

NI appeals for seafarer feedback over S-Mode

Towards the end of February The Nautical Institute announced a consultation to help assess the latest proposals for standardised navigation equipment.

The latest suggestions were presented at IMO's fifth session of its NCSR (Navigation, Communication and Search and Rescue) Sub-committee by the Institute and other stakeholders including CIRM (Comité International Radio-Maritime), the Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, and delegation members from Australia and the Republic of Korea.

Navigators' views are sought on the latest concept for S-Mode which is in the closing stages of development before being finalised next year (2019). This is for an 'always on' standardisation of key features to be adopted by the leading manufacturers of navigation systems.

NI Director of Projects, David Patraiko commented: *'The collaboration with industry stakeholders has taken years, however this new approach of standardisation should lead to more effective familiarisation for mariners and ultimately improve the safety of navigation. For many years and particularly with the increased complexity of ship systems, mariners have been challenged when sailing on different ships with different manufacturers' equipment to become familiar with systems that are so safety critical'*.

The new proposal, by CIRM, focuses on:

- 1) A standard approach to hot keys.
- 2) The establishment of 'essential information blocks'.
- 3) Defining a list of functions that must be accessible by single or simple operator action.

However, these proposals need urgent feedback from mariners before they become enshrined in IMO Guidance due to be finalised next year.

In the words of the NI, now is the time for users to have their say and they are invited to visit: www.nautinst.org/knowledge to participate in three short surveys based on these proposals.

This task can be achieved individually or in groups. The groups might be bridge teams (if Internet is available), or officers in a shipping company or training organisation.

Furthermore, instructions and tutorials are available with the surveys and further background information is to be found including a recorded webinar and full documentation.

In conclusion the NI has conveyed its thanks to the Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Department of Maritime Studies for these surveys and the analysis.

Urgency is stressed, as these surveys will be closed on 1 June 2018 in order that responses can be compiled.

For more information readers are invited to take a look at:
www.nautinst.org/knowledge

Picture caption

Some of those involved in the S-Mode discussions now calling for consultation.