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COVER NOTE

From: Secretary-General of the European Commission, signed by Ms Martine DEPREZ, Director

date of receipt: 26 March 2026

To: Ms Thérèse BLANCHET, Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union

No. Cion doc.: SWD(2026) 99 final

Subject: COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT Union submission to the 13th session of the International Maritime Organization's Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue proposing to update the Guidelines for the presentation of navigation-related symbols, terms and abbreviations

Delegations will find attached document SWD(2026) 99 final.

Encl.: SWD(2026) 99 final



Brussels, 26.3.2026
SWD(2026) 99 final

COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

Union submission to the 13th session of the International Maritime Organization's Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue proposing to update the Guidelines for the presentation of navigation-related symbols, terms and abbreviations

Union submission to the 13th session of the International Maritime Organization's Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue proposing to update the Guidelines for the presentation of navigation-related symbols, terms and abbreviations

PURPOSE

This Staff Working Document contains a draft submission to the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) 13th session of the Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue (NCSR 13). The IMO has scheduled NCSR 13 from 22 to 26 June 2026.

This document proposes a draft amendment to the Guidelines for the presentation of navigational-related symbols, terms and abbreviations (SN.1/Circ.243/Rev.2) to reflect the latest changes to the underlying IEC standard 62288.

EU RELEVANCE

Navigation equipment, including automatic identification system equipment (AIS), electronic chart display and information system (ECDIS) and IEC standard 62288, is listed in Section 4 of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2025/1533¹. The Implementing Regulation contains design, construction and performance requirements and testing standards for marine equipment. It is based on the empowerment of the Commission to indicate, through implementing acts, the design, construction and performance requirements as well as the testing standards for marine equipment falling within the scope of Directive 2014/90/EU on marine equipment², in accordance with Article 35(2) thereof.

In light of all of the above, the present draft Union submission falls under EU exclusive competence pursuant to article 3(2) TFEU, as the update of the guidelines, once adopted, risks affecting or altering Union legislation and in particular Directive 2014/90/EU.³ This Staff Working Document is presented to establish an EU position on the matter and to transmit the document to the IMO prior to the required deadline of 17 April 2026.

¹ Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2025/1533 of 23 July 2025 laying down rules for the application of Directive 2014/90/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards design, construction and performance requirements and testing standards for marine equipment and repealing Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/1975. OJ L, 2025/1533, 14.8.2025. http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_impl/2025/1533/oj

² Directive 2014/90/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 July 2014 on marine equipment and repealing Council Directive 96/98/EC. OJ L 257, 28.8.2014, p. 146. <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2014/90/oj>

³ An EU position under Article 218(9) TFEU is to be established in due time should the IMO Maritime Safety Committee eventually be called upon to adopt an act having legal effects as regards the subject matter of the said draft Union submission. The concept of '*acts having legal effects*' includes acts that have legal effects by virtue of the rules of international law governing the body in question. It also includes instruments that do not have a binding effect under international law, but that are '*capable of decisively influencing the content of the legislation adopted by the EU legislature*' (Case C-399/12 Germany v Council (OIV), ECLI:EU:C:2014:2258, paragraphs 61-64). The present submission, however, does not produce legal effects and thus the procedure for Article 218(9) TFEU is not applied.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Update of the Guidelines for the presentation of navigation-related symbols, terms and abbreviations (SN.1/Circ.243/Rev.2)

Submitted by Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the European Commission, acting jointly in the interest of the European Union

SUMMARY

Executive summary: This document proposes a draft amendment to the Guidelines for the presentation of navigational-related symbols, terms and abbreviations (SN.1/Circ.243/Rev.2) to reflect the latest changes to the underlying IEC standard 62288.

Strategic direction, if applicable: 7

Output: ---

Action to be taken: Paragraph 12

Related documents: MSC.191(79), MSC.466(101), SN.1/Circ.243/Rev.2, MSC 101/24, NCSR 6/7, NCSR 6/23

Introduction

1 This document is submitted in accordance with the Guidelines on the Organization and Methods of Work of the MSC and MEPC Committee and their subsidiary bodies (MSC-MEPC.1/Circ.5/Rev.6).

2 The Maritime Safety Committee, at its 79th session, adopted the performance standards for presentation of navigation related information on shipborne navigational displays resolution (MSC.191(79)) along with the “Guidelines for the presentation of navigation-related symbols, terms and abbreviations” (SN.1/Circ.243).

3 These guidelines provide guidance on the use of appropriate navigation-related symbols to achieve a harmonized and consistent presentation and list symbols e.g. regarding the presentation of own-ship information, radar target information, AIS target information and route information.

4 Subsequently the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) developed test standards (IEC 62288) for presentation of navigation-related information on shipborne navigational displays.

5 The Subcommittee on Navigation, Communication and Search and Rescue, at its 6th session, revised SN.1/Circ.243/Rev.1 to include new symbols that had been added to IEC 62288. The revision took place as part of the former output item for the development of guidelines on standardized modes of operation, S-Mode. The Maritime Safety Committee, at its 101st session, approved SN.1/Circ.243/Rev.2.

Background

6 In 2015, an accident analysis by the German Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation revealed that one AIS symbol displayed on a radar device of one of the ships involved was neither explained in the operating instructions for the AIS device nor in the relevant IMO guidelines. The report concluded that “the use of unknown symbols, which may be interpreted incorrectly, for the rendering of AIS targets could cause confusion and misjudgement among users”.

7 To this respect, Germany proposed at that time to the IMO Correspondence Group on the development of draft guidelines on standardized modes of operation, S-Mode recommending the Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communication and Search and Rescue to revise SN.1/Circ.243/Rev.1.

Current Status of SN.1/Circ.243/Rev.2 and IEC 62288

8 The current IEC standard 62288:2021/AMD1:2024 contains several new AIS and other symbols not yet addressed by SN.1/Circ.243/Rev.2.

Discussion

9 AIS is important for the safety of navigation and situational awareness. AIS symbols are displayed on radar and ECDIS. The risk that marines are not familiar with the displayed AIS symbols would be reduced, if the symbols were entirely addressed in SN.1/Circ.243/Rev.2, which is referenced also in the AIS model course. To this respect the proposed update of SN.1/Circ.243/Rev.2 is considered to improve the safety of navigation and should be carried out timely.

10 The sole reason for the proposed update of SN.1/Circ.243/Rev.2 is the recent update of IEC Standard 62288. As far as is known, there are no implications for or requirements to amend other IMO instruments.

Proposal

11 A proposal to include new AIS symbols in SN.1/Circ.243/Rev.2 is set out in the annex. If the Sub-Committee agrees with this proposal and noting paragraph 3.2(vi) of document C/ES.27/D, i.e.

“... it being understood that minor corrections/issues could continue to be considered by the committees under the agenda item 'Any other business'”,



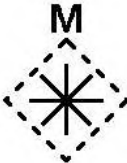
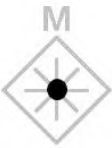




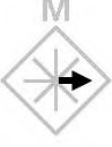

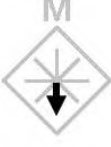



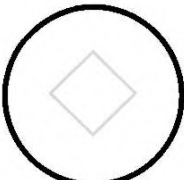
the Sub-Committee is further invited to consider if the most efficient means of proceeding would be for the Sub-Committee to provide its technical advice to MSC 112 on this matter so that the Committee may decide as appropriate.




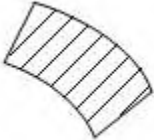




Action requested of the Sub-Committee







12 The Sub-Committee is invited to consider the proposal in paragraph 11, the proposed draft inclusions to SN.1/Circ.243/Rev.2 in the annex and to take action as appropriate.

ANNEX

Proposal to include new AIS symbols in SN.1/Circ.243/Rev.2

Type	Symbol (Virtual)	Description
Light error or combination of light error/off with racon error	<p style="text-align: center;">Error</p> 	<p>Failure is indicated using yellow caution colour with text "Error" on top of the Physical AIS AtoN.</p> <p>In case there is an indication of purpose, the error text should be above the indication of purpose</p>
AIS aids to navigation – Mobile (AIS msg. 21 with AIS status: Page ID = 101)	<p>default virtual</p>   <p>Self-propelled, but direction not reported or unavailable.</p>   <p>Tethered</p>  <p>If COG information is provided.</p>        	<p>Mobile AIS aids to navigation (AtoN) should be presented as an open diamond topped by letter "M" and a compass rose inside centred at reported/predicted position.</p> <p>The diamond and the compass rose should be drawn using a thin solid line style (non-virtual AtoN) or a thin dashed line (virtual AtoN).</p> <p>Mobile AIS AtoN with known direction of movement should include an arrow originating from the compass rose centre oriented towards the reported COG of the mobile AIS AtoN:</p> <p>The orientation mode should be presented aligned with the closest line of the compass rose.</p>
AIS AtoN dimensions – True scaled outline	<p>Outline drawn as a circle; when $A = B = C = D > 1$</p>  <p>Outline drawn as a rectangle; when</p>	<p>True scale outline may be added to the AtoN symbol for AIS AtoN type 3 and 31 using a thick solid line style with the same basic colour used for AtoN symbols, with the A axis of the ABCD values of the AIS AtoN oriented to True North.</p> <p>Used on low ranges/large scales.</p>

	<p>$A \neq B$ and $C \neq D$</p>  <p>Outline drawn as a rectangle; when $A \neq B$ and $C \neq 0$ and $D = 0$</p> 	
AIS SAR aircraft – helicopter		An AIS SAR aircraft – helicopter should be drawn with a thin solid outline with the same basic colour as used for target symbols. The symbol should be oriented in the direction of the COG.
Acquisition/Activation exclusion zone		Solid line boundary for an area with thin solid diagonal lines.
Autonomous Marine Radio (Group B) Device (AMRD B)		An AMRD B should be drawn as hexagon with a thin solid outline with the same basic colour as used for target symbols.
Fairway closure		The fairway closure symbol should be presented as crossed lines centred on a fairway symbol (two converging dashed lines) plus a box around the symbol, drawn using a thin solid line style and using the same basic colour as AIS AtoN.
AIS synthetic target – Distress		AIS synthetic targets for which the source is AIS ASM when FI = 22 or FI = 23 Area Notice with "Sub-areas" set to "0" circle or point and "Area shape" set to "0" and "Radius" set to "0" and "Notice Description" set to a value range from 64 to 74 should be presented as a quadrilateral and centred at the predicted position and oriented to the top of the operational display area and should include a diagonal line across the quadrilateral. The symbol should be drawn using a thick solid line style with yellow colour.
AIS synthetic target		AIS synthetic targets for which the source is AIS ASM when FI = 17 VTS generated/synthetic target should be presented as quadrilaterals oriented to the reported COG and centred at the targets' predicted position. The quadrilaterals should be drawn using a thick solid line style and using the

	<p>AIS synthetic target without COG</p>  <p>Sarah J</p>	<p>same basic colour as AIS AtoN. An AIS synthetic target without a reported COG should be oriented toward the top of the operational display area and should include a diagonal line across the quadrilateral.</p>
<p>Source of a received call or unread message</p>	<p>Some examples together with other symbols. With AIS target</p>  <p>With AIS AtoN physical</p> 	<p>Received call or unread message should be presented by having two increasing centred 1/8 arcs drawn using a thin solid line at upper right-hand side of the AIS symbol. The received call or unread message symbol may be presented to the upper left-hand side of the AIS symbol, centred on the symbol position, if required to avoid overlapping.</p>
<p>AIS base station</p>		<p>AIS base station should be presented as a diamond at the reported position of the base station. The sides of the diamond should be drawn using a thin solid line style and should be the same basic colour as the AIS AtoN symbol. The symbol should be labelled with text "BS" centred in the diamond and the colour of the label should be the same colour as the symbol.</p>
<p>Co-located AIS ASM objects</p>		<p>Co-located AIS ASM objects should be presented as a diamond at the reported position of the AIS ASM objects. The sides of the diamond should be drawn using a thin solid line style and should be the same basic colour as the AIS AtoN symbol. The symbol should be labelled with text "INFO" centred in the diamond and the colour of the label should be the same colour as the symbol.</p>
<p>Weather observation report from ship</p>		<p>The weather observation report from ship symbol should be presented as a diamond with "WX" inscribed inside it. The diamond should be centred at the position derived from the reported position of observation. The sides of the diamond should be drawn using a thin solid line style and using the same basic colour as AIS AtoN. Note that the source of ship weather information may be AIS ASM function identifier 21 when type of weather report = 0 (SN.1/Circ.289).</p>
