

OPM/MS/5/20/01

Memo to Cabinet No. 78

MEMO TO CABINET PRESENTED BY THE PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER  
FOR COMMONWEALTH AND FOREIGN AFFAIRSACCESSION TO THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON LOAD LINES 1966

The Merchant Shipping Act, 1973 provides that in making the rules for the assignment of freeboard to and the marking of load lines on Maltese ships, regard should be had to the International Convention on Load Lines (1966).

The Convention stipulates that ships engaged on international voyages flying the flag of a State which has acceded to the Convention shall be surveyed, marked and issued with the appropriate International Load Line Certificate.

Certificates issued by or under the authority of a convention government are accepted by other convention governments and each government is empowered to ensure that the conditions stipulated in the convention certificate of a ship are complied with.

At present, Maltese ships operating on international voyages are issued with Non-Convention Load Line Certificates by Classification Societies (e.g. Lloyd's, Bureau Veritas etc) authorized for the purpose by the Government. But such vessels when in foreign convention ports run the risk of having their certificates rejected and of being subjected to new surveys before being granted clearance.

Accession to the Load Line Convention, which, up to this date, has been ratified by 68 countries (being practically all the countries having an interest in merchant shipping) will achieve international recognition for the Load Line Certificates carried by Maltese ships and will also enable us to exercise control on convention ships while at a port in Malta.

According to Article 28(3) of the Convention, the Convention will enter into force in respect of a country three months from the date of the deposit of an Instrument of Accession by the Government of that country with the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization.

Now that the load line rules required for giving effect to the provision of this Convention have been drafted and vetted by the Crown Advocate General, Ministers may wish to approve that the Government of Malta accedes to the International Convention on Load Lines (1966).