

Press release

21 May 2024

PARIS MOU 57TH COMMITTEE MEETS IN MADRID, SPAIN

The Paris Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control (Paris MoU) held its 57th Committee meeting in Madrid, Spain from 6 to 10 May 2024. The meeting was formally opened by Mr. Benito Núñez Quintanilla, Secretary-General of Maritime and Air Transport, and chaired by Mr. Brian Hogan.

The Paris MoU Committee discussed the results of the Concentrated Inspection Campaign (CIC) on Fire Safety, held from 1 September to 30 November 2023. Overall, compliance appeared to be satisfactory. The result was less favourable on two specific topics; maintenance of fire doors (9.3 % non-compliance) and performing fire drills (9.2% non-compliance). The Paris MoU expects the industry to give these issues the necessary attention. Future CICs will cover Crew Wages and Seafarer Employment Agreements under MLC (2024), Ballast Water Management (2025) and Cargo Securing (2026).

During 2023, the Paris MoU conducted, on a trial basis, Focused Inspection Campaigns (FICs) aimed at improving the effectiveness of inspection campaigns. These focused inspections have now been carried out on Pilot Transfer Arrangements, Electronic Chart Display Information Systems (ECDIS) and on the Galley. The Paris MoU will continue to implement these FICs, announced and unannounced.

The Committee also discussed new developments on several topics. One of these was the approval of the new port State control instruction for the inspection of ships carrying Industrial Personnel (IP Code). This new Code has been developed by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and will enter into force from the 1st of July 2025 and will facilitate the development of offshore renewable energy projects.

Another instruction that was approved was a new training policy regarding Port State Control Officers (PSCOs). This training policy has been revised to align training efforts with developments within and beyond the Paris MoU and thereby maintain a sustainable level of qualified PSCOs.

Furthermore, the Paris MoU approved the incorporation of a new relevant instrument: the Hong Kong International Convention for the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships. The Paris MoU will enforce this instrument as of 1 July 2025.

The Paris MoU Committee also recalled the entry into force of several MLC amendments on 23 December 2024. In addition, attention was drawn to the Mediterranean Sea Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides and Particulate Matter that will soon become effective. To create additional awareness, the Committee agreed that a letter of warning should be issued during inspections in the 1st quarter of 2025.

Several recent developments have raised some concerns for the Paris MoU, including apparent attempts by some flag States to conclude bilateral agreements with port States to avoid detentions. The Paris MoU Committee stressed that such attempts are not acceptable.

Another concern discussed was the occurrence of fraudulent seafarer certificates. The Paris MoU Committee urged members to continue to pay attention to this issue in order to uphold safety at sea. The Committee also called on the shipping industry itself to keep a close eye on the matter.

The Paris MoU Committee also discussed the integration of fisheries control within the framework of port State control and noted the importance of keeping safety considerations separate from fisheries to ensure the effectiveness of port State control.

Related to the statistics published in the 2023 Annual Report, the Committee considered it important to monitor the continuously higher level of the detention percentage (3.81%).

The meeting was attended by the members of the Paris MoU, the European Commission, EMSA, and by observers from the Abuja MoU, Black Sea MoU, Caribbean MoU, Indian Ocean MoU, Mediterranean MoU, Tokyo MoU, US Coast Guard and the ILO. The Riyadh MoU, the Viña del Mar Agreement and representatives from IMO participated on-line.

The large participation of observers from international and European organisations showed the co-operative strength of the international port State control community.

On behalf of the maritime authorities, Mr. Hogan concluded the meeting by remarking that significant progress had been made in port State control, both in the short and longer term. He thanked Spain for hosting the meeting and 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 meeting.

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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.