



Press Release Asia, Stronger Together

The Asian Shipowners' Association (ASA) held its 28th Annual General Meeting on 28th May 2019 in Bangkok, Thailand, hosted by the Federation of ASEAN Shipowners' Association (FASA) Thailand. Mr Bhumindr Harinsuit, the 28th ASA President, welcomed delegates of member associations and urged members to continue to stay united so that Asia remains stronger together. To prepare for the future, ASA will establish a new S Committee – Shipping Young Executive Committee (SYEC) to take the ASA forward and to prepare for succession.

Supporting seafarers' mental health

Mental health of the world's seafarers was highlighted by the ASA SC as a significant concern to be addressed by the industry. The ASA SC therefore encourages shipowners to consider providing internet connectivity for all seafarers. Such provision of facilities will enable seafarers to stay connected beyond the vessels, and may help manage this issue and is particularly important for attracting young seafarers.

Limitation of liability-Trade affected by Unilateral actions

The ASA SILC is deeply concerned by decisions made by Spain and France unilaterally, contravening the CLC and Fund Conventions, to which both States are parties. The uncertainties caused by such decisions may result in substantial costs to trade with these countries.

The ASA SILC advocates the industry proposal for a unified interpretation of the test for breaking the shipowner's right to limit liability under the IMO Liability Conventions already supported by 35 States. The ASA SILC calls for international conventions to be upheld as the success of the compensation regime depends on uniformity and consistency of application.

The Road to 2020

In 2008, the industry applauded when the IMO adopted amendments to MARPOL that could introduce a global sulphur cap – this was proof that the industry could govern itself with practical and progressive goal-based regulations. We are now a few short months from 1 January 2020, and whilst the ASA SNEC is confident that, in the long run, the shipping industry will eventually settle into a new equilibrium, a great deal of work needs to be done in the time remaining.

Fortunately, MEPC 74 met earlier this month and was able to demonstrate that it was up to the task of addressing most of the issues facing the industry, such as concerns over testing standards for compliant fuel.

There will undoubtedly be issues that crop up over the next few months and shipowners are concerned about the complex operational challenges and increased risks they may face post 1 January 2020. Nevertheless, the ASA SNEC is confident that the industry, working closely with their respective maritime administrations, the IMO and other stakeholders, will be able to navigate the future together.

Uphold Free Trade

The ASA SPC reiterated its serious concern over the implications of intensified trade frictions and protectionism developments. Trade-restrictive measures such as import restrictions and cargo reservation policies on the international transportation of energy products, raw materials and any others, would have negative impacts not only on the shipping industry, but also on the sustainable development and efficiency of a global economy. In this respect, the ASA SPC emphasises the points referred in the global shipping sector position papers, jointly produced earlier this month by ASA, ECSA and ICS, to support free trade principles and rule-based multilateral international trading system.

Prompt Enactment of the Hong Kong Convention

The ASA SRC reaffirmed the necessity for prompt enactment of the HK Convention, to increase the number of compliant yards available. The Convention is the only effective measure to regulate environmentally-sound recycling of ships globally. The ASA SRC welcomes the series of ratifications this year by Turkey, The Netherlands, The Republic of Serbia, Japan, Estonia and, most recently, Malta, which move us closer to the full enactment of the HK Convention.

Asia is the main arena for ship recycling, building and operations. Therefore, the ASA urges both China and India to promptly ratify the Convention as a key to satisfy the required conditions towards its enactment, for the protection of the global environment. The ASA will endeavor to motivate ship recycling associations in South Asia through regular dialogue, and encourage improvement of ship recycling and operational standards to achieve the earliest possible ratification by these countries.

Mr David Parmeter, Vice-President of ASA and Chairman of MIAL (Maritime Industry Australia Limited), was elected as the 29th ASA President. Captain Anoop Kumar Sharma, Chairman of INSA (Indian National Shipowners' Association) was elected as the Vice-President of ASA. The next ASA AGM will be held in Darwin, Australia.

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Editor's Note:

The Asian Shipowners' Association (ASA) is a voluntary organization of the shipowner associations of Australia, China, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Korea and the Federation of ASEAN Shipowners' Associations comprising shipping associations of ASEAN countries. The aims of the ASA are to promote the interests of Asian shipowners. Between annual ASA meetings, the ongoing work is carried out by five Standing Committees: The Seafarers Committee (SC), the Ship Insurance and Liability Committee (SILC), the Safe Navigation and Environment Committee (SNEC), the Shipping Policy Committee (SPC), and the Ship Recycling Committee (SRC). It has been estimated that ASA shipowners and managers control and operate around 50% of the world's cargo carrying fleet.