

I. IMO Facilitation Committee (FAL) 50th session (FAL 50)

The 50th session of FAL was held from March 23rd to 27th, 2026, at IMO Headquarters in London. The meeting highlights are as follows:

- 1. Agree to develop a new maritime digitalization strategy and prepare a draft for approval and endorsement by the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC), the Marine Environmental Protection Committee (MEPC), and the Legal Committee (LEG).**

Digitalization has the potential to enhance efficiency across multiple sectors of the maritime industry, including ship design, ship operations, and port operations; it also serves as a key driver of maritime decarbonization.

The IMO has identified the need to develop a comprehensive strategy for maritime digitalization. This initiative aims to establish digitalization as a holistic policy for the Organization, integrating it into the Strategic Plan and applying it to all committees and relevant operational processes. The FAL Committee has been instructed to lead these efforts.

FAL 50 agreed, in principle, to the draft "Strategy on Maritime Digitalization" and agreed to submit the draft to MSC 111, MEPC 85, and LEG 114 for consideration, with the objective of adoption at the 35th session of the Assembly (A 35) in 2027.

FAL 50 further agreed to re-establish a Correspondence Group following MSC 111 in May 2026 to continue developing the IMO Strategy on Maritime Digitalization and authorized the group to develop an action plan to support its implementation.

The Correspondence Group was also instructed to assess whether and how the Strategy aligns with the Revised Strategic Plan for the Organization (2024-2029), including reviewing the necessity for relevant amendments or integration with existing strategic directions. The Group will submit its report to FAL 51.

- 2. Initiate work on the development of a goal-based, non-mandatory "Maritime Cyber Code." This Code is expected to be completed by 2028 and should be flexible enough to allow Member States to make adjustments based on regional or national requirements.**

As technical complexity continues to rise, it is essential for the maritime sector to implement measures to prevent and respond to existing and emerging threats and vulnerabilities arising from digitalization, system integration, and automation.

The IMO has decided to develop a goal-based, non-mandatory "Maritime Cyber Code," scheduled for completion in 2028. This Code is intended to build upon the IMO's existing work to support the maritime sector in addressing emerging cybersecurity

challenges, covering the secure operation of port facilities, ship operations, and the ship-to-shore interface. Upon completion of the Code, an "Experience Building Phase" (EBP) is expected to be established to gather experiences and lessons learned from Member States during implementation. These efforts will be led by the FAL Committee, with technical support from the MSC, and will integrate the expertise of both committees.

Furthermore, FAL 50 agreed to recommend the establishment of a Correspondence Group to formulate a roadmap for the development of the "Maritime Cyber Code," define its scope of application, and initiate the drafting of the Code. The Correspondence Group is expected to be established following Council approval at its 137th session (C 137) in July 2026 and will submit its report to FAL 51. Subject to the approval of C 137, an Intersessional Working Group is expected to be established in 2027 to accelerate the development process of the Maritime Cyber Code.

3. **Adopted the new version of the *IMO Compendium on Facilitation and Electronic Business* (IMO Compendium), which incorporates several new data sets**

The IMO Compendium aims to harmonize the vast amount of electronic data exchanged between ships, ports, and other stakeholders. It includes **IMO data sets and the IMO reference model** ([Note 1](#)), providing a common format and semantics for relevant data. This framework enables the information systems (IT systems) of various stakeholders to exchange data efficiently based on consistent semantics, while supporting the standardization and coordination of Maritime Single Windows (MSW) and Port Community Systems (PCS).

FAL 50 reviewed the progress of the IMO Compendium and identified it as a permanent and continuous output supporting maritime digitalization. It is recommended that the associated costs be incorporated into the IMO regular budget starting from 2028.

The Committee approved the updated version of the IMO Compendium, which includes revised and new IMO data sets, sub-models, and code lists. The Committee also instructed the 14th session of the Expert Group on Data Harmonization (EGDH 14) to develop additional data elements and sub-models related to "medical fitness certificates" for submission to FAL 51 for consideration.

Furthermore, the Committee agreed to continue work on the high-level business process flows and descriptions for the IMO data sets and re-established the Correspondence Group to report to FAL 51. Additionally, the Committee reported on the establishment of the IMO Compendium Code List Platform and invited Member States to conduct testing and provide feedback.

Current IMO Compendium and the updated version:

The current version of the IMO Compendium (approved by FAL 49) comprises:
1. 29 data sets; 2. Approximately 950 data elements; 3. 85 business rules; and 4. 42 code lists maintained by the IMO.
Updated version of the IMO Compendium has been approved and includes the following newly added data sets:
1. Meteorological and oceanographic observations 2. Letter Bill (in accordance with the Universal Postal Convention and its Regulations currently in force); 3. Ship Sanitation Certificates (in accordance with the International Health Regulations); 4. Information related to seafarers and STCW certificates (currently under development).

4. Approved the resolution of the amendment to the FAL Convention, the content are related to public health, which may enter into force in 2028.

(1) Public health and quarantine

To align with the amendments to the International Health Regulations (2005) adopted through World Health Assembly resolution WHA77.17 (2024), the Committee adopted a resolution to amend Recommended Practice 6.24 ([Note 2](#)) in the Annex to the Convention on Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic (FAL Convention). The amendments relate to measures to facilitate crew changes, provide vaccinations, and ensure access to medical care during a public health emergency of international concern, and are expected to enter into force on January 1st, 2028.

(2) Advance Passenger Information (API)/Booking and Reservation Information (BRI)

To enhance the effectiveness of border control and operational efficiency, last year, FAL 49 agreed in principle to introduce the Advance Passenger Information (API) into the FAL convention, aiming to strengthen the management of crew and passenger information. However, there are still some implementation issues that need to be addressed, particularly regarding the impact of replacing IMO FAL Form 5

(Crew List) and Form 6 (Passenger List) ([Note 3](#)) with an API, and whether the provision of an API should be mandatory.

The discussions are progressing, and FAL 50 has approved a draft resolution on the collection of API and BRI. This draft will be submitted to the next meeting (FAL 51) for adoption, with an expected entry into force date of January 1st, 2029. The current plan is to incorporate API as a new standard, though the decision to collect API data will remain at the discretion of individual Member States. Furthermore, Booking and Reservation Information/Passenger Name Record (BRI/PNR) will be introduced as a recommended practice, with implementation at the discretion of Contracting Governments. To support this flexible framework, a new standard has been drafted stipulating that public authorities should not require the transmission of a Crew List or Passenger List if an API declaration has already been requested.

(3) Mandatory requirement for cybersecurity in Maritime Single Windows

When a ship's arrival at or departure from a port, the port authorities may require the submission of various declarations ([Resolution FAL.14\(46\)](#)). Since 2024, these declarations have been transmitted through a standardized and harmonized electronic environment (portal) known as a "Single Window" (FAL.5/Circ.42/Rev.4). Given the high sensitivity of this information, the risk of cyberattacks has become a matter of significant concern.

The Committee approved a draft resolution to amend the FAL Convention by adding a new Standard 1.4([Note 4](#)) to establish a framework for mandatory cybersecurity measures to safeguard Maritime Single Windows, with adoption expected at FAL 51. This amendment requires Contracting Governments to implement mandatory cybersecurity measures to protect their Maritime Single Windows in accordance with their national legislation. The amendment will be submitted for adoption at the next session (FAL 51) and is expected to enter into force on January 1, 2029.

FAL 50 agreed to commence follow-up work on amending the Annex to the FAL Convention, using the entry into force date of the International Health Regulations amendments as a benchmark. This item will be included in the FAL 51 agenda, with a target completion date in 2027.

Additionally, FAL 50 considered a resolution intended for the ILO's Special Tripartite Committee (STC 5), reflecting amendments to the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, and their potential impact on shore leave regulations within the FAL Convention. FAL 50 also recommended that Member States submit proposals for a new output on this matter.

- Note 1: **IMO Data Set:** A set of individual data elements used to identify and define the data elements that support regulatory or business processes related to international shipping (e.g., gross mass of cargo items, date and time of arrival, next port of call, etc.);
IMO Reference Model: A model that serves as a guide for the development of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) systems.
- Note 2: This suggests that each State government incorporate the IMO's guidelines on seafarers' vaccination into their domestic vaccination plans and ensure that seafarers can receive necessary medical care during public health emergencies of international concern.
- Note 3: IMO. CREW LIST (IMO FAL Form 5).
<https://wwwcdn.imo.org/localresources/en/OurWork/Facilitation/Documents/FAL%20FORM%205.docx>;
IMO. PASSENGER LIST (IMO FAL Form 6).
<https://wwwcdn.imo.org/localresources/en/OurWork/Facilitation/Documents/FAL%20FORM%206.docx>
- Note 4 "Contracting Governments and their relevant authorities shall implement mandatory cybersecurity measures to safeguard single windows, taking into account their national legislation. Such measures shall be technologically neutral."

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II. IMO Legal Committee (LEG), 113th session (LEG 113) Meeting Highlights

The Legal Committee (LEG) is primarily responsible for handling all legal matters of the IMO. This includes liability and compensation issues related to ship operations, such as damage, pollution, passenger claims, and shipwreck salvage. The committee also deals with matters related to seafarers, including their fair treatment and illegal maritime activities that affect navigation safety.

The 113th session of the Legal Committee (LEG 113) was held from 13th to 17th April 2026 at the IMO Headquarters in London. The highlights of the meetings are as follows:

1. **Confirmed that there are still insufficient provisions in the existing liability and compensation systems for dealing with alternative fuel accidents, and it is agreed to establish a communication team to continuously discuss the subsequent handling direction of the liability and compensation system when alternative fuels are used in ship operations and propulsion.**

LEG 112 approved a new work output to review the applicability of existing IMO liability and compensation regimes to alternative fuels used for ship operation and propulsion. A working group composed of relevant stakeholders completed a comprehensive review and comparison of the scope of current liability conventions, including:

- (1) *International Convention on Civil Liability for Bunker Oil Pollution Damage, 2001 (BUNKERS 2001)*;
- (2) *International Convention on Civil Liability for Oil Pollution Damage (CLC)*;
- (3) *International Convention on Liability and Compensation for Damage in Connection with the Carriage of Hazardous and Noxious Substances by Sea, 2010 (HNS Convention)*;
- (4) *Convention on Limitation of Liability for Maritime Claims (LLMC)*;
- (5) *Nairobi International Convention on the Removal of Wrecks, 2007 (NAIROBI WRC 2007)*.

The abovementioned analysis compared the types of damage covered, the applicable substances, the liability limits, the liable entities, and the amendment procedures for each convention. The key findings are as follows:

- (1) **BUNKERS 2001**: Applies only to hydrocarbon mineral oils and does not cover personal injury or death.
- (2) **CLC**: Applies only to persistent hydrocarbon mineral oils (whether carried as cargo or fuel) and does not cover personal injury.
- (3) **HNS Convention**: Does not cover third-party claims.

- (4) **LLMC**: While there are relatively sufficient liability regulations for alternative fuels transported as bulk cargo and already included in the scope of the convention, fuels used for ship propulsion or operation are not yet covered.

Overall, the current regime is unable to provide an adequate response to incidents involving alternative fuels used for ship operation or propulsion.

LEG 113 agreed to establish a Correspondence Group on this matter. The mandate of the group is to further deliberate on proposals regarding the following items from documents submitted during this session:

- (1) Establishing a separate, independent work output to study a civil liability regime for nuclear fuels;
 - (2) Conducting a gap analysis to identify substances not yet covered by the HNS Convention;
 - (3) Deliberating on proposals to incorporate alternative fuel liability and compensation regimes into the BUNKERS Convention;
 - (4) Reviewing amendment systems to ensure that "Indigenous Cultural Loss" is also covered;
 - (5) Taking scientific dimensions into account for the classification of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG);
 - (6) Developing guidelines on how the BUNKERS Convention applies to biofuel blends and synthetic fuels;
 - (7) Exploring possible pathways for defining liability for biofuel blends, including:
 - ① Developing a unified interpretation of the term "hydrocarbon mineral oil" in the CLC and BUNKERS Conventions;
 - ② Establishing a new international regime covering biofuels and biofuel blends;
 - ③ Proposing transitional guidance by the LEG, building upon the technical work on biofuel blends to be completed by the MEPC in 2025;
 - ④ Establishing voluntary industry agreements regarding biofuel incidents, with content modeled after existing liability conventions, to fill institutional gaps before a complete regime is established.
2. **Continue to monitor the trend of the rapid increase in seafarer abandonment cases; reiterate the importance of the financial security mechanism under the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC, 2006) and the joint IMO/ILO database; and agree to promote model Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to support more rapid and coordinated resolution of cases.**

It seems the Seafarer abandonment remains a core concern for LEG 113. Relevant data indicates that the number of reported cases continues to increase, with 310 new incidents reported in 2025 alone. Statistical data from early 2026 further shows that the situation is continuing to deteriorate. The discussions during the meeting once again underscored the importance of effective financial security arrangements under the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC, 2006). The Committee emphasized that compliant financial security has clearly demonstrated its value in improving the plight of seafarers, facilitating more rapid case resolution, and mitigating operational disruptions and reputational risks for shipping companies.

LEG 113 urged flag States and port States to strengthen enforcement, including enhanced oversight through Port State Control (PSC) mechanisms. Simultaneously, industry stakeholders were encouraged to ensure more robust compliance measures within ship ownership and management structures.

Furthermore, the Committee agreed to move forward with the establishment of a set of model Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to support a more rapid and coordinated response to seafarer abandonment cases. This initiative aims to provide shipowners, ship managers, and insurers with greater predictability when navigating complex cases across multiple jurisdictions.

3. Adopt the "*Guidelines on Ship Registration*," consolidating proposals related to the fraudulent registration of ships, fake flags, and best practices for ship registration. The guidelines cover matters including ownership verification, ship identity verification, security features of certificates, oversight of insurance, and information exchange through the Global Integrated Shipping Information System (GISIS), and will be issued via a LEG circular.

LEG 113 has considered two proposals for guidelines: **the first** focused on preventing fraudulent ship registration and fraudulent registries through due diligence, while **the second** focused on general matters related to ship registration.

LEG 113 The Committee agreed to consolidate the substantive content of the two documents into a single set of "*Guidelines on Ship Registration*," aimed at assisting flag States in strengthening their registration procedures, detecting fraudulent documents, and eliminating fraudulent registrations.

These guidelines apply to the registration of commercial ships engaged in international shipping and are consistent with the sovereign rights and obligations of States to establish ship registration systems as defined in Articles 91 and 92(1) of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The guidelines seek to remain neutral regarding specific registration models and assist all Administrations—whether they operate national or open registries—in ensuring compliance with IMO regulations and preventing "Flags of Non-Compliance" (FONC) practices.

The structure of the guidelines is as follows:

- (1) Governance of registration procedures: Specifies requirements for domestic legal and administrative frameworks, including the designation of a competent authority and the requirement to establish formal oversight mechanisms for private registry operators.
- (2) Registration procedures: Specifies requirements for establishing and maintaining documented procedures and quality management systems to cover all stages of ship registration.
- (3) Due diligence on ownership: Specifies requirements for verifying ship ownership (including beneficial ownership) and requires proof of deletion from the previous registry prior to permanent registration.
- (4) Sanctions list screening: Specifies requirements for cross-checking against United Nations and appropriate national sanctions lists. These requirements must be complied with prior to registration and periodically thereafter while under the flag.
- (5) Ship identity verification: Specifies requirements for conducting due diligence, including cross-checking the ship's IMO number with the Continuous Synopsis Record (CSR) and independent databases.
- (6) Issuance of certificates, security features, and verification tools: Specifies requirements for incorporating unique identifiers and security features into certificates and verification tools to facilitate real-time authentication.
- (7) Oversight of ship class and insurance: Specifies the establishment of procedures to verify valid class certificates and mandatory insurance/financial security. Recognized Organizations (ROs) acting on behalf of the flag State should issue relevant certificates under proper authorization and appropriate oversight.
- (8) Information sources: Specifies requirements for using reliable information sources and tools to cross-check a ship's history, ownership, class, operational records, and sanctions status during the registration process.
- (9) Cooperation and information sharing: Specifies that States should exchange information on registration status, ownership records, insurance data, and deletion notices through platforms including GISIS, to prevent "flag hopping" and the re-registration of sub-standard ships.
- (10) Implementation of IMO instruments: Specifies that the effective implementation of international conventions should be ensured, including pre-registration inspections as required by UNCLOS Article 94(4)(a) and the establishment of oversight programs for Recognized Organizations.

The above guidelines will be issued around the LEG circular. At the next meeting, LEG 114 will continue working on this topic and may propose additional supplementary

guidelines on PSC and the role of coastal states in combating illegal ship registration agencies.

- 4. Update the work plan for Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS) within the terms of reference of the Legal Committee (LEG). It was confirmed that substantive regulatory work at the LEG level will not be progressed until the adoption of the non-mandatory MASS Code by MSC 111. A follow-up assessment will be conducted later to determine whether treaty amendments or interpretations are needed.**

(1) Current Promotion Strategy

- Status of Roadmap Review: At this session, LEG 113 decided not to revise the current MASS Roadmap for the time being.
- Threshold for Concrete Action: The Committee reached a consensus that LEG will only take subsequent substantive and concrete actions following the formal adoption of the "Non-mandatory MASS Code" by MSC 111.

(2) Key Tasks during the Experience Building Phase (EBP)

LEG 113 acknowledged the various views expressed and agreed that, during the MASS Experience Building Phase, priority should be given to developing practical interpretations or guidelines for existing international maritime insurance

(I) Key Maritime Instruments Involved

To ensure legal applicability, the following treaties still need to be studied:

- i. Civil Liability and Compensation:
 - *International Convention on Civil Liability for Bunker Oil Pollution Damage* (BUNKERS 2001)
 - *International Convention on Civil Liability for Oil Pollution Damage* (CLC 1969)
 - *International Convention on Liability and Compensation for Damage in Connection with the Carriage of Hazardous and Noxious Substances by Sea* (HNS), 1996 (and its 2010 Protocol) (HNS PROT 2010)
- ii. Passenger Carriage, Salvage, and Wreck Removal:
 - *Athens Convention relating to the Carriage of Passengers and their Luggage by Sea* (PAL PROT 2002)
 - *Nairobi International Convention on the Removal of Wrecks* (NAIROBI WRC 2007)
 - *International Convention on Salvage* (SALVAGE 1989)
- iii. Safety and Suppression of Unlawful Acts:
 - *Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Maritime Navigation (SUA)*, 1988 (and its 2005 Protocol) (SUA 2005)

(II) Key Review Points for the Non-mandatory MASS Code

Future work will focus on examining the following regulations within the Code concerning MASS:

- Responsibility: Clarifying the legal distribution of responsibility between automated systems and human operators.
- Operations & Survey: Establishing operational, survey, and certification processes that align with the characteristics of automation.
- Emergency Response: Reviewing the implementation mechanisms for Search and Rescue (SAR) obligations in unmanned or remotely controlled scenarios.

5. Noted the substantial progress made toward the entry into force of *the 2010 HNS Protocol*.

Following the deposit of instruments of ratification by Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden, the threshold of 12 States has been achieved.

The next step is to verify whether the total contributing cargo has reached 40 million tonnes; if the conditions are fulfilled, the Protocol is expected to enter into force as early as 30 November 2027.

- Entry into Force Milestones and Implementation Preparations for the 2010 HNS Protocol:

(1) Entry into Force Timeline and Key Thresholds

- Contracting States threshold: With Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden depositing their instruments of ratification, the initial requirement of 12 Contracting States has been met.
- Cargo volume verification: The IMO will review, by 31 May 2026, whether the total contributing cargo has reached the final threshold of 40 million tonnes.
- Expected date of entry into force: If the cargo threshold is met, the Convention is expected to enter into force as early as 30 November 2027 (i.e. 18 months after the conditions are fulfilled).

(2) Compulsory Insurance and Administrative Challenges

- Certification requirement: Upon entry into force, all HNS ships entering the territorial waters of Contracting States will be required to carry a certificate of compulsory insurance.
- Cross-border issuance: Contracting States must establish the necessary domestic legal framework to authorize their competent authorities to issue certificates to ships registered in non-Contracting States.

- **Administrative burden:** At the initial stage of entry into force, it is anticipated that up to 65,000 certificates may need to be issued within a very short period. States should make advance administrative preparations to avoid unnecessary delays for ships in port.

6. Continued to promote the Regulatory Scoping Exercise (RSE) for tackling sub-standard shipping.

- LEG 113 has approved a thematic approach to mapping available tools and institutional gaps within existing IMO regulations and re-established a correspondence group. Subsequent deliberations will focus on issues including ship registration, mandatory insurance, ship identification, AIS/LRIT, transparency of ship-to-ship (STS) transfer operations, and electronic certificates.
- **Core Objective:** The Regulatory Scoping Exercise (RSE) aims to identify provisions within the current IMO legal framework that can be used to combat substandard shipping and to precisely locate "institutional gaps" where existing regulations are insufficient, or enforcement is inadequate.
- **Methodology Approval:** LEG 113 approved the Correspondence Group's use of a "thematic approach" for the assessment, rather than a document-by-document review, and emphasized the need to clearly distinguish the boundaries of action between the Legal Committee (LEG) and other bodies (such as MSC or MEPC).

LEG 113 initially assesses the issue as follows:

(1) Ship Registration Processes and Documentation

- **Current Status:** Some resolutions (such as A.1142(31)) have provided A transparency framework, but the implementation level varies. The main reason is that some countries have not updated the ship registration contact information on GISIS.
- **Strategies:** Promote non-binding guidance or best practices for ship registration could support Flag States in strengthening their Due Diligence procedures and enhancing information-sharing requirements among registration authorities.

(2) Mandatory Insurance and Liability Coverage

- **Challenge:** Although there are conventions such as CLC 1992 and Bunkers 2001, it is difficult to verify the validity and credibility of insurance certificates in a timely manner in practice.
- **Recommendations:** Establishing a centralized module via GISIS to list insurers recognized by flag States would enhance transparency and help address these difficulties, also by sharing information on cases where specific insurers are rejected in various countries, as well as the reasons why they do not comply with the guidelines of [Circular LEG.1/Circ.16](#).

(3) Ship Identification and Historical Data

- **Problem:** The IMO Ship Identification Number Scheme is facing technical challenges regarding data accuracy and oversight, including duplicate records and incomplete information.
- **Enhancement:** Efforts should be made to strengthen governance, improve data quality, and enhance interoperability between databases, while utilizing the Continuous Synopsis Record (CSR) as a complementary tool for tracking dynamic changes in ownership and flag.

(4) Port State Control (PSC) and Related Compliance Monitoring Mechanisms

Existing instruments pertaining to port State control provide a sufficient legal basis for inspections; however, their effectiveness depends on consistent implementation. Issues related to ship flag transfer and temporary loss of flag are already being addressed in other IMO bodies. To avoid duplication, no additional PSC-related action is proposed within the Regulatory Scoping Exercise (RSE) at this time.

(5) Ship-to-Ship (STS) Transfer Operations and Other Activities Prone to Evasion of Oversight

- Ship-to-ship (STS) transfer operations are a potential area of concern regarding unlawful operations. MARPOL Annex I, Regulation 42, establishes notification requirements for STS operations within territorial seas and exclusive economic zones (EEZs); however, these do not apply to operations conducted on the high seas, constituting a potential gap that may be exploited by substandard vessels.
- Consequently, greater transparency of STS activities should be promoted, including exploring the possibility of voluntary or mandatory reporting by flag States. Such regulatory changes would fall primarily within the remit of other IMO bodies and must comply with jurisdictional limitations under international law.

(6) Vessel Tracking and Reporting Systems (AIS, LRIT)

- Ship tracking requirements under the SOLAS Convention, specifically **Automatic Identification System (AIS) and Long-Range Identification and Tracking (LRIT)**, play a critical role in monitoring ship movements. However, the non-use or manipulation of AIS information undermines regulatory effectiveness. LRIT provides an additional tool for flag States to monitor compliance, as its reporting is less susceptible to onboard interference.
- **Improving the utilization of existing tracking data and enhancing guidance on monitoring and response** could strengthen enforcement without requiring

new legal instruments. While the MSC manages the technical standards for VDES, AIS, and LRIT, the Legal Committee addresses legal implications arising from data manipulation regarding liability and the law of evidence.

(7) Electronic Certificates

Initiatives promoted by the FAL Committee—including electronic certificates, digital signatures, advance electronic information on cargoes and persons, and harmonized reporting forms—can assist flag States in identifying and combatting fraudulent documentation. The wider acceptance and use of electronic certificates in line with existing IMO guidance should be encouraged without the need for new mandatory instruments.

(8) IMO Member State Audit Scheme (IMSAS)

- The IMSAS was established under *the IMO Instruments Implementation Code* (III Code) and *the International Safety Management Code* (ISM Code), can contribute to detecting deficiencies in ship operation and management if audit results are effectively followed up and transparency is improved. However, no concrete proposals for new audit mechanisms have been made at this time.

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