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Press release

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THE PARIS MOU MAKES SIGNIFICANT STEP FORWARD IN GLOBAL HARMONIZATION OF PORT STATE CONTROL

At its 41st session in Loutraki, Greece, 19- 23 May 2008 the Paris Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control (Paris MoU) decided positively on observer status for the Mediterranean MoU and the Riyadh MoU, as well as the Black Sea MoU. Representatives from these memoranda may participate in Paris MoU meetings, including Committee meetings.

Richard Schiferli, the General Secretary of the MoU stated: "I am particularly pleased with the decision to provide all MoUs which hold observer status with the distance learning package for PSCOs and access to the expert training programme. A major step forward towards global harmonization."

The Committee made significant progress in filling in further details of the new inspection regime, which is expected to enter into force in 2011. The Committee also discussed progress made on the development of a new information system. The European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA), in co-operation with the Paris MoU, will manage the development of this new information system, with the working title of THETIS.

One of the main items on the agenda was the proposal of a common training programme for Port State Control Officers (PSCOs). The general principles of setting and continuing common and consistent standards, providing training to PSCOs and the updating of technical knowledge were embraced. A number of initiatives will be financed and developed jointly by the Member States, Paris MoU Secretariat and EMSA.

The Committee thanked EMSA for the development of "Rulecheck" which is an electronic tool for PSCOs to check the application of legislation. This electronic tool was successfully delivered in early 2008 to all PSCOs.

The Committee continued to take actions in response to the 2nd Joint Paris/Tokyo MoU Ministerial Conference, held in Vancouver in 2004. It gave high importance to Concentrated Inspection Campaigns (CICs) and scheduled a CIC on Safety of Navigation from September to November this year. The campaign will be carried out jointly with the Tokyo MoU.

In addition the Committee considered a number of options for other joint CICs with the Tokyo MoU for 2009 and beyond.

During 2009 a CIC on lifeboat launching arrangements will be carried out.

The report of the CIC on the implementation of the ISM Code carried out in September, October and November of 2007, was presented to PSCC41. The results will be presented to the IMO in 2009.

The Committee also agreed on new PSC guidelines for Operational Drills and the Anti-Fouling Systems Convention.

The Committee adopted the 2007 Annual Report including the new Black, Grey and White List and a performance list of Recognised Organisations. Both lists will be used for targeting purposes starting 1st July 2008. The Annual Report is expected to be published by the end of July.

The Netherlands will join the MoU Advisory Board, MAB, of the Paris MoU for the coming 3 years to represent the EU members and the Committee thanked the outgoing MAB member Spain for their positive contributions over the past period.

The current Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Brian Hogan, was re-elected for a period of three meetings.

Mr. Hogan stated: "I am very pleased with the outcome of this meeting. We have taken positive steps to enhance port State control. However, much work remains to be done in the coming years".

Notes to editors:

The Hellenic Coast Guard hosted the 41st meeting of the executive committee of the Paris Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control in Loutraki from 19 - 23 May 2008.

Port State Control is a check on visiting foreign ships to see that they comply with international rules on safety, pollution prevention and seafarers living and working conditions. It is a means of enforcing compliance where the owner and flag State have failed in their responsibility to implement or ensure compliance. The port State can require defects to be put right, and detain the ship for this purpose if necessary. It is therefore also a port State's defence against visiting substandard shipping.

Regional Port State Control was initiated in 1982 when fourteen European countries agreed to co-ordinate their port State inspection effort under a voluntary agreement known as the Paris Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control (Paris MoU). Current membership includes 27 countries. The European Commission, although not a signatory to the Paris MoU, is also a member of the Committee.

The new inspection regime (NIR) will introduce full coverage of visiting ships and a more risk-based method of ship selection and thereby a more effective use of resources. It will also strengthen current banning measures and the training for inspectors.

Inspection reports are recorded on a central database SIRENaC located in St Malo - France, available for search and daily updating by MoU member countries. Inspection results can be viewed on the Paris MoU public website and are also provided to the Equasis public database.

The Secretariat of the MoU is provided by the Netherlands Ministry of Transport, Public works and Water Management and located in The Hague.

For more information on the Paris MoU on Port State Control please consult our Internet Website on the following address: www.parismou.org