



Workshop Report

Ro-Ro Passenger Ships Fitted With Long Lower Holds

Lisbon, 27 March 2007

Report

EMSA Workshop on Ro-Ro Passenger Ships Fitted With Long Lower Holds Lisbon, 27 March 2007

Background

In accordance with the objectives and tasks as laid down in EMSA's founding Regulation (EC) 1406/2002 (as amended), as well as following the meeting of the Committee on Safe Seas (6th COSS) on 13th June, it was decided to establish this specific work shop.

According to the original initiative of UK prior and during the COSS meeting, the current damage stability rules are not sufficient for the determination of safety level on board Ro-Ro Passenger Vessels with long lower holds, especially in conjunction with the Directive 2003/25/EC, or the so called Stockholm Agreement. This would not only make the flag transfer of a vessel complicated, but also cause questions on the feasibility of the applied survivability standard in case of damage. Particularly, some of the flag states have been found applying variable interpretations of the existing stability rules, when others (UK) have increased their demands considerably above the SOLAS requirements.

Following the amendment for the agenda of COSS Working Group held on 30th October (7th COSS), the issue of future probabilistic stability regulation of SOLAS 2009, which will enter into force in Jan.2009, has been raised. Sweden stated that the Directive 203/25/EC of the Stockholm Agreement has to be revised, as a minimum, in order to be compatible with the new SOLAS 2009.

At the same time, the UK informed that based to their latest studies, they are not convinced that the new SOLAS 2009 can incorporate all possible damage stability cases relating to Ro-Ro passenger vessels with lower hold.

The discussion at the first subject workshop on 17th November 2006 centered on the two currently applied IMO stability rules, the SOLAS 90 and its alternative the IMO Res.A.265, as well as on the future SOLAS 2009 Regulation, their applicability and future evaluation.

The clear result of the first meeting was that the flooding of the lower hold, caused by possible damage of mandatory watertight bulkheads and deck of the hold, is not feasible to be taken in account with the damage stability calculation, as originally demanded by the UK.

As an short term alternative, Germany drafted a proposal for the calculation of floodable length curve of the new constructions, which would be used for the interim period, prior SOLAS 2009 enters in force. This and the available Member State data (the UK presentation of the meeting, the German and Swedish studies) were disseminated to the Member States for collecting opinions.

This second meeting of the subject working group continued the discussion of the long lower holds, the examination of the German proposal and the question on how to treat the existing ships, as well as the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement Regulations with the future rules.

Workshop Objectives

The Workshop had the following original objectives:

- to stimulate an exchange of views among EU experts and the Commission concerning the problems associated with different stability standards in use and the current practices for approval, carried out in the MS.
- to work towards a common understanding of some of the key issues identified in damage stability approval for the Ro-Ro vessels fitted with long lower holds.
- to look at the interrelationship between SOLAS 2009 and SOLAS 90 in conjunction with the Stockholm Agreement Regulation.

Workshop Programme

The workshop was chaired by Mr. Panagiotis Petropoulos Head of Unit D (Implementation of EU Maritime Legislation).

Mr. Richard Mason (European Commission, DG TREN) gave a welcome address and a short introductory speech.

17 MS participated in the Workshop. It is to be noted that Italy with a substantial number of RoPaxes under it's flag and Malta did not participate.

Workshop Minutes

The Workshop was divided into six sessions:

1. The first session was on the German proposal.

The objective of this session was to exchange views on the proposal which was made by Germany as an intermediate solution for the ships with Lower Longer Holds flagged in MS.

During the technical discussion it was noted that the German proposal has no research background and, even should an agreement on it be reached among the experts of the MS, the proposal would had to be tabled as a new working item at the IMO.

Bearing in mind the time constraints, the chairman concluded that all members agreed that the discussion on the German proposal has reached a deadlock and could not continue. The representatives of the MS concurred.

A proposal for common guidelines "Fulfilling SOLAS stability subdivision requirements" for the transfer of such ships between MS was presented.

This proposal gained support at the meeting. The commission will check the compatibility with the Transfer of Ships Regulation.

It was also agreed that the administrations will provide details of the method used under their flag for the interpretation of equivalent bulkheads and equivalent damage stability calculations.

2. The second session was on long lower holds on existing vessels.

The objective of the second session was to exchange views between EU experts on the feasibility of applying the Stockholm Agreement requirements on the basis of a flooded long lower hold.

After the previous discussion, it was found that problems encountered, especially the one of the transfer of vessels with lower longer holds between the Member States, would be solved by the presented guideline on "Fulfilling SOLAS subdivision requirement".

3. The third session dealt with the application of the SA in conjunction with SOLAS 2009.

Following a short discussion the chairman concluded that all participants agreed that even after 1 January 2009, existing ships built according to the SOLAS 90 as amended and with Stockholm Agreement Regulations will be allowed to continue operating according to the schedule presented in Directive 2003/25/EC, Art.7, while SOLAS 2009 would only apply to new ships.

4. The fourth session questioned the paper presented by the UK paper for the safe return to port of Large Passenger Ships (LPS), which could be considered applicable for Ro-Ro Passenger ships in general.

The chairman requested a brief introduction to the UK paper to clarify its current position and after a short discussion noted that the LPS project is still under development and that conclusions in relation with the RoPax vessels could not be drawn.

5. The fifth session discussed the possible options presented in the EMSA assessment report after the first meeting of November 2006, regarding the interrelationship between SOLAS 2009 and SOLAS 90 in conjunction with Stockholm Agreement.

The participants unanimously agreed to request the Commission to start the work for amending the directives 2003/24/EC and 2003/25/EC,.

Following this very clear position of the participants the Chairman concluded that the work of the technical group on this issue should be considered as concluded. The group would be called together again only in the case the results of the UK model tests are not supportive enough.

6. The sixth session dealt with the difficulty to apply SOLAS 2009 on smaller passenger vessels.

The chairman concluded that an update to Directive 98/18/EC for smaller passenger vessels has to be examined carefully.

Workshop Conclusions

The consensus from this workshop was that all members seemed content with the fact that there is no single solution to the damage stability question for long lower holds and that the existing technical interpretations applied by the MS are compatible with SOLAS. The remaining work concerning the dissemination of the information related to the correspondence group, as well as to the follow-up of MS studies, will complete the work of EMSA on this issue.

- The overall view was that the SOLAS 2009 has been proven to be as safe as, or safer than, the Stockholm Agreement Rules in conjunction with SOLAS 90.
- The upgrading of Directive 98/18/EC for the A Class vessels was envisaged.
- The participants urged an immediate start to the preliminary work on amending directives 2003/24/EC and 2003/25/EC. If the results of the studies turn out to be unsatisfactory, the group will be called together immediately.
- A consensus was reached on the gentlemen's agreement on the transfer of any Ro-Ro Passenger Ship with a long lower hold between the MS using the presented guideline "fulfilling SOLAS subdivision requirement". Its validity has to be checked by the Commission's Legal Service.

As requested by the MS, an early signal to ship builders will be the proposal to exempt new ships from the Stockholm Agreement as from 1 January 2009 and the application of SOLAS 2009.

Papers distributed:

1. IMO sub-committee SLF 45/3/3
2. WOD compared with GZ approach, by Sugmund Rusaas, DNV
3. Current UK position as reported to EMSA

Annexes:

1. Workshop Agenda.
2. List of Participants.
3. Two ways of fulfilling SOLAS subdivision requirements.

Agenda

Technical Meeting on Passenger Ship Safety

March 27, 2007

EMSA

Avenida Dom Joao II
Lote 1.06.2.5
1998-001 Lisboa

- 09h00 - 09h30: Welcome coffee, registration
- 09h30 - 11h45: Long Lower Holds – examination of the DE suggestion
- 11h15 - 11h30: coffee break
- 11h30 - 13h00: Long Lower Holds – existing ships
- 13h00 - 14h30: Lunch
- 14h30 - 16h15: SOLAS 2009 – Stockholm Agreement – Evolution of the studies provided by DE, SW and UK
- 16h15 - 16h30: Coffee break
- 16h30 - 18h00: Possible option for the next steps

Roro Ferries meeting 27th March 2007

Attendance list

Name	First Name	Country	Organisation	E-mail
Bruhns	Hendrik	Germany	Germanisher Lloyd	hendrik.bruhns@gl.group.com
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Attendance list

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Two ways of fulfilling SOLAS subdivision requirements

1. Floodable length with eq. bulkheads or eq. damage stability calculation.
2. IMO Res.A.265.

When there is a transfer of flag between MS, the receiving MS is allowed to require additional measures to ensure safety of ships with long lower holds if they have been approved according to alternative 1. This should however not go beyond the requirements according to alternative 2.