong Kong International Convention for the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships as a new relevant instrument under the Black Sea MoU.

The Committee, with reference to the Flag Detention Index and Recognized Organization (RO) Related Detention Index parameters established under the Black Sea MoU NIR, endorsed the application of a deterministic methodology for the annual assessment of Flag and RO performance. This approach includes appropriate adjustments for Flags and ROs with a limited number of inspections. The outcomes of these assessments will continue to be reflected in the Black Sea MoU Annual Reports. Furthermore, the Committee agreed in principle on a refined methodology for evaluating RO-related detention indices, which involves the direct correlation of detainable deficiencies with statutory certificates issued or surveyed by the concerned ROs.

The Committee considered and adopted the guidelines for PSC Inspections of Ships Carrying Industrial Personnel (IP Code). In addition, it approved the amendments and revisions to several existing guidelines, including IMDG Code, Completing Inspection Forms, Use of Action Taken Codes, the Responsibility Assessment of RO and Coding System.

The Committee adopted revisions to the BS MoU Training Policies for New Entrant PSC Officers and the Professional Development Scheme to align training efforts and thereby maintain a sustainable level of qualified PSCOs. Additionally, a strategic plan for technical cooperation programmes for the period of 2026-2030, supported by a financial mechanism coordinated by the Black Sea MoU Secretariat was adopted by the Committee.

In light of ongoing challenges and the need for continuous improvement, the Committee also agreed to (re)establish intersessional working groups on topics including geographic criteria, the introduction of “co-operating membership” status, readjustments to inspection rate target, consideration of being in the Ship Watch List as an overriding factor and potential use of refusal of access to the ports in the region as an enforcement tool in the case ship fails to call at an agreed repair yard or failed to comply with the detention order (jump detention).

The report of the Concentrated Inspection Campaign (CIC) on Crew Wages and Seafarer Employment Agreement under MLC, 2006, carried out from September to November of 2024, 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 Ballast Water Management (BWM), during the period from 01 September to 30 November 2025. The Committee nominated the Maritime Administration of Türkiye to act as campaign coordinator.

On behalf of the member States, Ms. RZGOEVA, concluded the meeting by noting that significant progress made on the port State control issues during this meeting. She expressed her appreciation to the Maritime Administration of Türkiye for the exceptional arrangements they provided for this Committee meeting and anniversary celebrations. She also extended thanks to all Member States and the Secretariat for their ongoing commitment and cooperation.

In conjunction with the Committee meeting, a dedicated in-person session was held with the participation of the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS), providing an opportunity for an exchange of views and the presentation of its digital platform for electronic seafarer certificates. The Committee took note of the potential of this platform to enhance the efficiency and reliability of the verification process. By enabling secure and swift authentication of electronic seafarer certificates, such platforms may offer meaningful support to PSCOs in the performance of their responsibilities.

The Committee elected Mr. Hayri HASANDAYIOGLU, Head of Ship Inspection Department Republic of Türkiye, as the Chair of the Committee.

The 26th meeting of the Port State Control Committee is tentatively scheduled to take place in Varna, Bulgaria in early spring 2026.

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