

**Report on  
IALA's e-Nav8 Meeting**

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## **Introduction**

Good morning.

In September of this year, on behalf of IMPA, I attended something called **IALA eNav8**.

I think before I go any further, it would be a good idea to explain what that is. The IALA is the International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities. It was established in 1957 as a non-governmental technical group with the aim to harmonize aids to navigation worldwide and to ensure that the movements of vessels are safe, cost-effective and not harmful to the environment.

On occasion, the IALA has included pilotage issues in its deliberations, despite the fact that the International Maritime Organization has passed a Resolution – A960 – which explicitly declares that efforts at international harmonization of pilotage are futile and unwarranted.

It comes as no surprise therefore that IMPA follows the IALA's activities very closely so as to be able to intervene whenever the IALA pronounces on pilotage matters. The IALA actually has neither the expertise nor the input from pilots themselves to do so.

One of the IALA's Committees is e-Navigation. This e-Nav Committee deals with all aspects of e-Navigation that relate to aids to navigation. In particular, it develops documentation on current issues such as radar technology as an aid to navigation, ship-borne navigation aids and Automatic Identification Systems (AIS).

The e-Nav Committee first met in September of 2006 and the meeting I attended in Paris in September of 2010 was its eighth meeting.

All of this to explain what was meant by the title of my presentation: IALA eNav8!

## **S-Mode/Default Mode**

It is now widely accepted that the development of an e-Navigation strategy, as envisioned by the IMO, should be led by the users of the technology. One of the specific ideas related to e-Navigation that is of particular interest for pilots is the so-called "S-Mode", an initiative originally developed by the Nautical Institute in London.

The Institute's proposal is for all shipboard navigation displays to have the ability to revert, by a single operator action, to a standardized navigation display, with standardized functionality and interface.

IMPA's particular concern at eNav8 was the discussion surrounding the proposal put forward by the American Pilots' Association to actually have two standardized features as part of the S-Mode.

These two features would allow users to select either the "default mode" – which is really a "clean slate" or basic settings starting point that would always be available to the pilot or mariner – or the "saved settings mode" – which allows an individual to select and save his own preferences. With these saved settings, if anyone was to change a setting subsequently, the pilot could always revert back to his preferred settings by a single action or, if you prefer, through a "back button".

Having first secured the endorsement of the APA proposal by the IMPA executive, who quickly recognized the proposal's good sense – I was able to inform members of the e-Nav Committee at the Paris meeting that the proposal had broad support from marine pilots.

After some deliberation, the Working Group on Information Portrayal – of which I was part – unanimously agreed to the APA proposal. It was also determined by the Working Group that the expression "Default Mode" suits the overall concept better than its original name of "S-Mode". Accordingly, the concept was rebranded as the "Default Mode" and it is under that name that the e-Nav8 Committee accepted the Working Group recommendations, at its wrap-up plenary session.

## **Vessel Traffic Management**

Another focal point of the meeting was the concept of Vessel Traffic Management or "VTM".

This concept is defined by the IALA as "*the functional framework of harmonized measures and services, to enhance the safety, security and efficiency of shipping and the protection of the marine environment, in all navigable waters*".

The discussion focused on the premise at the root of this concept that traditional vessel traffic management is no longer sufficient to satisfy the needs of maritime stakeholders and that traffic management instruments need to be rethought, with the flow of information being controlled and centralized at an on-shore location.

The problem with this line of thinking is that it can easily lead to a shift from on-board to shore-based decision-making.

The presentation made by a senior official of the Dutch Ministry of Transport, Pieter Paap, clearly illustrates this danger.

This slide, taken from Mr. Paap's presentation, illustrates the shift in focus that proponents of VTM advocate. In their view, VTS operators should move from an "operational" level – in which information is shared freely between stakeholders – to a "tactical or strategic" level – where all information is centralized with VTS and controlled by it. In other words, they suggest that the role of VTS evolves from "traffic monitoring" to "traffic planning".

In any event, the e-Nav Committee's deliberations on VTM are not completed, although at some point it is expected that the IALA will forward a recommendation to the IMO on this subject.

IMPA, for its part, will continue to monitor this issue very closely and will make whatever interventions are appropriate to ensure that the decisive role of pilots on-board vessels is not compromised or usurped by a shore-based decision-making model.

### **Information Portrayal**

Another very interesting – and exciting – discussion was the one led by our friend Lee Alexander on Information Portrayal. The number of ways that information can be portrayed is growing dramatically and what appeared to be ground-breaking and even experimental only a few years ago will soon be common place. Much of it is of great benefit to pilots.

As an example, here is a typical image that currently appears on an ECDIS screen when piloting a vessel.

Now, here is essentially the same information but portrayed through "super-imaging", which is a projection system with fluorescent conversion technology, allowing colour images to be displayed on a transparent screen such as a window.

Unlike other display technologies, such as plasma, the transparent display uses a homogenous and structure-less fluorescent screen to eliminate the need for projector-to-screen alignment.

This is a technological advance that speaks to me! It is radically innovative, yet entirely compatible with the best and most basic principle every pilot should respect: look through the window!

### **Conclusion**

I mentioned earlier that, as a matter of policy, IMPA monitors closely the proceedings of the IALA. Another Committee of the Association, known as IWRAP, meets in November while we are attending the IMPA Congress in Australia.

IWRAP stands for the Waterway and Port Assessment Program and the meeting next month will focus on risk-management tools.

Fortunately, Captain Michel Pouliot, the past IMPA President and a very experienced and respected participant in international maritime conferences, has agreed to represent IMPA at the IWRAP2 Meeting.

Thank you. I would now be happy to take your questions!