



# ECSA

European Community Shipowners' Associations

## **INTEGRATED EUROPEAN UNION POLICY FOR THE ARCTIC**

### **ECSA POSITION PAPER**

*December 2016*

**The integrated European Union policy for the Arctic region adopted earlier this year aims to establish a coherent and comprehensive approach on matters where the Arctic region has an impact on the EU and vice versa. The European Community Shipowners' Associations (ECSA) welcomes the adoption of this policy and believes that the three priority areas identified cover all topical Arctic matters. Climate change and environment, sustainable development and international cooperation all deserve equal attention. ECSA also appreciates that the EU supports the efforts to implement the International Code for ships operating in polar waters (Polar Code) as adopted by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO).**

**The Polar Code sets a mandatory and uniform regulatory framework for ships navigating in the area, ensuring maritime safety and environmental protection for shipping operations. It is unlikely though that the Arctic will be immediately accessible as sea ice disappears. Shipowners encounter challenges in polar shipping such as polar darkness, poor charts, lack of infrastructure and navigation control systems and low search-and-rescue capability. ECSA is pleased that these issues are among the points addressed in the integrated European Union policy. Prior to any follow-up actions taken in the context of the integrated policy, the EU should continue following the work of the IMO and consult the Arctic States within the Arctic Council.**

Maritime transport in the Arctic has attracted widespread attention because of the region's growing strategic importance. The development of technology that enables operations in hostile and remote environments has revitalized the potential of new transport routes in the region. These developments have drawn interest from the shipping community as an opportunity to cut economic costs and reduce CO2 emissions.

A year-round ice-free Arctic Ocean is however not likely as sea ice will always reform during winter. Ice properties and coverage will therefore vary greatly within the region. Only 18 vessels navigated in the Northern Sea Route during 2015. The route is available to shipping for about 8-10 ice-free weeks during the summer season. Apart from the climate factors, shipowners also encounter many other challenges, such as polar darkness, poor charts, lack of critical infrastructure and navigation control systems as well as low search and rescue capability.

### ***The Polar Code***

Precautions need to be taken to ensure safety of life at sea and the sustainability of a highly sensitive environment is not compromised. The International Code for ships operating in polar waters (Polar Code), adopted by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), will enter into force in January 2017 and applies to ships operating in Arctic and Antarctic waters.

European shipowners have emphasized that a mandatory and uniform regulatory framework is a prerequisite to ensure maritime safety and environmental protection, as polar shipping grows in volume and diversifies in the coming years. This is the single, most expeditious solution to achieve coordination and harmonisation of national legislation. The mandatory nature of the Polar Code will guarantee a level playing field.

The risk-based approach of the Polar Code will indeed boost the level of confidence in the safety and environmental performance of shipping. As of 2017, vessels will be carrying onboard the Polar Ship Certificate stating the adequacy of the vessel to navigate in the region as well as the Polar Water Operational Manual. The latter is an essential tool in evaluating the anticipated range of operating conditions and hazards to ensure that the decision making process onboard is adjusted accordingly.

The *infographics* annexed to this paper illustrate the Polar Code requirements in terms of environmental protection and ship safety.

### ***EU added value***

European shipowners appreciate that within the integrated European Union policy, the EU supports the efforts to implement the Polar Code. While the IMO remains the prime regulator for the shipping industry, ECSA endorses the actions included in the policy that will concretely improve polar shipping conditions and help overcome the challenges mentioned above. For the European Shipowners, the EU could particularly add value in the following areas:

#### *Supporting the development of critical maritime infrastructure*

A well-defined regulatory regime should be accompanied by adequate reinforced infrastructure and technology in a region where extreme weather conditions prevail. The EU confirms in its policy that will explore the merits of strengthening links to the Arctic through trans-European networks. European Shipowners support the use of EU funding for infrastructure projects that will lead to improved transport connections. The EU could also play a significant role in satellite observation and search and rescue infrastructure for defined incident scenarios. The resources of the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) on maritime surveillance and vessel traffic monitoring could be expanded to arctic waters.

### *Stimulating the knowledge for the region*

The EU has established itself as a key supporter of the Arctic region and could play an essential role in gaining a better understanding of the developments the region is facing. This could be achieved by investing in research about the area and the seabed of Arctic waters. The EU could invest in improved navigation aids, accuracy of nautical charts, weather forecasts, monitoring of drifting ice and icing conditions. ECSA is therefore pleased that the EU is expected to maintain its current funding levels for Arctic research. The European Shipowners endorse the EU-PolarNet initiative, the use of EU space programmes and additional research through Horizon 2020.

### *Protecting the Arctic climate*

ECSA welcomes the actions identified in the policy that protect the Arctic climate, particularly the implementation of the EU's CO<sub>2</sub> commitments according to the Paris agreement. ECSA also welcomes the EU commitment to contribute to international efforts to limit sulphur emissions that further accelerate climatic changes in the Arctic. IMO has also contributed considerably into the achievement of these goals. IMO recently agreed on a roadmap for developing a comprehensive IMO strategy on reduction of GHG emissions. In addition, IMO agreed on global cap on the content of sulphur in marine fuel as of 2020 which will deliver a dramatic reduction in sulphur emissions by shipping worldwide and improve local air quality in coastal areas.

ECSA has also noted EU discussions concerning consideration of a ban on the use of heavy fuel oil (HFO) as bunker fuel and a ban on the transportation of oil on tanker vessels in the Arctic. Under the Polar Code ships are already encouraged not to use or carry heavy fuel oil in the Arctic. ECSA recalls that carriage of heavy fuel oils was extensively considered and addressed during the development of the recently implemented IMO Polar Code. The IMO Polar Code provides an effective framework for dealing with this matter. In summary, the risk of accidents involving oil spill is addressed through:

- (i) SOLAS requirements for double hull tanker construction;
- (ii) Provisions concerning ice strengthening; and
- (iii) The requirement for fuel tanks on new ships constructed from 01 January 2017 to be situated at least 760mm inside the outer hull plating of the ship when the ship is intended to be operated in ice covered waters.

### *Coordinating with the Arctic States by recognising their special responsibilities*

Given the importance of the Arctic region and the significant changes underway there, the EU should continue cooperating with Arctic states to identify common positions and solutions on issues such as climate change, environmental protection and scientific research. ECSA therefore endorses the actions identified in the integrated European Union policy to that end. However, ECSA believes that the EU should refrain from establishing additional fora. Instead, the EU should stimulate its presence in existing platforms; the IMO and the Arctic Council. This would reduce overlapping and lead to better coordination and ocean governance. ECSA therefore anticipates the full implementation of the EU observer status in the Arctic Council, which is the leading intergovernmental Arctic forum.

ECSA also urges the EU to continue consulting the Arctic States and monitor closely IMO discussions, prior to any future actions taken in the context of the integrated European Union policy for the Arctic.

### *Increasing awareness about operators' contribution to the development of the area*

Shipping and energy extraction depend on both local and global acceptance of increased industrial activity in the Arctic. Investment in relationships is imperative for local and global acceptance of increasing industrial activities in the region. From a maritime perspective, increasing awareness about IMO actions taken in terms of maritime safety and sustainability of operations is crucial. Confidence can be built through EU information campaigns and public discussions where the main actors could present their activities and positive contributions to the development of the area. The establishment of an Arctic information center, possibly in Brussels, could also be considered by the EU. Such center would operate as a network and provide EU citizens, institutions, companies and Member States with Arctic information.

The European Community Shipowners' Associations (ECSA) was founded in 1965 and represents the interests of the national shipowners' associations of the EU and Norway. ECSA works to ensure that shipping industry can best serve European and international trade and commerce in a competitive and free business environment, to the benefit of both shippers and consumers. European shipowners control 40% of the global commercial fleet.

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# HOW THE **POLAR** CODE PROTECTS THE ENVIRONMENT

## OIL



**DISCHARGES**  
Discharge into the sea of oil or oily mixtures from any ship is prohibited



**STRUCTURE**  
Double hull and double bottom required for all oil tankers, including those less than 5,000dwt (A/B ships constructed on or after 1 January 2017)



**HEAVY FUEL OIL**  
Heavy fuel oil is banned in the Antarctic (under MARPOL). Ships are encouraged not to use or carry heavy fuel oil in the Arctic



**LUBRICANTS**  
Consider using non-toxic biodegradable lubricants or water-based systems in lubricated components outside the underwater hull with direct seawater interfaces

## INVASIVE SPECIES



**INVASIVE AQUATIC SPECIES**  
Measures to be taken to minimize the risk of invasive aquatic species through ships' ballast water and biofouling

## SEWAGE



**DISCHARGES I**  
No discharge of sewage in polar waters allowed (except under specific circumstances)



**TREATMENT PLANTS**  
Discharge is permitted if ship has an approved sewage treatment plant, and discharges treated sewage as far as practicable from the nearest land, any fast ice, ice shelf, or areas of specified ice concentration



**DISCHARGES II**

- Sewage not comminuted or disinfected can be discharged at a distance of more than 12nm from any ice shelf or fast ice
- Comminuted and disinfected sewage can be discharged more than 3nm from any ice shelf or fast ice

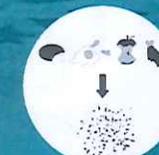
## GARBAGE



**PLASTICS**  
All disposal of plastics prohibited (under MARPOL)



**FOOD WASTES I**  
Discharge of food wastes onto the ice is prohibited



**FOOD WASTES II**  
Food wastes which have been comminuted or ground (no greater than 25mm) can be discharged only when ship is not less than 12nm from the nearest land, nearest ice shelf, or nearest fast ice



**ANIMAL CARCASSES**  
Discharge of animal carcasses is prohibited



**CARGO RESIDUES**  
Cargo residues, cleaning agents or additives in hold washing water may only be discharged if they are not harmful to the marine environment; both departure and destination ports are within Arctic waters; and there are no adequate reception facilities at those ports. The same requirements apply to Antarctic area under MARPOL

## BACKGROUND INFO

- ❄️ THE INTERNATIONAL CODE FOR SHIPS OPERATING IN POLAR WATERS WILL ENTER INTO FORCE ON 1 JANUARY 2017
- ❄️ IT APPLIES TO SHIPS OPERATING IN ARCTIC AND ANTARCTIC WATERS; ADDITIONAL TO EXISTING MARPOL REQUIREMENTS
- ❄️ IT PROVIDES FOR SAFE SHIP OPERATION AND PROTECTS THE ENVIRONMENT BY ADDRESSING THE UNIQUE RISKS PRESENT IN POLAR WATERS BUT NOT COVERED BY OTHER INSTRUMENTS

## DEFINITIONS



### SHIP CATEGORIES

Three categories of ship designed to operate in polar waters in:

- A) at least medium first-year ice
- B) at least thin first-year ice
- C) open waters/ice conditions less severe than A and B



**FAST ICE:** Sea ice which forms and remains fast along the coast, where it is attached to the shore, to an ice wall, to an ice front, between shoals or grounded icebergs

**ICE SHELF:** A floating ice sheet of considerable thickness showing 2 to 50m or more above sea-level, attached to the coast

## CHEMICALS



**DISCHARGES**  
Discharge of noxious liquid substances (NLS) or mixtures containing NLS is prohibited in polar waters

# WHAT DOES THE POLAR CODE MEAN FOR SHIP SAFETY?

## EQUIPMENT



**WINDOWS ON BRIDGE**  
Means to clear melted ice, freezing rain, snow, mist, spray and condensation



**LIFEBOATS**  
All lifeboats to be partially or totally enclosed type



**CLOTHING I**  
Adequate thermal protection for all persons on board



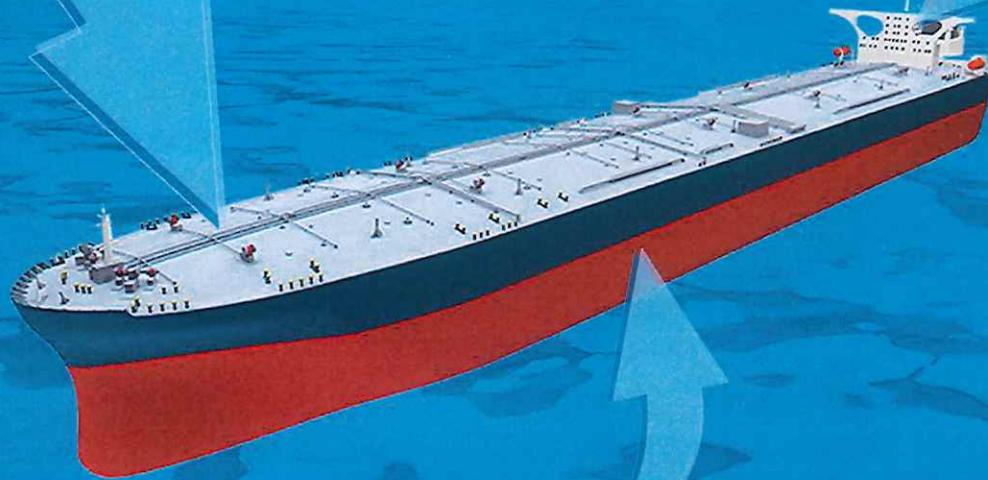
**CLOTHING II**  
On passenger ships, an immersion suit or a thermal protective aid for each person on board



**ICE REMOVAL**  
Special equipment for ice removal: such as electrical and pneumatic devices, special tools such as axes or wooden clubs



**FIRE SAFETY**  
Extinguishing equipment operable in cold temperatures; protect from ice; suitable for persons wearing bulky and cumbersome cold weather gear



## OPERATIONS & MANNING



**NAVIGATION**  
Receive information about ice conditions



**CERTIFICATE & MANUAL**  
Required to have on board a Polar Ship Certificate and the ship's Polar Water Operational Manual



**TRAINING**  
Masters, chief mates and officers in charge of a navigational watch must have completed appropriate basic training (for open-water operations), and advanced training for other waters, including ice

## DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION



**SHIP CATEGORIES**  
Three categories of ship which may operate in Polar Waters, based on:  
A) medium first-year ice  
B) thin first-year ice  
C) open waters/ice conditions less severe than A and B



**MATERIALS**  
Ships intended to operate in low air temperature must be constructed with materials suitable for operation at the ships polar service temperature



**INTACT STABILITY**  
Sufficient stability in intact condition when subject to ice accretion and the stability calculations must take into account the icing allowance



**STRUCTURE**  
In ice strengthened ships, the structure of the ship must be able to resist both global and local structural loads

## BACKGROUND INFO

❄️ THE INTERNATIONAL CODE FOR SHIPS OPERATING IN POLAR WATERS WAS ADOPTED NOVEMBER 2014 BY THE IMO MARITIME SAFETY COMMITTEE

❄️ IT APPLIES TO SHIPS OPERATING IN ARCTIC AND ANTARCTIC WATERS

❄️ THE AIM IS TO PROVIDE FOR SAFE SHIP OPERATION AND THE PROTECTION OF THE POLAR ENVIRONMENT BY ADDRESSING RISKS PRESENT IN POLAR WATERS AND NOT ADEQUATELY MITIGATED BY OTHER INSTRUMENTS