

CONFERENCE OF PARTIES TO THE  
INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON  
STANDARDS OF TRAINING,  
CERTIFICATION AND WATCHKEEPING  
FOR SEAFARERS, 1978  
Agenda item 7

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**CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT AMENDMENTS TO THE SEAFARERS'  
TRAINING, CERTIFICATION AND WATCHKEEPING (STCW) CODE**

**Guidance relating to senior electro-technical officers**

**Submitted by China**

**SUMMARY**

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|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b><i>Executive summary:</i></b>   | This document further discusses the necessity of providing guidance relating to senior electro-technical officer in part B of the STCW Code |
| <b><i>Strategic direction:</i></b> | 5                                                                                                                                           |
| <b><i>High-level action:</i></b>   | 5.2                                                                                                                                         |
| <b><i>Planned output:</i></b>      | 5.2.2.1                                                                                                                                     |
| <b><i>Action to be taken:</i></b>  | Paragraph 8                                                                                                                                 |
| <b><i>Related documents:</i></b>   | STW 41/16; STW 39/7/44; STW/ISWG 2/4/4 and STW/ISWG 2/4/5                                                                                   |

**Background**

1 It is recalled that after an in-depth discussion, STW 41 agreed on the standards of competence relating to electro-technical officer (ETO) at the operational level and electro-technical rating at the support level.

2 Furthermore, having considered as to whether to provide standards of competence relating to senior ETO at the management level, STW 41 decided not to do so. However, some delegates suggested that the competence requirements for senior electro-technical officers should be included as guidance in part B of the STCW Code.

**Discussion**

3 Mandatory competence requirements for ETO include the original competence requirements for electrical engineers as well as new requirements relating to the use of computer and computer network, maintenance and repair of shipboard electronic equipment. The training requirements in the GMDSS maintenance guidance was encouraged to be included in part B of the STCW Code. Notwithstanding the above, such requirements do not contain the higher competence requirements regarding systematic diagnosis, analysis and handling of the electronic equipment.

4 It is therefore difficult to conclude from experience that the attempt by the Organization to distribute the functions of electrical engineers to ETOs meets the current needs of the industry. Current shipping practice shows that electrical engineers are still needed especially on modern vessels, which means that marine engineers, even after some training, are finding it difficult to perform some functions of electrical engineers. An underlying reason might be an underestimation of the growth of navigational technologies and marine engineering electronics, information and intelligence sciences. Hence, future needs should be taken into account when providing the competence standards relating to ETOs so as to adapt to the fast development of marine computer systems and electronic equipment of the current information age.

5 With the development of IT, the training of ETOs may become complicated, time-consuming and costly. Nevertheless the personnel who completed such training may engage in a profession which is replaceable and which may not have complete career requirements. Thus to keep the ETOs only at the operational level may incur the potential decline in the number and quality of the practitioners.

6 In view of the fact that the STCW Convention sets out the standards of competence for ETOs but not the manning requirements, the shipping companies, when meeting the relevant legislation, can allocate ETOs of different levels to work on board as needed.

### **Proposal**

7 In light of the above, it is proposed that guidance is provided in part B of the STCW Code relating to training and certification of senior ETOs.

### **Action requested of the Conference**

8 The Conference is invited to consider the above proposal and take action as appropriate.

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