



# **European Union**

## **Statement**

**ILO Governing Body, 320<sup>th</sup> session**

**(13 – 27 March 2014)**

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**"International Cooperation relating to the Seafarers' Identity Documents"**

**(GB.320/LILS/5)**

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**Geneva, 21 March 2014**

**- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -**

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**"International Cooperation relating to the Seafarers' Identity Documents"**

**(GB.320/LILS/5)**

**EU Statement**

Thank you chair,

I speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The following countries align themselves with this declaration: Turkey\*, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia†, Montenegro†, Iceland‡, Serbia†, Albania†, Bosnia and Herzegovina†, Norway§, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia.

To date, ILO Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention No. 185 has been ratified by only 25 ILO Member States representing half of the seafarers working worldwide. The EU and its Member States take note of the fact that the solutions contained in the Convention were intended to contribute to the improvement of security in the shipping sector and to promote decent living and working conditions of seafarers, as well as their rights as mobile workers.

We note that the Convention might contribute to accomplish the aim of ensuring that seafarers working on board a ship have access to shore-based facilities and services to secure their health and well-being as included in the provisions of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, which entered into force on 20 August 2013. The IMO Convention on Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic, 1965, as amended (FAL Convention) also includes some standards and recommended practices in this field. However, the MLC does not require ratifying states to grant foreign seafarers access to their territory. This issue is dealt with by both Convention 108 – Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention and Convention 185 – Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention (Revised).

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\* Candidate country

† The Candidate countries former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia as well as potential candidate countries Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

‡ Candidate Country Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.

§ Liechtenstein and Norway are members of the EFTA and the European Economic Area.

We underline, however, that the current Seafarer's Identity Document, including a two-dimensional barcode, is not globally interoperable with other biometric documents, which follow the recommendations of ICAO DOC 9303 using a contactless chip for the storage of the biometric identifiers. Therefore the considerations to include a chip for the storage of the biometric data in a mandatory way should be further pursued in order to facilitate reading and identification at ports.

We thus consider that the implementation of Convention 185 involves complex technical aspects of compatibility with other norms and equipment (ICAO, IMO, ISO) and that prior technical work involving both maritime and visa experts is needed to provide ILO bodies with sound options, including on international cooperation in this matter.

Given the link between Convention 185 and the Maritime Labour Convention, we therefore propose that this matter is put on the agenda of a meeting of experts, at the earliest possible occurrence, to consider how to progress on this matter exploring the various technical solutions available, including a cost-benefit analysis. The issue of the technical assistance that the ILO Office could provide to Member States could also be included in these discussions.

On the basis of the results of an analysis of cost-benefit and technical solutions, the Governing Body could best decide on the appropriate steps forward.

We propose to modify the decision point contained in paragraph 22 as follows:

***22. The Governing Body:***

***Decides to hold a meeting involving both maritime and visa experts, within existing resources, to:***

***- examine the feasibility and carry out a cost-benefit analysis of the various options to address the issues involved in the implementation of the Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention No. 185 for ratifying and non-ratifying states, as well as for shipowners and seafarers.***

The rest of the existing text (paras a and b) is suppressed.

Thank you, Chair.