

Resolution 27 (EC-LIX)

SHIP OWNERS AND MASTERS' CONCERNS WITH REGARD TO VOS DATA EXCHANGE

THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL,

Recalling:

(1) The request by the Executive Council at its fifty-seventh session to the JCOMM Ship Observations Team (SOT) to assess the risks associated with allowing Voluntary Observing Ships (VOS) callsigns and position data being made freely available on external Websites not maintained by the National Meteorological or Hydrometeorological Services (NMHSs), and to provide options to address the issue, as appropriate,

(2) The request by the Executive Council at its fifty-eighth session to the Secretary-General to establish, as a high-priority issue, a high-level dialogue, involving Members affected, the International Maritime Organization, the International Chamber of Shipping, shipping companies, and relevant organizations and technical commissions, in order to determine if there is a link between VOS data availability on external Websites and piracy and other ship security issues; to review the implementation and impact of masking; and to propose a general and universally acceptable solution to the issue that would address ship owners and masters' concerns as well as the data monitoring and quality information feedback requirements, for consideration by the Executive Council at its fifty-ninth session in 2007,

(3) The recommendation by the Executive Council at its fifty-eighth session to Members who, in consultation with ship owners, wish to protect the identity of VOS may implement ship callsign masking, for a trial period of one year, a process which would facilitate open distribution of masked data on the Global Telecommunication System,

(4) The recommendation by the Executive Council at its fifty-eighth session to all Members implementing such a process to provide for the secure exchange of ship callsigns and report affected by the masking process, so as to assist in resolving real-time monitoring and climate analysis problems,

Noting:

(1) The outcome, recommendations, and agreed principles by the high-level WMO/IMO Consultative Meeting (Geneva, February 2007), and its recommendation to seek a universally accepted global and standardized solution using an agreed international system of masked callsigns, yet to be developed,

(2) The outcome and recommendations by the second session of the JCOMM Expert Team on Marine Climatology (Geneva, March 2007) and the fourth session of the JCOMM Ship Observations Team (Geneva, April 2007),

(3) The trial ship masking schemes implemented by a few Members and their technical implications for quality monitoring, and climate related applications,

Recognizing:

(1) That it is difficult to establish a relationship between VOS data availability on external Websites and piracy and other ship security issues, but that there is a perception that a connection exists in the shipping industry, and that such security concerns have to be addressed,

(2) That there are also concerns on commercial considerations amongst the shipping companies,

Acknowledging:

(1) The seriousness of the situation, which if not adequately addressed could lead to a decline of ships participating in the Voluntary Observing Ship (VOS) Scheme, and therefore a significant decrease of VOS reports available on the Global Telecommunication System,

(2) The concerns expressed by ship owners and masters with regard to VOS data exchange,

Recommends:

(1) Members who, in consultation with ship owners, wish to protect the identity of VOS may extend the trial period for the implementation of their current callsign masking schemes as per Resolution 7 (EC-LVIII) – Ship owners and masters' concern with regard to VOS data exchange;

(2) Members who, in consultation with ship owners, wish to protect the identity of VOS and have not implemented such schemes yet, may implement a callsign masking scheme, as a process which would facilitate open distribution of masked data on the Global Telecommunication System;

(3) All Members implementing such a process to:

(a) Provide for the secure exchange of International Telecommunication Union callsigns and reports affected by the masking process;

(b) Assist in the timely resolving of real-time monitoring and climate analysis problems;

(c) Minimize the technical implications on the Quality Monitoring of Marine Data set by the Commission for Basic System Lead Centre;

(4) All Members implementing such a process, to seek long-term solutions in a way consistent with recommendations raised by the high-level WMO/IMO Consultative Meeting (Geneva, February 2007), the second session of the JCOMM Expert Team on Marine Climatology (Geneva, March 2007), and the fourth session of the JCOMM Ship Observations Team (Geneva, April 2007);

(5) To continue the trial masking schemes in successive years, unless decided otherwise by the Executive Council, while pending the universal acceptance and implementation of a more suitable solution and the Commission for Basic System migration to table-driven codes;

Requests the Secretary-General, as a high-priority issue:

(1) To continue the high-level dialogue, involving affected Members, the International Maritime Organization, the International Chamber of Shipping, shipping companies, and other relevant organizations and technical commissions, for example JCOMM, the Commission for Basic Systems and the Commission for Climatology, in order to review the implementation and impact of masking;

(2) To propose a general and universally acceptable solution to the issue that would address ship owners and masters' concerns as well as the operational, data monitoring and quality information feedback, and climate requirements;

(3) To bring this resolution to the attention of all persons concerned.
