AHWG ERS Implementation (06) 2019
Report
Thursday 12 September 2019

Chair: Thord Monsen

1. Opening of the Meeting

1.1 The chair welcomed the participants and explained the aim of the meeting was to finalise outstanding documents and remaining issues and to hear the status of development within the European Union with the aim of moving towards setting a date for start of implementation.

2. Appointment of the rapporteur

2.1 It was agreed that the Secretariat act as rapporteur.

3. Discussion and adoption of the agenda

3.1 The Agenda was adopted as drafted.

4. Finalise outstanding ERS issues
4.1 Details for circulating data for Inspectors

4.1 The Chair introduced the task set out for PECMAC/ERS to ensure the same data was available to all Contracting Party inspectors during the ERS transition period via a filter mechanism. The discussion on circulation of data for inspectors would be informed by an updated paper from the European Union (ERS-IMP 2019-06-04) and a Secretariat paper produced on request of the Chair (ERS-IMP 2019-06-10).

4.2 The Secretariat presented its paper which explained the background and approach to the filtering aspect of the ‘level playing field’, but focused on the Secretariat views on consequences of moving to a once per day catch report as specified in the European Union paper. The European Union explained that while it could explain the several exceptions it expected to be built into the process to allow for different timings on catch reports, it seemed there was a fundamental difference in interpretation between Contracting Parties of the ‘level playing field’ concept agreed at the 2018 Annual Meeting.
4.3 After a short discussion, the Chair concluded that there was indeed a differing understanding between Contracting Parties, although this should not stop the continuing development of the ERS system.

4.4 ERS-IMP agreed to refer the issue of ‘level playing field’ back to PECMAC, explaining the complexity of the issues raised so far, and requesting further guidance to ERS-IMP on interpretation of filtering/level playing field both in terms of data and timing of reports. The European Union indicated it would explore internally the issue of filtering of content as a separate issue from the timing of circulation of reports.

4.5 As part of the discussion on the EU paper (ERS-IMP 2019-06-04), the Working Group also discussed amendments to the detail of the Catch Report tables in the document, including the issue of corrections and cancellations.

ERS-IMP agreed that the tables should be forwarded to PECMAC as part of the document but not to be seen as a final version.

4.2 Mandatory and Optional Gear Characteristics

4.6 ERS-IMP examined potential changes to Table 38 of the Implementation document on gear characteristics (ERS-IMP 2019-06-08). This had been circulated after the last ERS-IMP meeting and further comments had been received.

4.7 The working group discussed detailed changes to the table alongside what options there were to adopt any changes for version 1 or 2 of the ERS Implementation document.

ERS-IMP agreed to adopt ERS-IMP 2019-06-08 with the amendments to the table adopted at the meeting for Version 1 of the Implementation document. Any proposed amendments remaining in tracked changes would be up for further discussion and adoption in Version 2 of the Implementation document.

5. ERS Implementation Document

5.1 Configuration of the timeout (TODT) parameter for the FLUX envelope for ERS messages

5.1 The discussion covered the relative merits of shorter or longer time outs to be applied for ERS messages in the transport layer. As discussed on FLUX VMS (below) the concern of certain parties was the issue of sequencing of resent messages after a break in transmission. The EU explained that if sequencing was an important issue it may be better
for the relevant business layer to await acknowledgement of messages before sending the
next message. It was also noted that experience will be gained on FLUX VMS in production
which could also be acted on in within Version 1 of FLUX ERS

5.2 ERS-IMP agreed that the current TODT of 20 minutes was too short and TODT
configuration of 72 hours, as discussed on FLUX VMS, would be appropriate for the FLUX
ERS ‘version 1.1’.

5.3 Decisions on TODT for Version 2, including the possibility of TODT being different for
different Contracting Parties, was to be further discussed at next JAGDM.

6. Criteria to assess whether the technical preparations are
completed
6.1 List of basic tests

6.1 The Chair introduced the documents for this section; ERS-IMP 2019-06-05 - Test
Scenarios, set out the list of basic tests for the new system and would replace Annex 1 of
ERS-IMP 2019-06-13 on testing of FLUX ERS; ERS-IMP 2019-06-06 set out comments from
Contracting Parties on the test scenarios; while document ERS-IMP 2019-06-11 set out the
criteria to assess when preparations for the adoption of the FLUX standard were complete.

6.2 ERS-IMP discussed the detail of the ERS-IMP 2019-06-05, test scenarios and
amended the text.

6.3 In discussion, the EU agreed to circulate by e-mail the latest EU FLUX Test
Framework as referred to in the Test Scenarios document. It was agreed that once
finalised, the latest version of the FLUX Test Framework should be included in the NEAFC
master data register.

6.4 ERS-IMP noted that not all tests in the document were relevant for all parties, but
Contracting Parties should explain why they have not applied a particular test when they
had not done so. Where a fishing activity/logbook was limited in scope, then certain tests
may not be applicable.

6.5 The European Union considered that too many test cases were focussing on FMC
marking and would generate additional overhead with limited added value. They indicated
that should they do all these tests on FMC markings in ERS Version 1 implementation, they
would expect other Contracting Parties to do the same tests once they started their
implementation process.
6.6 In terms of documentation it was agreed that ERS-IMP 2019-06-05 (as amended) and ERS-IMP 2019-06-13 would be merged as one document. Annex 1 from ERS-IMP 2019-06-13 would be replaced by the text from ERS-IMP 2019-06-05 and then circulated to Contracting Parties for further work and consideration; the document was not closed. The Secretariat was asked to include a simplified reference numbering in the lists of scenarios in Annex 1.

6.7 The Chair then invited the European Union to provide an update from EU on implementation of UN/FLUX with its Member States.

6.8 The European Union noted that while some FLUX VMS testing had been done with the Secretariat no FLUX ERS testing had yet been done. The system had been built and validated internally. The FLUX Test Framework had been shared with the MS with the expectation for ERS testing in 2020.

7. Finalise the NEAFC VMS Implementation document

TODT for FLUX VMS

7.1 Under this item the Chair requested the working group to finalise arrangements for FLUX VMS going into production. The JAGDM Chair described the discussions at the JAGDM meeting the day before which had aimed to agree a TODT for the FLUX. While discussions had not concluded, different TODT for VMS and ERS was a possibility. The Chair noted that documents ERS-IMP 2019-06-09 and ERS-IMP 2019-06-12 had also been provided to help the working group consider the risks and benefits of varying approaches.

7.2 The European Union explained a pragmatic proposal was being put forward between a TODT of 24 and 96 hours, i.e. 36 hours. While this value could be used for the initial period it was likely that the FLUX Transport Layer would continue to evolve to find flexible solutions that could provide parties with different TODTs. The European Union believed a 36-hour TODT would provide sufficient robustness without the need for an e-mail response system as an additional safeguard, as suggested by the Secretariat. Norway noted its main concern was focused on ERS sequencing rather than VMS.

7.3 The Chair noted that the 36-hour TODT provided a solution, nevertheless Contracting Parties should note that this was not a fool-proof solution, but could be an acceptable solution in the short term. He explained that the Secretariat had highlighted that that they did not have the capacity to respond to downtime outside business hours hence the suggestion of an automated e-mail so parties are informed when the system is up, so they could then resend messages. Denmark (in Respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) reminded the working group that it was the responsibility of Flag State Contracting Parties to make sure VMS was running and resending messages.
7.4 In light of the detailed discussion, ERS-IMP agreed that 72 hours would be set as the VMS TODT. The decision was made on the understanding by the Contracting Parties of the risks entailed given that the Secretariat would not be in a position to respond if the system was down outside working hours, including national holidays etc. Discussions in JAGDM would continue.

FLUX Vessel Position Implementation

7.5 The Chair introduced document ERS-IMP 2019-06-03 on implementation of Vessel Position standard. In discussion, various amendments were considered in the tables and diagrams in the document.

7.6 A detailed discussion was had on the need for vessel identifiers/business rules related to the International Radio Call Sign (IRCS).

7.7 ERS-IMP agreed to amend ERS-IMP 2019-06-03 to include in the tables a mandatory IRCS vessel identifier as well as a second vessel identifier. In addition, it was agreed that a business rule must be implemented to check the vessel identifier. This issue could be returned to in the future (Version 2) if it became clear through Secretariat monitoring that it was problematic.

Timing of FLUX VMS in Production

7.8 The final discussion under this item was on the timing for FLUX VMS going into production, which had been covered by the EU and Secretariat papers above (ERS-IMP 2019-06-09 and ERS-IMP 2019-06-12).

7.9 The discussion on the move from testing into production of the FLUX VMS highlighted the risks and benefits of going ahead in the autumn of 2019, as set out in the two papers.

7.10 ERS-IMP agreed it that FLUX VMS should go into production following a test, as a first step, between the EU and the Secretariat on the capacity of the system to handle an increased flow of messages directly from the European Commission. This would be followed by Member State by Member State, one by one going into testing with the Secretariat in acceptance before moving into production. It was understood that there would not necessarily be an accumulation of the acceptance testing from Member States, nevertheless the European Union would encourage its Member States to continue sending messages in acceptance even when they had moved to production if they were willing/able so to do.
7.11 Additionally, ERS-IMP agreed that once a MS was in acceptance, the European Union and the Secretariat would agree timing of the move to production of that MS. If VMS in production turned out to be problematic for a MS then that MS should fall-back to the old system. Final timing of the (first) move to VMS in Production was to be resolved between the European Commission and the Secretariat.

8. Features and timeline for a Version2 Implementation of ERS

8.1 The Chair introduced document ERS-IMP 2019-06-07 with the list of features for Version 2 of the ERS Implementation. ERS-IMP noted that Table 38 (see above) should also be included in the list.

9. Report to PECMAC

9.1 The Chair would report back to PECMAC in the following week.

10. Identifying issues to be referred to JAGDM if any

10.1 The linked issues of TODT, system retries and business continuity planning were referred to JAGDM for further discussions.

11. Next Meeting

11.1 It was noted that discussions at PECMAC would drive a possible further meeting of ERS-IMP before the 2019 Annual Meeting, but no decision was yet made. [It has since been decided that a virtual meeting of the group will be help on Tuesday 8th October 2019.]

12. AoB

12.1 No items.