



International Maritime Organisation Maritime Safety Committee – 111th Session

Held at IMO Headquarters, 4 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7SR
from Wednesday, 13 May to Friday, 22 May 2026

Attendance

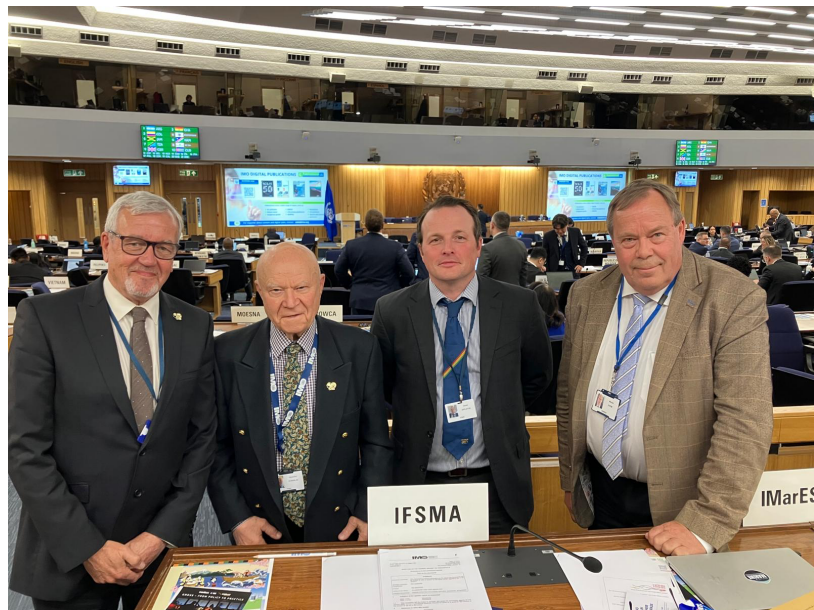
IFSMA was represented by four attendees at MSC 111.

Captain Andy Cook -
IFSMA Secretary
General

Captain Stanislav
Nezavitin - Odessa
Ship Masters'
Association

Captain David Appleton
- Nautilus International

Captain Morten Kveim -
Norwegian Maritime
Officers' Association



The IFSMA team represented our broader membership at the main MSC Committee as well as active participation in two Working Groups looking at MASS (Marine Autonomous Surface Ships) and GHG (Greenhouse Gas) Safety.



Summary Outcomes of MSC 111

The Session agreed various major regulatory and strategic developments affecting safety, digitalisation and decarbonisation.

1. The highlight, was the final adoption of the MASS (Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships) Code.

This is the world's first non-mandatory code on this evolving subject. It establishes a framework for the operation and management of remotely operated and autonomous vessels. This includes the operation of the Remote Operation Centres (ROCs). The Code becomes effective on 1st July 2026 and forms the basis for future mandatory regulation expected by 2032.

Captain David Appleton and Captain Morton Kveim have represented IFSMA on the MASS Working group on numerous occasions since the work started on this project 8-years ago.

There are a number of key elements that IFSMA have influenced. The need for mandatory STCW certification for key personnel working in the Remote Operations Centres (ROCs) and the fact that the Ship Master must be physically onboard the MASS if anyone else (Crew, Contractor or Passenger) is onboard.

Based on the implementation of this first MASS Code, the project now enters the critical Experience Building Phase (EBP), as the industry has a lot to learn about the operation of MASS.

2. Progress on Safety Regulations for Alternative Fuels and Decarbonisation.

The Committee advanced the development of a greenhouse-gas (GHG) safety regulatory framework to support ships using alternative fuels and emerging technologies. Important progress was made on hydrogen and ammonia-related safety guidance, including amendments to the IGC Code and guidelines for ammonia cargo used as fuel on gas carriers. These measures support the maritime sector's energy transition while maintaining safety standards.

3. Modernisation of Maritime Communication and Digital Systems

MSC 111 approved amendments enabling the use of the VHF Data Exchange System (VDES) as an alternative or enhancement to the Automatic Identification System (AIS). The Committee also approved the IMO Strategy on Maritime Digitalization, reinforcing the organisation's commitment to smarter and more integrated maritime operations.



4. Enhanced Inspection, Safety and Life-Saving Requirements

The session adopted or approved several SOLAS-related amendments covering remote inspection techniques for bulk carriers and oil tankers, updates to life-saving appliance testing requirements, industrial personnel ship safety provisions, and improvements to passenger ship “Safe Return to Port” guidance. These measures strengthen operational safety and survey efficiency across the global fleet.

5. Strengthened Maritime Security and LRIT Framework

MSC 111 addressed rising geopolitical and maritime security concerns, particularly in the Strait of Hormuz and surrounding regions. The IMO Secretary General’s has two priorities regarding maritime security. The first priority is seafarer safety; the second priority is the continuous need for freedom of navigation. Both have been compromised in the Strait of Hormuz region.

The Committee also agreed important reforms to the financial architecture of the Long-Range Identification and Tracking (LRIT) system to improve global ship tracking capabilities.

Since the introduction of the ISPS Code, the maritime security threat landscape had changed significantly and was much more complex, with new and emerging threats such as Transnational Organized Crime (TOC); drugs, people, weapons and wildlife smuggling; cybersecurity; shadow fleets and civil conflicts, and this necessitated a review and strengthening of the ISPS Code.

This was supported by IFSMA and our intervention led to the following statement in the IMO report:





There is a need to avoid the criminalization of seafarers, including the ship's master; any review of the ISPS Code has to ensure that it protects seafarers and does not impact on their shore leave, and does not add further security responsibilities on the ship master which are beyond their reasonable control.

This important security issue will be taken forward at the next MSC and the submission of papers was invited in the interim period.

6. Amendments to the Recommendations on the safe use of pesticides in ships applicable to the fumigation of cargo holds (MSC.1/Circ.1264/Rev.1) and Recommendations on the safe use of pesticides in ships (MSC.1/Circ.1358/Rev.1)

There was a proposal to amend the *Recommendations on the safe use of pesticides in ships applicable to the fumigation of cargo holds* (MSC.1/Circ.1264/Rev.1) and *Recommendations on the safe use of pesticides in ships* (MSC.1/Circ.1358/Rev.1).

The proposal was based upon the large number of casualties as a result of fumigating ships. There was some opposition to this paper based largely on the assumption that many deaths were caused by the lack of compliance with the present procedures.

IFSM intervened and supported the proposal to review and amend the present recommendations. This is based upon the fact that the use of pesticides and fumigants can cause death. The Ship Masters receive minimal training on their use but are still held accountable for onboard incidents. Ship masters therefore need the full support of guidance and regulation.

The proposal to amend the guidelines was approved by the MSC Committee.

More Information:

Full IMO MSC 111 Working Report can be found at:

<https://docs.imo.org/Category.aspx?cid=49&dtid=18#:~:text=WP.1%20%2D%20DRAFT-,REPORT,OF%20THE%20MARITIME>

Watch the IMO Secretary General's speeches on the IMO public website.

<https://www.imo.org/>