

CESA AND SEA EUROPE REGRET A FURTHER DELAY IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BALLAST WATER MANAGEMENT CONVENTION

CESA and SEA Europe regret that IMO MEPC 71 has decided to further delay the implementation of the Ballast Water Management Convention (BWMC).

“CESA and SEA Europe have consistently promoted the implementation of the ballast water management convention.”, said Christophe Tytgat, the associations' Secretary General, adding that *“the delay by another two years from 2022 to 2024 – in other words 7 years from today – means that 20 years will pass from the adoption of the convention in 2004 to its full implementation. This is very hard to understand and it is not an encouraging signal for all our members who have been investing a lot of money and energy to do what they were invited to do by the decision-makers”*.

The Convention was adopted to solve the serious problem with invasive species, which disturbs the fragile marine environment. Maritime equipment manufacturers were invited to develop the appropriate technology and they did so over the past years, bearing in mind the tight timeline that had been adopted. However, whilst all stakeholders were fully aware of the requirements of the convention, the most recent decision to further date the implementation date cannot be read otherwise than to mean that those who have done nothing to reach the goals of the convention, have been given more influence in the process than those who have lived up to the objectives of the convention and those that have invested in the equipment and technologies to put the requirements of the convention in place.

The arguments brought forward for every delay have been the same: the ballast water management systems are not at all reliable, the capacity to install them is limited, the standards for these systems are not harmonised, or the expense for installing ballast water management systems is high. All these arguments were already brought forward in 2004 and they are still used in 2017 to delay the implementation of the BWMS until 2024.

Mr. Tytgat stressed that *“The efforts made by maritime equipment manufacturers and first moving ship owners have obviously not paid off and the investments made by them have visibly not been appreciated, even though manufacturers have developed ballast water management systems that had been tested and certified, and that had been installed by first moving shipowners. The most recent decision of the IMO to further delay the implementation of the BWMS – without ensuring that the postponement is used fruitfully – will undoubtedly mean a further deterioration of the marine environment by invasive species coming from ships' ballast water. But it also gives a very wrong (political) signal”*.

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