

FLAGSHIP

NEWS FROM THE LIBERIAN REGISTRY

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Liberian Registry undertakes successful IMO audit

The Liberian Registry has successfully undergone a voluntary audit under the International Maritime Organisation's recently adopted Member State Audit Scheme. Liberia, the largest flag to have thus far carried out the audit, has emerged without a single non-conformity recorded against the operation of the registry.

The IMO Audit Scheme is intended to provide member states with a comprehensive and objective assessment of how effectively they administer and implement the mandatory instruments of the IMO. And it is intended that the results be systematically fed back into the regulatory process at IMO to help make measurable improvements in the effectiveness of the international regulatory framework of shipping.

LISCR Chief Operating Officer Scott Bergeron says, "We are very enthusiastic about the audit process and quite satisfied with the manner in which the entire audit programme was conducted. Consistent with the determinations of other independent measures such as Port State Control records and the Flag State Performance Guidelines issued by the Round Table of international shipping associations, the positive outcome of the IMO audit confirms that the Liberian registry is one of the leading ship registries in the world.



The IMO audit team, with LISCR staff.

"The entire audit process was an extremely valuable exercise. The audit was conducted in a spirit of enthusiastic co-operation between the registry staff and the experienced IMO auditors throughout the preparation, interviews, discussions, demonstrations and reviews which the scheme calls for. We were very impressed with the professionalism and the broad and relevant experience of the audit team."

Having confirmed that Liberia had come through the audit with zero non-conformities, the IMO team made three observations:

- (1) To make the promulgation of changes and amendments to IMO instruments more efficient;
- (2) To better document the oversight activities of Recognised Organisations; and
- (3) To document to a higher degree of detail the training and individual capabilities of the hundreds of surveyors who make up Liberia's worldwide network of nautical inspectors, auditors and casualty investigators.

Scott Bergeron says, "We feel that achieving a more efficient promulgation of changes and amendments to IMO instruments is a challenge for the entire industry. And, while Liberia has a very robust and dynamic programme for overseeing the classification societies to which we have delegated certain actions, we agree that the programme's formal documentation could be improved. Finally, we recognise that improved and more detailed documentation of the capabilities and qualifications of our surveyors will improve our ability to respond to the needs of the registry's shipowners."

"We will incorporate the audit team's suggestions into the operational framework of the registry, in full confidence that doing so will improve still further the effectiveness and efficiency of the Liberian Registry's administration."

"The Liberian registry is a committed supporter of the IMO and the efficient implementation of internationally adopted maritime regulations. Having supported the mandatory application of the audit scheme, we continue to believe that it is deserving of the full support and co-operation of all member states."

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In pursuit of safe manning

Fatigue remains a serious issue in shipping, with leading registries and industry organisations continuing to look at its impact on safe manning levels.

Liberia shares those concerns and, as a committed and proven upholder of the highest standards of safety and crew welfare, was a significant contributor to the 38th session of the IMO Standards of Training and Watchkeeping (STW) subcommittee which met in London recently.

The STW Safe Manning subcommittee agreed that manning and fatigue are linked and that fatigue is a matter for utmost concern. It was noted that fatigue is closely linked to hours of rest and work, which in turn is directly linked with workload and functions conducted on board. And it was agreed that maintaining clear and verifiable records will facilitate the determination of proper manning levels and the mitigation of fatigue.

Liberia recognises that fatigue is caused by a variety of factors and that addressing the issue requires an inclusive, all-encompassing approach. It supports the importance of the relevant provisions of the ILO Maritime Labour Convention 2006, and believes that the industry would benefit from a harmonisation of IMO/ILO with regard to inspection requirements concerning rest or work hour records. The harmonisation viewpoint was shared by other IMO member states, including Greece and Japan.

Adopting its characteristically proactive approach to all safety-related issues, Liberia is currently exploring an innovative technology which allows owners to screen personnel on board for a quantitative analysis of alertness and attentiveness. The screening system is designed to be compatible with the marine environment and the hope is that it will reduce accidents by early identification of fatigue.



The state-of-the-art LNG carrier *Neo Energy* was recently delivered under Liberian flag to its owner, Sea Optima SA, of Monrovia. The 100,253 gt vessel was built by Hyundai Heavy Industries of South Korea, and is managed by Hyundai Merchant Marine Co Ltd.

New manager for London



GILES Heimann has been appointed manager of LISCR's London office, in succession to Peter Kidman, who has accepted a new position in Zurich which will involve him in the promotion of the corporate registry in Europe and the Middle and Far East.

Giles joins us from Carnival UK, the UK arm of Carnival Corporation, where he served as head of training and compliance overseeing the training and certification of a fleet of thirty cruiseships covering the Cunard, Princess, P&O, Ocean Village and P&O Australia brands.

Condition assessment

AMENDMENTS to MARPOL Annex I - Condition Assessment Scheme (CAS) were adopted at the 55th session of the IMO Marine Environment Protection Committee in London, towards the end of last year. The amendments (Resolution MEPC 94.46 as amended) clarify the validity of an oil tanker's statement of compliance where there has been a change of ownership, change of class society (recognised organisation) or change of flag. The procedures call for the flag and the RO with which the vessel was previously registered to provide the new flag with a copy of both the CAS final report and the complete review record of all the CAS documentation relating to the vessel which the previous flag has compiled for review and assessment.

Should a change of flag take place during the course of a CAS survey, the new flag shall determine at what point in the CAS schedule provided in Annex 3 to MEPC/Circ 390, and

under what conditions, it will assume responsibility for the CAS survey and allow it to continue. Sufficient documentation should be provided by the shipowner and the responsible RO in order to enable the new flag to make its decision.

Transport of bio-fuels

MEPC 55 also identified the need to clarify the regulations which apply to the increasing carriage by sea of bio-fuels and bio-fuel blends as cargo. Bio-fuels, when transported as products intended for blending with petroleum or mineral products, are considered to fall under MARPOL Annex II. However, when carried as blended products, it is not clear if carriage should be in accordance with MARPOL Annex I or Annex II.

The MEPC agreed that the Subcommittee on Bulk Liquids and Gases (BLG) should address the issue as a new high-priority item in its work programme, with a 2008 target completion date.



Japanese owners expect increase in Liberian registrations

Leading Japanese shipowners attended a reception in Tokyo on March 13, held to mark a visit by Liberian president Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf to Japan.

The Liberian Registry hosted the reception at which representatives of Japanese shipowners and the shipping industry met with Liberian political and business leaders.

The Liberian Commissioner of the Bureau of Maritime Affairs, John Morlu, opened the meeting with an update on developments concerning the Liberian Registry. Hiroyuki Maekawa, President of 'K' Line, proposed a toast in welcoming Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and, on behalf of the Japanese shipowners present, congratulated the Liberian president on bringing political stability to her country and creating opportunities for economic development for her people.

Mrs Johnson-Sirleaf responded by thanking Japanese shipowners for their steadfast relationship with Liberia, evidenced through their association with the Liberian Registry, dating back more than a quarter of a century.

Speaking of recent developments in Liberia, Mrs Johnson-Sirleaf said, "In just one year, Liberia has made an important beginning in the face of monumental challenges. Liberians have laid the foundation for full recovery and reconstruction for peace, security and healing and restoring Liberia to sustained prosperity.

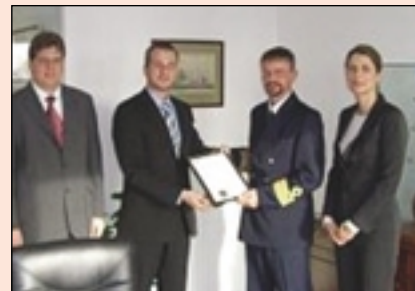
"Programmes are being implemented to reduce poverty across the nation, to reform and strengthen the country's economic management system, and to rebuild infrastructures decimated by years of war. Liberia is making an all-out effort to regain the confidence of investors, which may have suffered as a result of concerns about the country's image and post-

conflict security and stability. "To attract foreign investors, efforts have focused on creating an improved investment climate – a strong judiciary, streamlined regulations to tackle corruption, and a more efficient and transparent government."

Concluding with a wish to see more ships flying the Liberian flag, the president noted, "The Maritime Bureau has made progress in its restructuring and training programmes and in the settlement of its obligations to the International Maritime Organisation."

Following the president's address, members of Japan's shipping industry said that, as a result of what they deemed to be a good business environment, with clear economic advantages, they expected to see a further increase in Japanese ship registrations with the Liberian Registry. Shipowners in attendance indicated that they were currently reviewing the services of the Liberian Registry, with a view to placing vessels under the Liberian flag.

German master honoured



CAPT Stefan Kramp, master of the Liberian-flagged vessel *Westermuhlen*, was recently presented with a commemorative tribute to his professionalism in rescuing nine people from a small rubber boat found drifting in the Alboran Sea near Gibraltar. Capt Kramp is seen in the photo above receiving his award in Hamburg from Stefan Rother, managing director of the shipowner, Peterson & Sohne GmbH Co KG, flanked by Julia Mueller and Jorg Molzahn of the Liberian Registry's Hamburg office.

The Liberian Registry is proud to be associated with such dedicated and professional seafarers and shipowners.



Liberian Registry President Brad Berman is pictured addressing the recent Intertanko Poseidon Challenge in Houston. Brad was recently elected Chairman of the Associate Members Committee

of Intertanko. On March 26, 2007, the Executive Committee of Intertanko recommended, and the Council co-opted, Brad as one of five additional members of Intertanko's Council.



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On the register

Martha Green has been with LISCR from the beginning. After a short spell working for the registry's previous manager in New York, she joined the team in Virginia in December, 1999.



A native New Yorker, Martha was a project secretary with a major construction company before entering the world of ship registries, and the experience she gained there in working with real estate contracts has stood her in good stead at LISCR.

Martha's role at the registry takes the form of a close involvement with ship mortgages. Much of her day is spent checking and proof-reading these important documents, ensuring that the mortgages are in order, and in accordance with the requirements of Liberian corporate law. Bills of sale, power-of-attorney papers, and discharges regularly land on her desk, waiting for her expert eye to approve or amend them. It is a vital job, and one that Martha thoroughly enjoys.

Having earned an AAS & BS degree from Berkeley College in New York as well as a real estate licence in Maryland, Martha says, "Financing a ship purchase is not really so different from buying property." She admits that her work can sometimes appear tedious, but points out that it is also challenging and demanding at times such as those when she has three closings on the go at once. Martha enjoys engaging with the registry's shipowners, with whom she is in regular contact by telephone and email on a daily basis. "It is important to ensure that everything is in order, and properly executed," she says.

Martha has a busy life. Outside LISCR, she is a member of the National Guard, where her work takes up a significant part of her free time. In fact, Martha has two jobs in her voluntary role. She is a cook, and she has responsibility for inventories. And she doesn't leave her love of cooking behind, either, when she is at home. It is one of things she really enjoys – that, and singing.

"I sing all the time," says Martha, "but not to an audience." Martha also enjoys reading, mainly novels, and travel is one of her other great passions. Last year, she went to Brazil, and she has travelled widely in the Caribbean. She also enjoys travelling to New York, to see her family. "I can do it in just over three hours by road," she says - provided I leave at three in the morning."

