

STATEMENT OF THE E-LÄSS NETWORK ON THE USE OF FRP IN SHIP BUILDING

To whom it may concern,

In 2002 a new SOLAS regulation in the fire safety chapter (regulation II-2/17) on "Alternative design and arrangements" opened up for new and unconventional ship design; it allows "an alternative to" the prescriptive SOLAS regulations to be "adopted" if, and only if, it can be proven that the safety level given by the prescriptive code is not "adversely affected."

At the IMO FP56 meeting in London, January 2013, a Correspondence Group was given the task to develop guidelines for the use of FRP composites on SOLAS vessels, in conjunction with the SOLAS regulation 17. A first draft was presented at the IMO SDC1 meeting last January and the work continues this year. From a European, industrial and shipbuilding perspective, it is highly important that this work is supported and given the necessary resources for a positive outcome.

Below you find statements of the level of knowledge as perceived by the E-Lass community:

1. FRP composites offer immense potentials for the efficiency of shipping and will contribute significantly to reduce energy demand and GHG emissions in line with the policy goals of the European Commission and the member states.
2. The approach suggested by SOLAS reg.17 does fully cover large deviations from requirements, including the SOLAS II-2/2.2.1.3 functional requirement on "restricted use of combustible materials". This is in line with SOLAS II-2/2.3 and with the scope of reg.17 as originally defined.
3. Reaction and resistance to fire challenges for FRP composites in shipbuilding have been shown to be manageable through many research projects, e.g. LASS, SAFEDOR, LASS-c, De-Light Transport, Cargo Xpress, BESST, etc.
4. FRP composite in shipbuilding should today be considered "Technical projects" and not "Research projects".
5. Several classification societies, institutes and other organizations are today capable of reviewing FRP composite constructions and of issuing formal statements with recommendations for the national authorities on whether an alternative design is acceptable or not.

The above statements are based on a common understanding within the E-Lass network. Should you need some more information, we will be happy to support you in this matter.

Yours sincerely,



Tommy Hertzberg
 Present chair of E-Lass

Included is a list of organizations supporting the above statements. Please note that several stake holder associations are represented, thereby increasing the number of actual supporting organizations substantially.

About E-Läss: E-Läss (www.e-lass.eu) is a network of about 140 international organizations from academia, research centres, ship owners, classification societies, shipyards, suppliers and service providers working on the field of lightweight marine structures. The network cooperates with other European initiatives such as MESA, Coordination Action within FP7, managed by SEA Europe, the European association of shipyards and ship equipment suppliers.

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