

D-7: UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON CONDITIONS FOR REGISTRATION OF SHIPS

Name of the Convention: United Nations Convention on Conditions for Registration of Ships

Acronym or short name: Registration of Ships

International organisation in charge: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
(UNCTAD)

Summary description (in plain language): This Convention aims to stop the phenomenon of registration of ships in foreign states merely for financial purposes through flags of convenience, by strengthening the linkage requirement between the vessel and its flag state ([art.1](#)). The Convention applies to any self-propelled vessel over 500 gross registered tons used in international seaborne trade for the transport of goods and/or passengers ([art.2](#)).

Every State, coastal and land-locked, has the right to sail ships flying its flag on high seas. By virtue of the Convention, a ship shall sail under the flag of one State only at a time, and this State must have entitled it to do so ([art.4](#)).

The Convention contains provisions relating to the role of national maritime administrations, which are responsible for the implementation of international standards ([art.5](#)). State collects appropriate information necessary for identification and accountability concerning ships flying a state's flag and their owners and in having this information accessible; also, ships should have on board documents containing such information ([art.6](#)). The Convention lists the type of information that must mandatorily appear in a State's register.

Two series of conditions are set up to reinforce the vessel-flag State link with demanding one of those series must be wholly respected to allow registration of a ship. The first series deals with ownership of the vessel: domestic law must demand a level of ownership of the vessel by the

State or its nationals sufficient to permit the flag State to exercise effective control over the vessel ([art.8](#)). The second series deals with the nationality or domicile of the ship's officers and crew: domestic law must ensure that a satisfactory part of the ship's complement (officers and crew) be nationals of the flag State or lawfully reside or be domiciled in that State ([art.9](#)).

In order to be registered in a State, the ship-owning company must be established, have its principal business place or have a national representative or management person domiciled in the registration State. It is the States' responsibility to ensure respect of these norms ([art.11](#)).

The Convention takes into account different practices in the shipping industry. Registration may be granted to a bareboat charterer, in which case the Convention must be fully complied with ([art.12](#)). Also, the Convention urges State parties to promote joint venture between shipowners of different countries ([art.13](#)).

Date of first approval: 7 February 1986

Date of coming into force: not yet in force

Dates of revision: no

Reasons of revisions: no

Applicability (situation of ratification): 14 ratifications (as of 11 September 2012)

This Convention shall enter into force 12 months after the date on which not less than 40 States, the combined tonnage of which amounts to at least 25 per cent of world tonnage, have become Contracting Parties to it in accordance with article 18 ([art.19](#)).

Stakes for ports: Ports are not involved in the implementation of international standards and they are not liable for the exercise of the effective control over the vessel. The competent

authority is the flag state (art.5).

Links with other conventions: [UNCLOS](#), [United Nations Convention on International Multimodal Transport of Goods](#), [United Nations Convention on the Liability of Operators of Transport Terminals in International Trade](#)

Key-words: ownership, register of ships, national maritime administration, flag state, shipowning companies, labour supplying country, bareboat charter

Internet hyperlink with other website:

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

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

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

(full text) <http://www.admiraltylawguide.com/conven/registration1986.html>

