

Danish-Swedish routeing IMO and autonomous ships

Kattegat and Skagerrack

On 21 May the Danish Maritime Authority (DMA) reported that the IMO Maritime Safety Committee* (MSC) has approved a joint Danish-Swedish proposal for new ship routes in Kattegat and Skagerrack.

It is understood that this work is already in progress and the new routes will be in place from 1 July 2020.

IMO has approved the new ship routes in Kattegat and Skagerrack following a proposal from Denmark and Sweden. This step is necessary due to the much larger size of ships navigating the straits today compared to the ships for which the route systems were originally designed.

Each year about 70,000 ships pass through Kattegat and Skagerrack on their way to or from the Baltic Sea and several of these have significant draught. For this reason, the existing ship routes must be expanded to ensure traffic separation and proper use of deep-water routes.

Ensuring safety of navigation in Danish waters is a strategic target for the DMA which is significantly furthered by this important decision at IMO's MSC.

Autonomous ships: Regulatory scoping exercise on Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships

News was received that when underway the MSC would be looking at how the safe, secure and environmentally sound operation of Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS) may be introduced in IMO instruments.

Work in this session was expected to focus on the framework of the regulatory exercise (that is the instruments to be considered) and a plan of work, including expected deliverables, coordination mechanisms and future work.

It is anticipated that a Working Group will be established to develop a plan of work and terms of reference for an intersessional correspondence or working group.

The MSC, at its last session (MSC 98, 7-16 June 2017), recognized that IMO should take a proactive and leading role on this issue, given the rapid technological developments relating to the operation of ships in various autonomous / automated modes. This scoping exercise is seen as a starting point and is expected to touch on an extensive range of issues, including the

human element, safety, security, interactions with ports, pilotage, responses to incidents and protection of the marine environment.

(Photo: DMA ©)

*The 99th session to be held from 16-25 May 2018, at IMO Headquarters in London.