



MARITIME SAFETY COMMITTEE
84th session
Agenda item 11

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SHIP DESIGN AND EQUIPMENT

Definition of the term “bulk carrier”

Submitted by the Community of European Shipyards' Associations (CESA)

SUMMARY

<i>Executive summary:</i>	This document provides comments concerning the draft interpretation of the term “bulk carrier”. In particular, CESA is concerned that the interpretation given in paragraph 1.3.2 provided in the draft MSC resolution will invalidate the bulk carrier definition in SOLAS regulation IX/1.6 completely.
<i>Strategic direction:</i>	2
<i>High-level action:</i>	2.1.1
<i>Planned output:</i>	2.1.1.2
<i>Action to be taken:</i>	Paragraph 9
<i>Related documents:</i>	MSC 84/11/2, MSC 84/11/3 and DE 50/25/4

Introduction

1 This document is submitted in accordance with paragraph 4.10.5 of the Guidelines on the organization and method of work of the Maritime Safety Committee and the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MSC-MEPC.1/Circ.1) and provides comments on document MSC 84/11/2 on the definition of the term “bulk carrier”, submitted by Norway.

Discussion

2 The annex to document MSC 84/11/2 contains a draft MSC resolution providing new material for the interpretation of the term “bulk carrier”, which has been developed by a group of experts during DE 51. Although CESA appreciates the continued efforts to advance the matter, European shipbuilders have doubts that the draft paragraph 1.3.2 provides the necessary clarification.

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3 The definition provided in SOLAS regulation IX/1.6 makes use of design specifics of a dedicated bulk carrier, namely single deck, top-side tanks and hopper tanks, and refers to the intention to primarily carry dry cargo in bulk.

4 It is obvious that, against the background of the diversity of ship types and varying cargoes transported, this simple design and cargo-based definition might require interpretation. But this has to be done by the incorporation or exclusion of specific constructional features and/or cargoes.

5 The interpretation provided in paragraph 1.3.2 of the annex to document MSC 84/11/2, however, invalidates the bulk carrier definition of SOLAS regulation IX/1.6 completely by stating that the design specifics used in the definition are not relevant for the decision whether a ship is a bulk carrier or not.

6 CESA would like to raise the concern that such an approach would finally destroy any defining power of SOLAS regulation IX/1.6, opening up the opportunity to apply chapter XII requirements on virtually any ship type that might occasionally transport bulk cargoes without providing clear guidance on the criteria upon which such a decision would be based.

7 To avoid confusion for ship designers world-wide, CESA would like to recommend the further exploration of the alternative approach of defining design specifics to indicate that a ship is primarily used for non-bulk cargoes. Examples are:

- .1 the installation of cranes and other types of (un)loading equipment designed for unitized cargo should be interpreted as an indication that the ship is not primarily used for the transportation of bulk cargoes;
- .2 the arrangement of step-like discontinuities in the fore and aft parts of the inner hull that correspond to the dimensions of standard containers should be interpreted as an indication that the ship is primarily used for the transportation of containers;
or
- .3 the arrangement of a 'tween deck should be interpreted as an indication that the ship is primarily used for the transportation of unitized general cargo.

8 Some of these features have already been introduced into the discussion by the DE Chairman through document DE 50/25/4. CESA recommends taking this contribution into account when the Committee decides on the preferred way ahead.

Action requested of the Committee

9 The Committee is invited to consider the views presented and take action as appropriate.
