

# Press release

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9 October 2020

## **VIRTUAL PARIS MOU 53<sup>RD</sup> COMMITTEE MEETING, COPING WITH COVID-19 CIRCUMSTANCES**

The Paris Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control (Paris MoU) held its 53<sup>rd</sup> Committee meeting by virtual means from the 28<sup>th</sup> of September to the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October 2020. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Brian Hogan.

One of the priority elements discussed was the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on port state control. The port calls and number of inspections decreased substantially in the period from March to June as a consequence of restrictive measures resulting from COVID-19. However, port state control efforts have increased since June.

The Committee discussed the impact of the COVID-19 situation and noted that the Paris MoU had already acted on the situation by issuing a Circular (PSCircular 97) on the resumption of inspection efforts. This Circular urges the Paris MoU member authorities to apply an enhanced focus, during all types of inspections, on MLC requirements, in particular on Seafarers Employment Agreements, SEAs, and on the repatriation of seafarers. While the gradual resumption of port state control efforts are visible, the Committee felt that attention should be paid to possible effects on the harmonised system of inspections. To that end, a task force was established to analyse the impact and to determine if any actions are needed for the medium and longer term.

The Committee recalled its earlier decision, as a result of COVID-19, to postpone all concentrated inspection campaigns (CICs) by one year, and the resulting re-scheduling of the CIC on Stability that was planned for 2020 to 2021. The Committee also agreed to an Inspection Campaign on the Polar Code in 2022.

Furthermore, following last year's decision, the Committee decided how to share inspection data in bulk to registered users by publishing it on the Paris MoU website. The general public will be informed in due course when this data will be available and how to access it.

The Committee also discussed the outcome of the joint CIC on Emergency Systems and Procedures, held from 1 September 2019 until 1 December 2019. The compliance by the industry was, in general, recorded as being satisfactory.

The Committee also recalled its earlier adoption of the 2019 Annual Report, including the White, Grey and Black List and the performance list of recognised organizations. These lists were taken into account for the calculation of the Ship Risk Profile from 1 July 2020.

The Committee re-elected Mr. Brian Hogan (Ireland) as Chairman and elected Mr. Naim Nazha (Canada) as vice-Chairman.

The virtual meeting was attended by the members of the Paris MoU, the European Commission, EMSA, Montenegro, observers from the Abuja MoU, Caribbean MoU, Indian Ocean MoU, Mediterranean MoU, US Coast Guard, Riyadh MoU, Tokyo MoU and representatives from ILO and IMO.

On behalf of the maritime authorities, Mr. Hogan concluded the meeting by remarking that significant progress has been made on port state control issues both regarding the COVID-19 situation and on the longer term during this meeting. The virtual meeting as such was a significant achievement in itself. He thanked all member authorities, the European Commission, EMSA, the Paris MoU Secretariat and the observers for their contribution and the spirit of co-operation shown by all who attended the virtual meeting.

## Contact

Mr. Luc Smulders  
Secretary-General  
Paris MoU on Port State Control

PO Box 16191  
2500 BD The Hague  
The Netherlands

Tel: +31 (0)6 1535 9772  
E-mail: [luc.smulders@parismou.org](mailto:luc.smulders@parismou.org)  
Web-site: [www.parismou.org](http://www.parismou.org)

## Notes to editors:

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

The Paris MoU is supported by a central database THETIS hosted and operated by the European Maritime Safety Agency in Lisbon. Inspection results are available for search and daily updating by MoU Members. Inspection results can be consulted on the Paris MoU public website and are published on the Equasis website.

The Secretariat of the MoU is provided by the Netherlands Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management and located in The Hague.

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