

MEMORANDUM FOR CABINET BY THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRIAL
DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea

The question has arisen whether Malta should accede to the "INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION FOR THE SAFETY OF LIFE AT SEA, 1948", which was signed in London on the 10th June, 1948.

2. The object of that Convention, which was accepted by the Government of the United Kingdom on the 30th September, 1949 with effect from the 19th November, 1952, was to replace and modernize a similar convention adopted in 1929.

3. Malta had agreed to accede to the 1929 Convention but after consideration and advice by the Secretary of State for the Colonies it was decided that no useful purpose would then have been served by applying the Convention to any of the Colonies except Hong Kong and Singapore.

4. It may here be pointed out that whilst these two territories had always had major maritime interests, including ship-building, Malta could not offer any attraction to the shipping industry, as the only docks were fully engaged on Admiralty work.

5. With the commercialisation of the docks, the position with regard to the local shipping industry has now been altered. Whereas, previously, ships stayed at this Port for a few days or so, to load or unload goods, all types of vessels, especially tankers, are now coming over for repairs or overhauls which necessitate a prolonged stay. During that time, shipowners usually avail themselves of the possibility to take all the necessary steps to ensure that their ships are made safe for the statutory periods after repairs.

6. In this connection it is remarked that a ship is not considered to be "safe", and will not therefore be allowed to leave any port, unless she carries, inter alia, valid certificates as follows:-

- (a) Safety Equipment Certificate.
- (b) Safety Radiotelegraphy Certificate.
- (c) Load Line Certificate, and
- (d) Passenger Certificate (in the case of passenger boats).

7. These certificates are issued by the authority of the port of registry of the ship but, at the request of that authority, they may also be issued or extended by the marine authority of the port where the vessel happens to lie.

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8. However, in the case of ships registered in countries which subscribed to the convention, the issue or extension of certificates is only valid in convention ports if granted by another convention port authority.

9. For that reason, any convention ship requiring endorsements on, or issue of, safety certificates, would find herself at a disadvantage in that regard if she happens to be at this Port, and would obviously not call at Malta expressly for any such requirements.

10. Already some ships' Masters have remarked adversely on the lack of this facility which, it is not unreasonable to believe, may induce some ships to proceed to other ports for repairs; hence it is considered that acceptance of the Convention is advisable.

11. Hon. Ministers are accordingly invited to agree that the Convention should be extended to Malta and that the Attorney General should prepare the necessary legislation to bring the provisions of the Convention into force.

24th March, 1964.