

B-2: INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION TO INTERVENTION ON THE HIGH SEAS IN CASES OF OIL POLLUTION CASUALTIES

Name of the convention: International Convention to Intervention on the High Seas in cases of Oil Pollution Casualties

Acronym or short name: INTERVENTION Convention

International organisation in charge of it: International Maritime Organization (IMO)

Summary description (in plain language): This convention was adopted to protect the interest of peoples against the grave consequences of maritime casualties resulting in danger of oil pollution of the sea and coastline; and to recognize that measures of an exceptional character to protect such interests might be necessary on the high seas, provided these do not affect the principle of freedom of the high seas.

The convention affirms the right of coastal state to take such measures on the high seas as may be necessary to prevent, mitigate, or eliminate danger to its coastline or related interests from pollution by oil or the threat thereof, following upon a maritime casualty ([art.I](#)). The coastal state is, however, empowered to take only such action as is necessary, and after due consultations with appropriate interests including, in particular, the flag state or states of the ship involved, the owners of the ships or cargoes in question and, where circumstances permit, independent experts appointed for this purpose ([art.III](#)).

A coastal state which takes measures beyond those permitted under the convention is liable to pay compensation for any damage caused by such measures ([art.V](#)). Provision is made for the settlement of disputes arising in connection with the application of the convention. The convention applies to all seagoing vessels except warships or other vessels owned or operated by a state and used on Government non-commercial service ([art.I](#)).

Date of first approval: 29 november 1969

Date of coming into force: 6 may 1975

Dates of revision and Reasons of revisions:

- **Protocol of 1973** extended the convention to apply also to substances other than oil, such as noxious substances, liquefied gases and radioactive substances.

- **1991 amendments** revised the list of substances drawn up in 1974 to assist the application of the 1973 Protocol.

- **1996 amendments** revised the list of substances attached to the 1973 Protocol, following the adoption of new criteria for their selection.

Applicability (situation of ratification): 78 parties (71,28% of world tonnage) by 30 august 2003. The convention shall enter into force on the ninetieth day following the date on which Governements of fifteen states have either signed it without as to ratification, acceptance or approval or have deposited instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession with the Secretary-General to the Organization (art.XI)

Stakes for ports: Ports activities can be hampered by pollution in high seas as soon as port activities are threatened by pollution of the sea by oil.

The coastal state exercises the right to take measures to “prevent, mitigate and eliminate danger to coastline and related interests from pollution”. So, coastal states have to co-operate with Port State Authorities (art.III) in order to protect maritime coastal, port activities (art.II).

Links with other conventions: [Protocol relating to Intervention on the High Seas in Cases of Marine Pollution by Substances Other than Oil](#) (which extended the convention to cover substances other than oil)

Key-words: oil pollution casualties, intervention, high seas, maritime casualty

Internet hyperlink with other website:

<http://www.imo.org/>

<http://www.comitemaritime.org/>

(full text) <http://sedac.ciesin.org/entri/texts/intervention.high.seas.casualties.1969.html>