



## IMO MARINE ENVIRONMENT DIVISION DEPUTY DIRECTOR LECTURES ON THE NEW AMENDMENTS TO MARPOL ANNEX II

Dr. Stefan Micallef, Deputy Director of the Marine Environment Division was recently at IMLI to deliver a lecture on the new amendments to MARPOL Annex II and the IBC Code which entered into force on 1 January 2007.



*Dr. Stefan Micallef lecturing on the new amendments to MARPOL Annex II and to the IBC Code*

Dr. Micallef described the structure of the revised MARPOL Annex II and its relationship to the consequential amendments to the IBC Code. He explained that MARPOL Annex II was originally adopted in 1973 at the same time as the MARPOL Convention and Annex I, but technical problems meant that many States had problems with ratification. In 1978 a protocol to the Convention was adopted and in order to encourage ratification of MARPOL it was agreed that States could become Party to the Convention by first implementing Annex I, with Annex II not being implemented until three years after the Protocol entered into force. This meant that MARPOL Annex II finally entered into force on 6 April 1987, by which time the provisions it contained were already 14 years old.

Shortly after its entry into force, it became clear that MARPOL Annex II was a rather unwieldy document and it was suggested that it could be beneficial to carry out an editorial review in order to make it easier to use. Concern was also being expressed at this time about the effect on the marine environment of certain products, most notably lypophylic substances (vegetable oil and animal fats),

and there were increasing calls for the regulations to be amended to prevent unregulated discharge of such substances. Advances in knowledge about marine pollution meant that it was becoming clear that properties not previously considered in the categorization of products should be given more weight, while others were perhaps not as important as had been thought. All these factors led the International Maritime Organization to embark on a complete overhaul of Annex II in the early 1990s.

The revision process thus encompassed a number of issues: 1) an editorial revision; 2) the re-evaluation of the hazard properties of products; 3) development of a new pollution categorization system (X, Y, Z and OS; products in the X category are deemed to present the most severe hazard); 4) criteria for assigning products to categories; 5) revision of stripping requirements; and 6) revision of discharge criteria.

MARPOL Annex II prescribes maximum amounts that may be left in tanks upon completion of unloading, known as “stripping limits”. Under the amended regulations, existing vessels are allowed to continue to strip as they had been designed to do (i.e. no retrofit), but vessels built from 2007 onwards would need to be designed and constructed to strip to 75 litres.

The old Annex II defined a number of special areas where discharge requirements were more stringent but in developing the new system it was agreed that the tightening up of requirements across the board, most notably in relation to stripping limits, meant that the special areas could largely be dispensed with. The revised MARPOL Annex II, therefore, identifies only one special area, namely the Antarctic, where all discharges are prohibited. This has helped to simplify the Annex, which was one of the aims of the revision process.

As a result of the re-evaluation exercise of the hazard properties of products and the new pollution categorization system, vegetable oils and animal fats which were previously carried in simple product tankers and discharged into the sea unrestrictedly are now required to be carried in chemical tankers with stringent requirements for discharge. At the time of negotiation, concerns were expressed by industry about the availability of tonnage to carry these products as vegetable oils and animal fats are high volume products. This concern was addressed through a specific regulation in MARPOL Annex II, specifically regulation 4.1.3 which allows an Administration to exempt ships certified to carry individual vegetable oils, subject to certain provisions relating to cargo tank location carrying that identified vegetable oil.

Dr. Micallef was previously Head of the Chemical & Air Pollution Prevention Section, Marine Environment Division and managed the Secretariat’s work for the revision of MARPOL Annex II and Annex III and the amended IBC Code including the work of the GESAMP/EHS Working Group as well as other working groups of the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) of IMO.

On 1 January 2007, he was appointed Deputy Director, Marine Environment Division, in charge of the Sub-Division for Pollution Response and Technical Co-operation Co-ordination. His responsibilities include, *inter alia*, all issues addressing oil and HNS preparedness, response and co-operation; co-ordination of all technical co-operation activities related to the protection of the marine environment; and relations with international Organizations regarding marine pollution prevention and control.

---

For further information please contact Ms. Josephine Uranza (Editor, IMLI e-News) at [publications@imli.org](mailto:publications@imli.org)