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**CIRCULAR LETTER 67/2016**  
**20 December 2016**

**CONSIDERATION OF PORT STATE CONTROL ISSUES RELATED TO  
ECDIS CARRIAGE AND OPERATION**

References:

- A. IHO Document HSSC7-07.2A - *IMO Activities affecting HSSC*
- B. IHO Document HSSC8-07.2A - *IMO Activities affecting HSSC*
- C. IHO CL 13/2016 dated 10 March - *Report on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Session of the IMO Sub Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue (NCSR3)*
- D. IMO Document III 3/5/5 dated 12 May 2016 - *Measures to harmonize port State control (PSC) activities and procedures worldwide - Poor navigational practices*
- E. IMO Document III/14 dated 15 August 2016 - *Report to the Maritime Safety Committee and the Marine Environment Protection Committee*

Dear Hydrographer,

1. As reported at the 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Hydrographic Standards and Services Committee (HSSC-7) in 2015 (see reference A) and again at HSSC-8 in November this year (see reference B), it appears that mariners are facing increasing instances of misunderstanding by port State control (PSC) authorities in relation to inspections concerning the carriage and operation of Electronic Chart Display and Information Systems (ECDIS) and Electronic Navigational Charts (ENC).
2. Following an indication in the IHO report submitted to the 3<sup>rd</sup> session of the Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue (NCSR) of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) on the apparent and inappropriate use of the ECDIS Data Presentation and Performance Check by PSC authorities and vetting inspectors, the NCSR agreed to invite the IMO Maritime Safety Committee to note the issue and refer it to the Sub-Committee on Implementation of IMO Instruments (III) (see reference C).
3. At its 3<sup>rd</sup> session (18-22 July 2016), the III considered a related submission by Australia regarding observed poor navigational practices and difficulties in operating electronic navigation equipment on some vessels visiting Australian ports (see reference D). Australia proposed that additional guidance be developed for PSC officers on the topic of electronic navigation systems. The III noted the intended future conduct of a "Concentrated Inspection Campaign" (CIC) by the Paris and Tokyo PSC Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the implementation of Chapter V of the international Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), including ECDIS-related requirements, and the recent development of PSC Guidelines on ECDIS by the Paris MoU. III agreed to consider further the development of IMO PSC Guidelines on ECDIS and invited relevant submissions at its 4<sup>th</sup> session in July 2017 (see reference E).
4. The IHO Secretariat contacted the Secretariat of the Paris MoU to obtain a copy of their PSC guidelines on ECDIS. The IHO Secretariat was advised that "*the provision of Paris MoU internal information is assessed on an individual basis and based on a policy agreed by the PSC Committee*". Therefore, the request will be considered at the next meeting of the Paris MoU PSC Committee in May 2017.

5. Considering these matters, HSSC-8 agreed that the ENC Standards Maintenance Working Group (ENCWG) should investigate the development of technical guidance for PSC bodies to assist them in inspecting ECDIS-related requirements in a consistent and informed way. One suggestion was to consider stage 2 of the revision of IHO Publication S-66 - *Facts about Electronic Charts and Carriage Requirements* as a potential reference in which to place such guidance.

6. As instructed by the HSSC (action HSSC8/56 refers), this Circular Letter invites the Hydrographic Offices of the IHO Member States to liaise with their national Maritime Administration and provide feedback on PSC issues related to the carriage and operation of ECDIS for further consideration by the ENCWG at its next meeting from 20 to 22 March 2017.

7. In order for the ENCWG to be in a position to consider further these matters in a constructive manner, you are kindly invited to provide the IHO Secretariat at [cl-lc@iho.int](mailto:cl-lc@iho.int) **no later than 15 February 2017** with all relevant information related to inspections by port State control authorities of ECDIS carriage and operation (including ENC related issues). The relevant information includes, but is not limited to, current and standard practices and check-lists, reports on the main issues inspectors are facing, reports on any possible lack of information and training, and feedback from mariners and ship operators. Your views and recommendations on ways and means of providing improved guidance for port State control authorities, if and as appropriate, are also welcome.

On behalf of the Secretary-General  
Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gilles Bessero', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Gilles BESSERO  
Director

Copy: Chair, ENCWG