



SUB-COMMITTEE ON STABILITY AND
LOAD LINES AND ON FISHING VESSELS
SAFETY
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Agenda item 11

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DAMAGE STABILITY REGULATIONS FOR RO-RO PASSENGER SHIPS

Comment on the report of the SDS correspondence group

Submitted by Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the European Commission

SUMMARY

<i>Executive summary:</i>	This document provides comments on document SLF 52/11/1 and requests that the Sub-Committee await the outcome of further research on possible rectification measures
<i>Strategic direction:</i>	2 and 5
<i>High-level action:</i>	2.1.1, 5.1.1 and 5.2.1
<i>Planned output:</i>	-
<i>Action to be taken:</i>	Paragraph 14
<i>Related documents:</i>	MSC 84/22/12; SLF 51/17 and SLF 52/11/1

Introduction

1 This document provides comments on document SLF 52/11/1 and is submitted in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 4.10.5 of the Guidelines on the organization and method of work (MSC-MEPC.1/Circ.2).

2 MSC 84 considered document MSC 84/22/12, agreed to refer the document to the SLF Sub-Committee and instructed SLF 51 to consider this document under the agenda item "Any other business", where the matter was discussed as reported in SLF 51/17.

3 This document points to the outcome of the SDS Correspondence Group set out in document SLF 52/11/1, where it was found that the majority of the group was in favour of further research on this issue.

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Background

4 The EU Member States and the European Commission submitted a joint document (MSC 84/22/12) to MSC 84, proposing a new high priority work programme item with a view to incorporating specific ship stability rules for ro-ro passenger ships into SOLAS. The co-sponsors outlined their concerns about the new SOLAS 2009 ship stability regulations, asking specifically that the IMO agrees to revisit these regulations to ensure that the issue of water on deck is adequately addressed within the new regulations.

5 At its eighty-fourth session in May 2008, the MSC decided to include, in the work programme of the Sub-Committee, a high priority item on “Damage stability regulations for ro-ro passenger ships”. The overall intent of this exercise was to ensure that the issue of water on deck for ro-ro passenger ships is adequately addressed within the revised SOLAS chapter II-1.

6 The Sub-Committee, at its fifty-first session, re-established the SDS (Subdivision and Damage Stability) correspondence group and drew up terms of reference to enable the issue to be examined in detail by the group.

The terms of reference comprised the following:

- .1 Taking into account discussions in plenary at SLF 51 and documents MSC 84/22/12 and MSC 84/22/23, the correspondence group is instructed to:
 - 1.1 examine the impact of the damage stability requirements of the SOLAS 2009 amendments on ro-ro passenger ships, in comparison with the SOLAS 1990 regulations in association with the Stockholm Agreement;
 - 1.2 define criteria to be used for the evaluation of the two approaches and determine whether the level of safety between them is generally equivalent;
 - 1.3 assess existing and new studies on the subject as well as design experience;
 - 1.4 if it is found that safety levels are not generally equivalent, identify possible rectification measures; and
 - 1.5 submit a report to SLF 52 under the agenda item “Damage stability regulations for ro-ro passenger ships”.
- .2 In this connection, the Sub-Committee encouraged all parties that have carried out studies on the subject to forward relevant information to the above correspondence group.

7 The correspondence group has now reported back its findings to SLF 52. The majority of correspondents consider amendments to SOLAS 2009 may be necessary, with most believing they should be based on further research work.

8 There is little agreement as to the most appropriate rectification measures, for which more research is considered to be needed. While one correspondent was against temporary interim measures as research could provide a more definitive answer, another suggested awaiting the measures resulting from the current Safe Return to Port discussions. Two correspondents pushed for some urgent rectification measures.

9 The European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) carried out a first study, which concluded that, the SOLAS 2009 stability regulations do not account for the accumulation of water on a vehicle deck. This study was reported to the correspondence group and is available at the following web address: <http://www.emsa.europa.eu/end185d007d002d003.html>. EMSA is currently letting a project to broaden the scope to different sizes and types of ro-ro passenger ships to arrive at more comprehensive conclusions. The contractor is to provide one or more proposals to upgrade the current rules supported by comprehensive explanation and technical evidence, as well as proposing an appropriate Model Test Method to verify compliance of ship designs with the new requirements.

10 For the time being and pending the findings of the IMO, the European Community has not repealed its legislation concerning the Stockholm Agreement, and therefore the EC Member States continue to apply it to ro-ro passenger ships engaged in regular international services to and from community ports.

Comments

11 Document SLF 52/11/1 indicates that there is no consensus as yet on rectification measures. However, by opting for particular solutions, a large number of the participants have recognized the need for improvement in the current regulations.

12 The co-sponsors are concerned to ensure that the Sub-Committee agrees to await the outcome of further research in this field, particularly since the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) has just launched a major study on this issue, which should provide greater insight into the problem, as well as on the need for possible rectification measures. This study is expected to produce preliminary data by the end of 2010 and its final conclusions to be available in 2011.

13 Should a clear need for specific rectification measures emerge, early agreement on such measures would be helpful. To that end the co-sponsors put forward this submission.

Action requested of the Sub-Committee

14 The Sub-Committee is invited to:

- .1 confirm that, having taken into account the findings of the correspondence group, it would be necessary also to take on board further ongoing research on this issue;
- .2 for this purpose, allow the Correspondence Group to continue its work;
- .3 note the ongoing research by the European Maritime Safety Agency; and
- .4 consider how best to ensure that the difficulties identified for specific ship types and designs are addressed in the interim.