

Offshore Industry Advisory Committee		OIAC/MIN/3/2011	
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Exemptions:	None		

Minutes of the Extraordinary Offshore Industry Advisory Committee meeting held on 25th November 2011 at Lord Cullen House, Aberdeen

Present:-

Chairman Steve Walker HSE, Secretariat Mike Readitt HSE, Bill Miller HSE, Paul Logan HSE, Adrian Lester BROA, Emily Comyn IMCA, Allan Graveson, Nautilus UK Phil Ley OCA, Jake Molloy RMT, Jane Bugler (IMCA), Robert Paterson (Oil & Gas UK), Bob Lauder (Oil & Gas UK), John Taylor Unite – TGWU, Paul Wilkins MCA, Pete Thomson MCA, Tim Walsh Lloyds Register, Richard Nott Lloyds Register, and Ian MacKay ABS.

Apologies

These were received from Jim Neilson HSE, Ian Russell COTA, Jane Bugler IMCA, Dave Nicholls Step Change, Neaz Hyder MCA, Ian Tasker STUC, Mark Robinson (Unite) and Brian Negus (GMB).

1. Introductions

- 1.1 The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting and informed the members of the reasons for holding the meeting. He explained that following the issue (on 27th October) of the European Commission's proposal for a regulation on safety of offshore oil and gas exploration and production activities HSE had been working closely with DECC to consider the implications of the proposed regulation and to develop the UK's negotiating lines.
- 1.2 This meeting had been organised to share with representatives the main objectives of the regulation and the key elements of the proposal, particularly, the duties on operators, licensing, creating a Competent Authority, Transparency, Emergency preparedness and co-ordination and co-operation between member states. The Chairman confirmed it was most important and valuable to share information with industry and to seek and listen to their views and concerns. This exchange will assist HSE in formulating its negotiating proposals.

2. European Commission Offshore Regulation Proposal

- 2.1 To raise awareness and prompt debate the Chairman provided a presentation that gave a detailed insight to the background and political reaction to the Deepwater Horizon incident. In addition, he explained the European Commission's response and preferred option to strengthen offshore oil and gas regulatory systems. This included the implications for the UK and the next steps in the process to introduce the proposed regulation.
- 2.2 All members in turn were invited to provide their views on the Commission's regulatory proposal. These are summarised below:

- The proposal is similar to the UK's existing offshore regulations, although there were important differences and some ambiguity.
- The Commission recognises the UK's offshore regulatory regime as 'world class' so why should there be a need to change it?
- An over bureaucratic regulation that would be too resource intensive to implement with little added value.
- The application of EU standards would be difficult to implement internationally.
- The proposal appears to strengthen health and safety standards for the offshore workforce although does not address workforce engagement issues.
- There are significant implications for verification bodies.
- There were concerns that existing offshore regulations would be withdrawn should an EU regulation be introduced, therefore diluting and reducing the UK's high safety standards. Hence, there was some support for the introduction of a Directive rather than a Regulation.

2.3 It was confirmed that HSE and DECC are currently engaged in discussions with members states and the Commission. DECC are currently finalising the UK's negotiating lines and obtaining the European Affairs Committee agreement to them. It was agreed these lines would be circulated to members once known along with any re-drafts of the proposed regulation Articles and key points from EU meetings as appropriate.

Action 1 Nov. 2011:- The secretary to notify members of the UK's negotiating lines once publically available and update them on any key information arising from EU meetings.

Action 2 Nov. 2011:- Members to provide the Secretary with any additional views on the proposed regulation.

3. Any other relevant business

3.1 The Chairman informed members that on 24th November, he had presented to the Step Change Leadership Team (SCLT) a paper containing the OIAC WIG proposals for additional Safety Representative training, and this had received the leadership's team support. The next step will be for the Chairman to write to OPITO to consider the proposals to develop an amended standard for safety representative training in the light of the WIG work, taking account of the increased basic training provided to offshore workers in the MIST training package.