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'I' ITEM NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee (Part 1)
No. Cion doc.:	15039/21
Subject:	Draft submission by Member States and the Commission to the eighth session of the International Maritime Organization's Sub-Committee on Ship Systems and Equipment commenting on the report of the Correspondence Group on Fire Protection (SSE 8/6) – <i>Endorsement</i>

I. INTRODUCTION

1. On 21 December 2021, the Commission transmitted to the Council a Staff Working Document containing a draft submission to the 8th session of the Sub-Committee on Ship Systems and Equipment (SSE 8) of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) commenting on the report of the Correspondence Group on Fire Protection contained in IMO document SSE 8/6. The deadline for transmitting the draft submission to the IMO Secretariat is 7 January 2021.
2. The purpose of the submission is to suggest further discussions on a limited number of highly technical issues since some of the proposals in the Correspondence Group's report may be in need of some clarification or final edits before adoption. It should be noted that agenda item 6 was initially included on the agenda of the SSE Sub-Committee on the basis of a proposal by the EU Member States and the Commission¹ to the IMO and has been the subject of several EU submissions since then.

¹ Doc. 11295/16.

II. WORK WITHIN THE COUNCIL

3. The draft submission was briefly presented by the Commission to the Shipping Working Party at its meeting on 7 December 2021. It was examined at the informal meeting of the members of the Shipping Working Party on 13 December 2021, based on an advance copy of the Commission Staff Working Document and a document from the Presidency suggesting some procedural and editorial modifications².
4. Taking into account written and oral comments by delegations, a revised Presidency document was issued³, with an invitation to delegations to provide further comments. No further comments were received and the Presidency therefore concluded that consensus had been reached on the text as set out in the Annex. It was also agreed that the Presidency would be allowed to indicate at the time of transmission that the document may be released to the public by the IMO secretariat prior to SSE 8.
5. However, there is no agreement on who should submit the draft submission. The Commission maintains the view that the draft submission should be made by "the European Commission on behalf of the European Union", while the Member States consider that it should be made by the Member States and the European Commission.
6. Given the urgency and importance of the matter, it was agreed at working party level to propose to transmit the submission in the name of the Member States and the European Commission, while taking good note of the position of the Commission.
7. Finally, the Shipping Working Party reiterates its request to the Commission that proposals for submissions to the IMO should be presented timely so as to allow for a proper examination of procedural and substantive issues in at least two working party meetings.

² WK 15249/21.

³ WK 15249/21 REV 1.

III. CONCLUSION

8. In the light of the above, the Permanent Representatives Committee is invited to endorse the text of the draft submission in the annex, with a view to its transmission by the Presidency to the International Maritime Organization by 7 January 2021.
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SUB-COMMITTEE ON SHIP SYSTEMS AND
EQUIPMENT
8th session
Agenda items 6 and 15

SSE 8/6
XX December 2021
Original: ENGLISH
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**REVIEW OF SOLAS CHAPTER II-2 AND ASSOCIATED CODES TO MINIMIZE THE
INCIDENCE AND CONSEQUENCES OF FIRES ON RO-RO SPACES AND SPECIAL
CATEGORY SPACES OF NEW AND EXISTING RO-RO PASSENGER SHIPS**

**UNIFIED INTERPRETATIONS OF PROVISIONS OF IMO SAFETY AND ENVIROMENT
RELATED CONVENTIONS**

Comments on document SSE 8/6

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

SUMMARY

Executive summary: This document provides comments on document SSE 8/6, the report of the Correspondence Group on Fire Protection, and suggests further technical discussions.

*Strategic direction,
if applicable:* Not applicable

Output: 6.36 and 6.1

Action to be taken: Paragraph 12

Related documents: SSE 8/6, SSE 7/21, SSE 7/WP.4, SSE 7/6/1, SSE 7/6

Introduction

1 This document is submitted in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 6.12.5 of *Organization and method of work of the Maritime Safety Committee and the Marine Environment Protection Committee and their subsidiary bodies* (MSC-MEPC.1/Circ.5/Rev.2). It comments on document SSE 8/6 containing the report of the Correspondence Group on Fire Protection.

Background

2 The Correspondence Group on Fire Protection was instructed to continue the significant work that has been ongoing on this agenda item since SSE 4. In particular, the Group had to take into account the comments made and decisions taken at SSE 7 (SSE 7/WP.4 and SSE 7/21, paragraphs 6.22 and 16.27).

Comments

3 The work that had to be undertaken by the Correspondence Group was extremely extensive and the additional time due to the postponement of SSE 8 was used to complete seven rounds of correspondence. It should be stated that the coordinator and the members of the group did an excellent job and the co-sponsors support most parts of the work so far.

4 However, the subject in question is highly technical and the format of written correspondence was not ideal to provide technical explanations. As a result, it appears that some of the proposals may be in need of some final edits before adoption. For example, some specific technical matters need to be further discussed at SSE 8, like the issues of side nozzles and the proposals for the FSS Code 7.2.5 (Annex 6 of SSE 8/6).

5 Another issue that was postponed but could be resolved after brief technical explanations was the “rate of temperature rise” topic as described in paragraph 26 of SSE 8/6. In the FIRESAFE II study, which has been the main reference for the work of this group, it is stated that *“For the open ro-ro space, the fibre optic linear heat detection system showed capacities to detect a fire faster than a conventional point heat detection system. The improved performance was judged to be mainly attributed to the used detection criterion, based on a rate of temperature rise instead of a given critical temperature.”*

6 It is understood that the relevant proposal on the rate of temperature rise criterion in SSE 7/6/1 (part 8 in the Annex) was drafted having in mind that a technical discussion would take place in order to also allow linear heat detection which was proven to have the improved performance mentioned above. This item was, however, not discussed during SSE 7 and, consequently, it is listed as an item not discussed in detail (paragraphs 23 and 24 of SSE 8/6). As a result, the Correspondence Group decided not to proceed with this topic.

7 Furthermore, further clarity may be achieved on elements such as steel dampers, deluge nozzles, fire-resistant materials and closing devices.

8 Furthermore, the co-sponsors note that significant results were reached in relation to provisions applicable to existing ships, and these are supported. While it is understood that amendments applicable to existing ships are more difficult to be implemented, the co-sponsors recall that, apart from the side openings Risk Control Option (RCO), all the other proposals for existing ships that were included in SSE 7/6/1 had been found to be cost-effective in the FIRESAFE II study, and as reviewed by the FSA EG in SSE 7/6.

9 The co-sponsors further note that within these cost-effective RCOs, the implementation of water monitors for existing ships was discussed in the Correspondence Group but this item was not supported, also pending further clarification on certain technical aspects. While providing for such clarifications, it should have emerged that, for example, such new requirements should not result in increased demand for pump capacity or increased dimensions of existing piping.

10 It is understood that when the recommendations of a successfully reviewed FSA are brought to the attention of a working or Correspondence Group, they could still be rejected or altered after an in-depth technical review. However, such a technical review specific to this RCO for existing ships did not take place. The co-sponsors are of the view that omitting a cost-effective RCO based on brief replies during a Correspondence Group would undermine the general trust in the FSA methodology.

Summary

11 While acknowledging the excellent work performed by the Correspondence Group and reflected in SSE 8/6, there is a need to hold further technical discussions at SSE 8 on some specific items, as discussed above, and on the options defined for SOLAS regulations II-2/20.6.2.1 (42.1 of SSE 8/6). The co-sponsors, mindful of the need to conclude this work, would suggest that other amendments, however, should not be re-opened for discussion, also having in mind the fact that SSE 8 will be held in hybrid format.

Action requested of the Sub-Committee

12 The Sub-Committee is invited to consider the comments provided and take action, as appropriate.
