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Agenda item 13

C 114/13/1
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**PERIODIC REVIEW OF ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS IN MANDATORY
IMO INSTRUMENTS**

Information related to a future IMO web-portal

Note by the Secretary-General

SUMMARY

Executive summary: This document presents pertinent information in relation to the recommendation on the possible development of a fundamental vision and policy regarding a web-based information portal, and the Secretariat's work in this regard

Strategic direction: 8

High-level action: 8.0.4

Planned output: 8.0.4.2

Action to be taken: Paragraph 16

Related documents: C 113/11 and C 113/D

Introduction

1 During the discussions on the reduction of administrative burdens in mandatory IMO instruments at its 113th session, the Council discussed at length the implications of recommendation 2 presented in the report of the Ad Hoc Steering Group for Reducing Administrative Requirements (SG-RAR).

2 Recommendation 2 of the SG-RAR recommended that "the Organization – as a matter of priority – establishes and develops a fundamental vision and policy concerning its role and responsibility as host of an internationally trusted web-based information portal, including (a) functional architecture for the entry, storage and retrieval of information and data; (b) practical and efficient use; and (c) development and maintenance of such a portal."

3 The Council requested the Secretariat to develop a proposal in order to better assess the implications of this recommendation. The Secretary-General and senior management considered how to best provide the information to the Council in order to enable Council to make relevant decisions with respect to this recommendation, and this document presents the current status of the work undertaken by the Secretariat on the matter.

4 Taking into account that the Organization already has an information portal (GISIS) that is used for an increasing number of the reporting requirements of Member States, it is considered that the feedback from the stakeholders in the public consultation carried out in 2013 leading to this recommendation called for a system that went beyond the reporting capabilities of the existing GISIS platform.

GISIS Development

5 Bearing in mind the existence of GISIS, the Secretariat has initiated a process to comprehensively map out its intent, purpose and current status, in order to better detail what additional features would be needed in a new web-based portal to fulfil the wishes expressed in the stakeholder consultation, and to present the information to Council for it to make the necessary decisions in this respect, if any.

6 The initial concept for an IMO ship information system was tabled by the membership as early as the mid-1990's. The proposal developed from a series of recommendations by the Maritime Safety and Marine Environment Protection Committees for a database where data would be centrally stored under IMO management, to allow Member States to meet their reporting requirements initially for casualties, port State control and crew certification. The cost to develop the system requirements of a ship information system was set by consultants at a price that was exceedingly more than the Member States would pay at the time. Forcibly, the project to develop the ship information system with funding from Member States was shelved.

7 However, the Secretariat undertook the initiative independently to develop as far as possible an information system with existing in-house resources. The first incarnation of GISIS was launched in 2005, with two modules, the first on Maritime Security, followed later by one on Maritime Casualties. The aims of the system were to provide Member States with a platform through which they could comply with reporting requirements to the Secretariat directly through a single channel, as well as obtain information from the Secretariat. Further development of GISIS was meant to enhance and facilitate compliance of Member States with an increasing number of reporting requirements.

8 The system was developed using the following set of guiding principles; (a) responsibility for the accuracy and validity of information reported through GISIS would rest with the Member States themselves; (b) IMO would not create data, it would rationalize and reduce duplication of reporting requirements without adding another layer of bureaucracy for stakeholders; (c) data on GISIS would be accessed only through GISIS in the format controlled by the Secretariat; and (d) data from private sector/third party providers that would be included in GISIS would be clearly indicated as such.

9 Access to information contained in GISIS is available for free to anyone who registers. However, not all data is available to the public and "hidden" modules can only be accessed according to permissions inferred from the regulations being reported on and granted by Member States or by IMO.

10 Over time, GISIS has grown organically in response to needs and requests expressed through committees, sub-committees, individual Member States or Secretariat staff to enable the increase in reporting through the database. However, as a result of a lack of a consistent methodology for including information in GISIS and the resulting step-by-step development of the system, the addition of modules has been carried out in an ad hoc fashion, without consideration of existing information or future requirements, thus affecting consistency in the collection and usage of data.

Way forward

11 In order to proceed and provide the Council with information on the implications of a web-based, information portal, the Secretariat has determined that it is necessary to first understand fully what we have. The Secretariat has initiated a comprehensive review to:

- initially reaffirm the original intent and purpose of GISIS, and
- determine and map out its current status what information the system holds, who provides the data, who uses the information, and how this data is used.

This process will entail a complete analysis of the functionality and architecture of the current GISIS system, and will consolidate relevant information from all of the Secretariat entities that use or provide data to one or more modules in GISIS.

12 These efforts from the Secretariat will ensure its future work on addressing recommendation 2 does not duplicate work which has already been accomplished through GISIS, it will streamline processes for both Member States and the Secretariat and provide relevant data for users of the information.

13 This is important as one of the initial findings of the review is that data currently contained in GISIS does not consistently allow for statistically significant information to be regularly extracted from the database, which adversely affects both Member States and IMO, who could benefit from the use and analysis of accurate, up-to-date data in their decision making processes and in complying with requirements.

14 The outcome of this work, will reaffirm the core mission of GISIS, it will enable a systematic approach to be developed for the continued development of the system and will enable Member States and the Secretariat to use the system to its full potential, amongst others.

15 Furthermore, once the Secretariat has conducted the review of the current GISIS platform, the next steps will be to:

- map out the SG-RAR consultation's stakeholders' expectations of the functionalities and characteristics of a web-based information portal,
- compare the existing functionalities with the functionalities that were detailed in the public stakeholder consultation that led to the SG-RAR's recommendation, as well as those raised in discussions elsewhere, and
- produce a proposal for required future work and the potential way ahead.

The work that will be done will inform the presentation to Council of what potential changes to the current system would be necessary to establish an internationally trusted, web-based information portal, if it is feasible to develop GISIS further; or alternatively whether a different proposal would be more appropriate. This will enable the Council to have a better understanding of the potential consequences and implications of embarking on such a project, and to take the appropriate decisions in this regard.

Action requested of the Council

16 The Council is requested to note the information provided on the Secretariat's ongoing work in relation to the recommendation on the development of a fundamental vision and policy concerning an internationally trusted, web-based information portal.