



BPAC 2016 - Summary

BPAC 2016 - 25 May 2016 - Stockholm, Sweden Agenda

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BPAC 2016 Draft Summary

Opening of the Conference

The 2016 host and BPAC President Pernilla Wallin warmly welcomed all BPAC participants, in particular all newcomers, to the BPAC 2016 conference in Stockholm. The President called for a table round giving all participants the opportunity to briefly introduce themselves and explain their backgrounds and interests in the BPAC 2016 conference. Finally, the BPAC members approved the summary of last year's conference without any objections or reservations.

Report from the Secretariat

The BPAC Secretary General & Pilotage Superintendent Frank Gottlieb reported that only German pilotage authorities had provided the Secretariat with an update on deep sea pilotage statistics after the conference last year. More updates of this kind from BPAC members would, of course, be most welcome. He went on to mention that no other business, e.g. requests for modification of the BPAC website as discussed at the 2015 conference, had been recorded and dealt with.

Senior Adviser Monica Sundklev had studied the homepage balticpilotage.org recently and saw a need for more frequent and coherent updating. For instance, it would have benefitted the BPAC community if the 2016 agenda had been published on the website ahead of the 2016 conference. In this context she would recommend that relevant BPAC members be given passwords allowing them to access and update the website as they see fit. The Secretary General considered the proposal well advised and promised to act accordingly.

HELCOM

The President recalled that HELCOM had worked for many years to limit sewage discharges from passenger ships in the Baltic Sea. An important milestone was reached in April 2016 when the IMO agreed to let the Baltic Sea special area for sewage discharges from passenger ships take effect for IMO registered passenger vessels no later than 2021. The only exception concerns certain direct passages between St. Petersburg and the North Sea. In this case the deadline has been extended up to 2023. From 2021/2023, then, all IMO registered passenger ships sailing in the Baltic Sea must either discharge their sewage at port reception facilities or treat it with on-board facilities certified to meet stringent special area requirements.

The President also reported that HELCOM had recently agreed on a roadmap that would lead to the submission of a proposal to the IMO for the establishment of a Baltic Sea Nitrogen Oxide Emission Control Area (NECA). The proposal was submitted to the IMO Maritime Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) meeting in October 2016 and coincides with a similar submission from the countries around the North Sea. This development represents an important step forward towards the reduction of the excessive richness of plant nutrients in the Baltic Sea.



Status on the BPAC model course for deep sea pilots

The Chairman referred to the current version of the BPAC model course for the education of deep sea pilots on the link [model course](#) and invited participants to comment on the issue.

Pilotage Superintendent Frank Gottlieb explained that as a result of the development of a BPAC model course the Danish pilot exam system has now been modified to include the subject of deep sea pilotage, too. He also mentioned that Red Cards are issued to examinees up to Mariehamn, only, i.e. for the western part of the Baltic Sea, unless they prove to have adequate experience related to pilotage operations in thick ice. Against this background he argued that it might be advisable to subdivide the Baltic Sea into areas with more or less thick ice and to issue Red Cards accordingly. A tiered Red Card approach of this kind would improve the safety at sea in the Baltic area.

Area Manager Anders Alestam noted that the Swedish Maritime Authority had recently introduced a deep sea pilotage training programme based entirely on the BPAC model course. The first class with six potential deep sea pilots had recently embarked on the training programme. In response to a question from Deputy Head of State Pilot Service Evgenij A. Voronin he added that training is conducted on three bridges with 2 pilots on each and that current simulation training sessions relate to transit operations, only, and not to operations in the open sea.

Following up on a question from Special Adviser Jukka Tuomaala about the criteria for admission to the course, Pilot Patrik Wikand explained that the Swedish course had been designed with the national demand for deep sea pilots in mind. For the time being, therefore, the course is offered in Swedish, only. However, he would not exclude that the course might be offered in English, too, as a result of negotiations with interested non-Swedish parties.

Captain Kay Krimmling noticed that German and Swedish deep sea pilotage training programmes have many similarities. For instance, they are both inspired by the model course and, consequently, require considerable training. The Chairman also considered the BPAC model course challenging and highlighted its status as a recommendation rather than a legally binding regulation. The model course, therefore, allows the BPAC members to pick and choose the building blocks from the model best suited to improve the quality of their national training programmes.

Captain Kay Krimmling also mentioned that the relatively mild climate in the southern Baltic Sea had led to cooperation between German and Russian pilots on the subject of ice pilotage training. Area Manager Anders Alestam noted that the incidence of ice along the Swedish coasts suffices to allow for adequate ice pilotage training in national waters, only. However, Swedish Red Cards do not document the amount of ice training and experience of individual pilots. He deplored this state of affairs that forced shipowners to choose blindly between pilots without ice pilotage qualifications on the one hand and pilots with the right skills, but lacking proof of these skills on the other. Under the current circumstances, therefore, shipowners risked making the wrong choice at the expense of the safety at sea in the Baltic area.

Pilot Patrik Wikand wondered whether the use of pilots with ice pilotage experience could be made mandatory through regulation in the BPAC member states. Special Adviser Jukka Tuomaala considered it likely that Finnish politicians would require fresh regulation of this kind in case of an accident in which a pilot with ice pilotage experience could have mitigated its effects on personnel



and vessels. He also deemed the present Finnish decree on Baltic pilotage somewhat obsolete as far as ice pilotage is concerned, but updates did not seem to be a high priority at this stage.

Deputy Head of State Pilot Service Evgenij Voronin and Deputy Director of Safety at Sea Andrej Balashov explained that Russia had not adopted any legislation regulating ice pilot training and ice pilotage activities, and providers of this kind of services, e.g. in the Gulf of Finland, were typically referred to as ice advisers. They also shared their experience that shipowners sometimes hire pilots without a Red Card and adequate ice pilotage skills. EMPA Vice President Bjarne Caesar Jensen added that certain non-Baltic pilots trained primarily in warm seas market themselves as ice pilots.

Pilot Ole Riis acknowledged that authorities, providers and shipowners had trouble distinguishing between the concepts of deep sea pilots, ice pilots and ice advisers and saw an urgent need to clarify the issue so as to reach a common understanding. Clearly, authorities, providers and shipowners alike struggle to define and understand these concepts, and the current ambiguities make it difficult for shipowners to select high quality providers to cater for their pilotage needs in ice covered parts of the Baltic Sea.

In conclusion, the Chairman considered the ice pilotage subject difficult and complex as member states seem to differ widely in their legal and operational approach to the subject. The meeting agreed to put ice pilotage or ice advisers on the agenda for the BPAC 2017 Conference for further discussion. This would allow member states to reflect on the 2016 inputs and return in 2017 with a clearer view of the scope for common action with due respect to the rules and regulations of all member states. For instance, it might prove feasible to consider including ice pilotage training recommendations in the model course, too.

Status on the country questionnaire

General Secretary Frank A. Gottlieb reminded participants about his invitation at the 2015 BPAC conference to forward national statistics on the number of deep sea pilotage operations performed once a year. So far, only a few responses had been submitted. He would therefore propose to introduce a digital reporting format easing the administrative burden for all staff involved in the process. A web service might be the right tool for the job.

Senior Adviser Monica Sundklev recalled that in the past the BPAC had devoted much time to discussing statistical issues. Subsequently, the development of a robust statistical data base had turned the attention away from statistics and led to discussions of a broader and more general nature. Captain Kay Krimmling and Captain J.D. Robinson followed up with confirmations that they could forward German and UK statistics as required to the BPAC Secretariat on short notice. In the UK case it is also possible to supply statistics for deep sea pilotage through the Channel.

The Chairman considered it important to determine whether the BPAC Secretariat should continue collecting deep sea pilotage data for further analysis and discussion. If so, the data reporting format should, of course, be kept as simple and manageable as possible under the current circumstances. The subject will be tabled again at the 2017 conference with a view to refining the discussion on the basis of fresh national positions as well as the above inputs.



The Fehmarn Belt fixed link

Captain Kay Krimmling expected the construction of an immersed tunnel across the Fehmarn Belt to interfere considerably with the vessel traffic along the sea routes in the area. Consequently, Baltic pilotage authorities and operators should prepare and adapt to the new realities well in advance.

In this context he was keen to learn more about the modalities of the project, e.g. its construction phases and timing as well as other factors influencing the vessel traffic and the demand for pilotage services on the routes concerned. He would also welcome any updates from BPAC colleagues, e.g. on the sea traffic implications of the planned lowering of some 80 tunnel elements down to the sea floor. In particular, he would be interested to know whether Danish authorities consider issuing a pilotage recommendation for vessels in the Fehmarn Belt area during the tunnel construction period.

General Secretary Frank A. Gottlieb recommended to forward questions about the technical nature of the fixed link project to the Fehmarn Belt Company rather than the BPAC. He also considered it early days as far the question of a pilotage recommendation is concerned. At this stage no news had been published that justified specific considerations about this issue, and he could only promise to keep stakeholders informed as events unfold. EMPA Vice President Bjarne Caesar agreed about the shortage of news relevant for decision making on a pilotage recommendation. He also explained that the momentum of the project is difficult to predict because of its political nature and the strong public awareness about its impact in a number of fields, e.g. the environment.

Plans and developments at the national level

Contributions to this agenda item were based, i.a., on presentations in the files listed below. These files are available from balticpilotage.org under the item “Links and docs”.

- 1 : ”BPAC 2016 - presentation - Trinity House - 25.05.2016.pptx”
- 2 : “BPAC 2016 - presentation - Finland - 25.05.2016.pptx”
- 3 : “BPAC 2016 - presentation - Russia - 25.05.2016.pptx”
- 4 : “BPAC 2016 - presentation - Sweden - 25.05.2016.pptx”
- 5 : ”BPAC 2016 - presentation - Latvia - 25.05.2016.pptx”

UK and Trinity House

Captain Dennis Robinson from Trinity House pointed out the need for regular and reliable updates of information systems of relevance for deep sea pilots. Unfortunately, reality leaves much to be desired in this area. The ECDIS system and the Admiralty List of Radio Signals (ALRS) are but two out of a number of cases in point. For instance, certain sea territories covered by ECDIS have not been updated since the nineties and lack basic data on bathymetry, and the sections of the ALRS dedicated to Deep Sea Pilotage issues also need an overhaul.

Trinity House staff work to remedy the situation, and Captain Dennis Robinson kindly invited all BPAC colleagues to join forces in an effort to achieve this goal. EMPA Vice President Bjarne Caesar commented that he had experienced similar problems with the ECDIS system, in particular



as far as positioning data are concerned. The ECDIS system clearly needs updating, but the difficult question of who should fund the update costs must be settled first.

Captain Dennis Robertson went on to observe that in some cases the pilotage sector is subject to impractical micromanagement from above. EMPA Vice President Bjarne Caesar agreed with this view and referred to recent efforts to establish rules for under keel clearance and squat effects as an example of unwarranted regulation. In Captain Kay Krimmling's view pilotage authorities tend to act as strong proponents of electronic navigation systems, and he wondered whether this approach had led to an inappropriate overemphasis on technical solutions.

Finally, Captain Dennis Robertson noted that the number of UK licensed deep sea pilots had fallen from 46 in 2015 to 44 in 2016. Following up on a question from Senior Pilot Janis Liepa he did not see this development as a result of an aging pool of deep sea pilots; EU legislation does not allow pilotage operators to recruit and dismiss pilots on the basis of age criteria. Instead, economic factors might play an important role in the sense that deep sea pilotage incomes tend to be low compared to the costs to keep deep sea pilots updated and fit for the job.

Finland

Special Adviser Jukka Tuomaala first noted that, in broad terms, the number of pilotage operations and the amount of piloted miles had followed a downward trend over the period 2007-15. Several factors, in particular economic and legal ones, accounted for this development. Next, he briefly summarized a Finnish study on the workload and stress of pilots. The study demonstrates, i.a., that pilots tend to underestimate their own level of fatigue and makes a number of recommendations to address the problem. Picking up from his briefing in 2015, he finally indicated that the Pilotage Act as well as the Government Decree on Pilotage continued to be under review. Progress was being made, and fresh legislation would perhaps be ready for implementation in the summer of 2016.

Pilotage Director Kari Kosonen mentioned that a working group is currently following up on the workload and stress study. Hopefully, more details could be released at the BPAC conference next year. Special Adviser Jukka Tuomala emphasized that the study did not focus specifically on deep sea pilots. In response to a question from Senior Adviser Monica Sundklev, therefore, he would recommend not to jump to conclusions as far as this special group of personnel is concerned. Pilot Patrik Wikand commented that in the Swedish case the EU legislation on rest periods contributes significantly to limiting pilot fatigue. Pilot Ole Riis also considered these rules appropriate, but it should nevertheless be kept in mind that economic pressure driven by market logic could change attitudes towards the rules.

Russia

Deputy Head of State Pilot Service Evgenij A. Voronin referred to the presentation in the file "BPAC 2016 - presentation - Russia - 25.05.2016.pptx" showing, i.a., that the Russian pilotage service in the Baltic Sea consists of a mix of state and private operators. A fall in the overall vessel traffic intensity in 2015 had led to lower demand for pilotage services and, consequently, to a fall in the number of Russian pilots in the area. Not surprisingly, the number of pilotage operations in the area with western pilots on board followed the same trend. However, he also noted some bright spots. For instance, the number of cruise vessels calling on St. Petersburg remained at a high level.



In addition, investments in the infrastructure of the Port of St. Petersburg, e.g. in the container terminal, were expected to increase business, too.

He further explained that the question of rest periods for pilots is a recurring subject for discussion in the Russian pilotage industry. For instance, operators respecting the rules to the letter sometimes risk losing business to other operators. Discussions are complicated by the view advanced by some that the need for rest periods varies between individual pilots with different characteristics. So far, no consensus has been reached on the subject.

Captain Kay Krimmling asked how orders for pilotage services were placed and handled. Deputy Director of Safety at Sea Andrej Balashov thought that price competition is generally tough on the Russian pilotage market. The price mechanism, therefore, tends to exert heavy pressure on operator behaviour. For instance, some shipowners forward their orders through brokers, and private pilots do not hesitate to reward brokers with bonuses for redirecting orders their way.

It is also common practice to negotiate contracts for bundles of pilotage operations. In this context private operators concentrate on the most profitable deals with the largest ships and leave it to the state pilots to service the less profitable market for small vessels. In addition, the market system favours the private pilots in the sense that they can choose to reject an order, whereas state pilots cannot. Private operators are, therefore, in a better position to adjust the demand for pilotage to their capacity, plan their activities accordingly and, in the final analysis, save costs.

Sweden

Senior Adviser Monica Sundklev and Area Manager Anders Alestam reviewed the Swedish 2015 pilotage statistics and noted that the total number of pilotage missions remained virtually unchanged in comparison to the 2014 level. The standstill reflected a net increase in the number of missions on the west coast that cancelled out a net decrease in the number of missions on the east coast. The reasons for this east-west split were not yet fully understood. They further noted that the gradual decrease in the number of deep sea pilotage missions over the period 2010-14 ended in 2015 when the number climbed to 90 compared to only 64 the year before.

Senior Adviser Monica Sundklev went on to brief on organizational issues: The Swedish Transport Agency (STA) plays a role as a regulator responsible for the development of new legislation, and the STA also issues Pilotage Exemptions Certificates valid for specific areas and fairways. The Swedish Maritime Administration (SMA) plays a very different role as an operator responsible for maintaining maritime safety in Swedish waters. The SMA provides i.a., pilotage in Swedish waters as well as deep sea pilotage in the Baltic Sea and the sea between Sweden and Denmark.

She further reported that from 5 October 2016 all pilot ordering should be made electronically in the Swedish Maritime Single Window (MSW) system together with other EU reporting requirements already implemented. The national MSW systems in the EU may merge into a common EU MSW system in the future, but since pilotage requirement is regulated at the national level vessels are foreseen to continue notifying their need for Swedish pilotage assistance through the Swedish system. The Chairman added that EU is expected to increase its focus on the issue in 2017.



Denmark

Pilotage Superintendent Frank A. Gottlieb reported that the monopoly of the Danish state pilotage organisation (DanPilot) on transit pilotage in the straits was broken in the beginning of 2016. The private operator Danish Pilotage Service (DPS) with a staff of about 20 certified pilots had won a contract for 600 operations of this kind in 2016 and had made a bid for larger contracts covering the coming years. Consequently, more competition was expected to follow on this market.

He also reported that from 1 July 2016 ships with more than 250 passengers are required to navigate with a pilot on board in the waters along the coasts of Greenland. Pilot Ole Riis commented that a lack of infrastructure, e.g. pilot stations, would force shipowners to employ pilots for long periods of time. Pilotage, therefore, would be expensive in Greenland. EMPA Vice President Bjarne Caesar added that the pool of pilots qualified for the job in Greenland was relatively small. Consequently, it might prove difficult to satisfy the demand for pilots in the area during the tourist season.

Finally, he indicated that Danish authorities have a keen interest in statistics on pilotage operations in the Sound. That goes in particular for statistics allowing for an analysis of the rate of compliance with the IMO pilot recommendation for this strait. He would therefore welcome further cooperation on the subject between the two nations bordering on the Sound. He acknowledged that the pilot recommendation for the Sound is technically difficult as it varies with the type of cargo carried by the vessels, but he nevertheless felt confident that close cooperation could lead to a solid database for analysis and proper action. Pilot Ole Riis added that in his experience most captains readily agree to report to authorities about the cargo on board their vessels.

Latvia

Senior Pilot Janis Liepa made a presentation outlining some of the main features of the Liepaja Special Economic Zone as well as the facilities available for ships calling at the Port of Liepaja. At this stage ships bound for the port of Liepaja and other Latvian ports are served by some 50 pilots of which none are trained to perform deep-sea pilotage.

Information from EMPA and IMPA

EMPA Vice President Bjarne Caesar recalled that the European Parliament had recently agreed on a wording of the Port Services Regulation eliminating pilotage from the chapter on market access. EMPA supports this development: Pilots should not engage in competition, but concentrate on their public service obligations, i.e. to guarantee a high level of maritime safety and security as well as to protect the environment.

EMPA is more determined than ever to influence political decision making related to pilotage. It has been decided, therefore, to modernize the organization and to relocate the EMPA office from Antwerp to a building in downtown Brussels with easier access to important decision makers and a host of new opportunities for cooperation with maritime players at national and international levels.

EMPA Vice President Bjarne Caesar ended his address with a remark that he had not received any news from IMPA for the BPAC 2016 conference.



Any other business & date and location of the next meeting

No new issues were raised under this item.

The President announced that the date and location of the 2017 BPAC conference was still under consideration and that the Secretariat would keep BPAC members informed about developments on the issue. Pilot Ole Riis kindly called on the Secretariat to forward invitations no later than three months before the conference so as to allow members to manage their calendars accordingly.

Closing of the Conference

The President & host Pernilla Wallin thanked all participants for their contributions to the BPAC 2016 conference and looked forward to continuing discussions of subjects of mutual interest in 2017, including some of the 2016 agenda subjects that would be tabled again in 2017.



BPAC 2016 - 25 May 2016 - Stockholm, Sweden
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