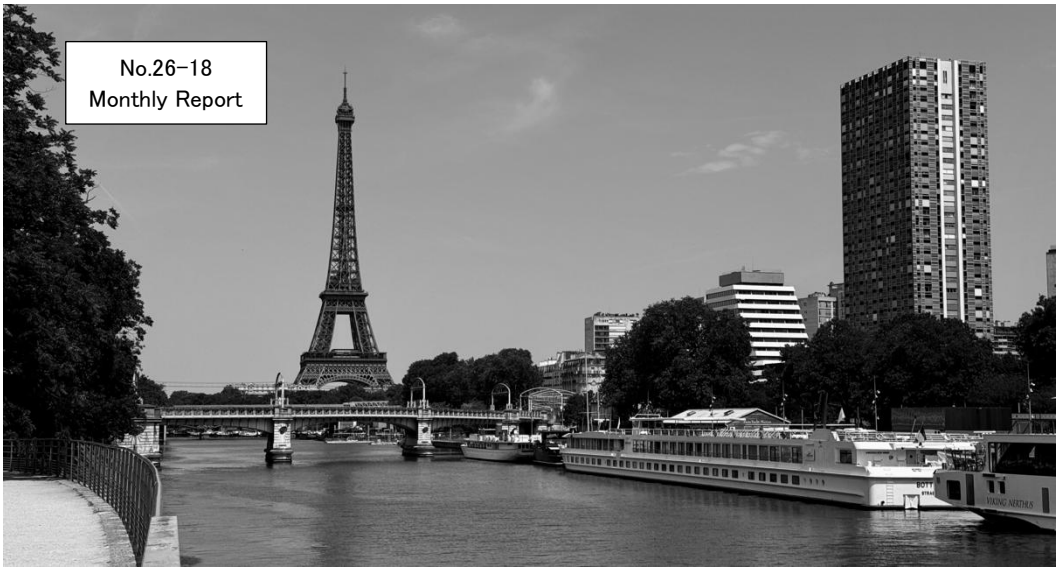

The Eiffel Tower and the River Seine, Paris, France.

European Maritime Safety Report
The Japan Association of Marine Safety
London Research Office

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Summary of Articles

26-18-1. Strengthening Emergency Response Arrangements for UK Offshore Wind Installations

- The UK Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) has revised its emergency response plan template for offshore installations, strengthening search and rescue (SAR) and related emergency arrangements.
- Across Europe, the expansion of offshore wind is prompting further development of incident response and wide-area surveillance arrangements.
- The revision forms part of wider European efforts to strengthen safety and crisis management arrangements for offshore wind installations.

26-18-2. Development of an EU Ocean Observation Framework

- The European Commission has outlined a framework for coordinating and using ocean observation activities conducted by Member States and other bodies.
- Through shared data platforms, the initiative aims to support SAR, safety of navigation and marine pollution prevention.
- The initiative strengthens the information infrastructure underpinning maritime domain awareness (MDA) across Europe.

26-18-3. EU Deliberations on AI and Decarbonisation Policy

- The Shipping Working Party of the Council of the European Union coordinated Member State positions on AI-enabled shipborne equipment, GHG reduction measures and related matters.
- On AI, Member States considered proposing a new IMO work item to develop international standards for the performance requirements and testing methods of AI-enabled shipborne equipment, rather than regulating AI technology itself.
- The discussions remain at the stage of internal EU coordination, with the principal objective of establishing a common EU position ahead of forthcoming IMO meetings.

26-18-4. Extension of the UK ETS to the Maritime Sector

- The United Kingdom has extended the UK ETS to emissions from domestic maritime transport and related activities in UK ports.
- The UK ETS is a carbon pricing scheme under which a price is placed on greenhouse gas emissions.
- The EU and the United Kingdom are now operating maritime decarbonisation measures against the backdrop of discussions on a potential global IMO framework.

(End)

Articles in Full

26-18-1. Strengthening Emergency Response Arrangements for UK Offshore Wind Installations

On 15 July, the UK Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) published on GOV.UK the third edition (2026) of the Hub Emergency Response Co-operation Plan (ERCoP) template for offshore wind, wave, tidal and marine current energy installations. The ERCoP is a standard form completed by the developer or operator and submitted to the offshore energy section of His Majesty's Coastguard (HMCG). It records the installation's location; emergency shutdown procedures and the time required; 24-hour emergency contact details; and the capabilities and operational limitations of support vessels. The form is intended to ensure that essential information is shared in advance, enabling the Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre (MRCC) to initiate search and rescue (SAR) and emergency response without delay. The MCA requires an ERCoP for the construction, operation and decommissioning phases. Operators must submit a revised plan whenever ownership or installation details change and must, in all cases, review and submit an updated plan to HMCG at least annually. Although the template revision is primarily technical, the associated guidance was also revised in May 2026 to include provisions on floating offshore wind and decommissioning. These changes reflect the continuing development of the regulatory framework in response to the expansion and diversification of offshore renewable energy installations. [1-1] [1-2]

To support its objective of achieving climate neutrality by 2050, that is, balancing greenhouse gas emissions and removals to achieve net-zero emissions, the EU Offshore Renewable Energy Strategy sets targets to increase installed offshore wind capacity from approximately 12 GW in 2020 to 60 GW by 2030 and 300 GW by 2050. These targets represent fivefold and twenty-fivefold increases, respectively. Meeting them would require average annual additions of approximately 5 GW to 2030 and 12 GW thereafter to 2050. The EU also aims to deploy approximately 40 GW of ocean energy, including floating wind, wave and tidal energy, by 2050. In recent years, several countries have advanced the joint development of offshore transmission grids and energy hubs, particularly in the North Sea, Baltic Sea and Atlantic. Offshore renewable energy is therefore evolving from a series of individual projects into critical infrastructure supporting the European energy system. [1-3] [1-4]

Offshore wind deployment is also advancing rapidly in the United Kingdom, which has more than 16 GW of installed capacity and ranks second globally after China. The Government has set a target of 43-50 GW by 2030, and several of the world's largest offshore wind farms, including Dogger Bank, are coming into operation. As developments become larger, move further offshore and are built closer together, movements of construction and maintenance personnel have increased, as have operations by crew transfer vessels (CTVs), service operation vessels (SOVs) and helicopters. These changes are significantly affecting the operating environment for maritime traffic and rescue services. [1-5] [1-6]

In response, the MCA requires operators to establish and maintain an ERCoP throughout the installation lifecycle, from construction and operation to decommissioning. If an offshore installation experiences an injury, fire, vessel collision, person-overboard incident, equipment failure or evacuation, rescue authorities may take substantially longer to reach the scene than they would at an onshore facility. Operators must therefore share in advance with HMCG information on the installation's location and structure, personnel numbers, communications, helicopter operations and support vessels, and clearly define the respective roles of the operator and HMCG. The ERCoP must also be updated when new installations or extension areas are developed near existing facilities. [1-1] [1-2]

More broadly, Europe is strengthening maritime safety arrangements for offshore renewable energy not only to improve incident response but also to protect critical infrastructure. Since the 2022 explosions on the Nord Stream subsea pipelines, offshore wind farms, subsea power cables and subsea communications cables have increasingly been treated as critical infrastructure requiring protection against sabotage, cyberattacks and related threats. In the 2023 Ostend Declaration, the North Sea coastal States set targets of approximately 120 GW of offshore wind capacity by 2030 and 300 GW by 2050. At the same North Sea Summit, national security officials discussed the protection of subsea infrastructure. Following a joint declaration in 2024, NorthSeal, a framework for security co-operation, was launched in 2025. In the United Kingdom, the MCA's guidance on offshore wind safety has included a security section since 2024, reflecting the development of arrangements that address both incident response and security. [1-3] [1-7] [1-8]

To support these developments, the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) is broadening its assistance beyond conventional ship safety and oil pollution response. Its work now encompasses safety of navigation around offshore wind farms, support-vessel operations, subsea infrastructure monitoring and maritime surveillance using drones and uncrewed surface vessels. EMSA is also strengthening wide-area surveillance capabilities in anticipation of further offshore renewable energy deployment, including by providing satellite monitoring and remotely piloted aircraft services to Member State coastguard authorities. [1-9] [1-10] [1-11]

This revision is therefore more than a procedural update in one country. It forms part of wider European efforts to strengthen search and rescue (SAR), critical infrastructure protection and wide-area surveillance as offshore renewable energy expands. As offshore installations become larger, more remote and more densely concentrated, coastguard authorities are likely to assume a broader role extending beyond conventional maritime rescue to the wide-area safety and crisis management of offshore installations and subsea infrastructure.

26-18-2. Development of an EU Ocean Observation Framework

On 15 July, the European Commission's Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE) completed the first phase of the study Enhancing Coordination and Synergies in the Field of Ocean Observation (ECOO) and published overview documents describing Europe's ocean observation arrangements. The ECOO study aims to identify duplication and coordination challenges among observation activities undertaken separately by Member States, regional bodies, EU institutions and international organisations, and to support more efficient arrangements across Europe. [2-1]

Four documents were published, covering: (i) the purposes of ocean observation; (ii) competences, governance and coordination; (iii) observation methods; and (iv) existing coordination initiatives. The first explains the relationship between scientific research, policymaking and operational observation. The second analyses responsibilities, competences and coordination frameworks at national, regional, EU and international levels. The third examines observation infrastructure and operations, including research vessels, observation buoys, tide gauges, high-frequency (HF) radar, seabed observation equipment and satellites. The fourth reviews existing coordination mechanisms and opportunities for closer cooperation. [2-1]

National hydrographic offices, meteorological services, marine research institutes, universities and EU bodies conduct ocean observation for different purposes. The ECOO study does not seek to centralise these activities. Instead, it aims to use marine data platforms such as EMODnet (the European Marine Observation and Data Network) to standardise and share data held by individual organisations and enable more efficient use across Europe. The Copernicus Marine Service, the marine component of Copernicus, the EU's Earth observation programme, analyses and forecasts sea conditions. It is funded by the European Commission and operated by France-based Mercator Ocean International. Together, the Copernicus Marine Service and EMODnet perform complementary functions within Europe's marine information infrastructure. [2-2] [2-3]

EMODnet brings together data collected by individual countries on seabed topography, water temperature, currents, sea level, marine biology, marine chemistry, geology and human activities. Users can search and access these datasets across domains through a single portal. The concept is similar to Umi-Shiru, operated by the Japan Coast Guard, which displays marine information from multiple organisations on a map. However, EMODnet is designed for cross-border use and provides a common European marine data platform that includes data standardisation and application programming interfaces (APIs). [2-2]

Integrated and shared ocean observation data support sea-state forecasting by the Copernicus Marine Service; national meteorological and oceanographic forecasting; safety of navigation; drift prediction for search and rescue (SAR); response to marine pollution incidents; climate change measures; maritime spatial planning (MSP); fisheries resource management; and the design and maintenance of offshore renewable energy installations. The data are also expected to underpin Europe's Digital Twin Ocean initiative. [2-4] [2-5]

Although this is not a direct rescue or enforcement measure, it strengthens the information infrastructure underpinning maritime domain awareness (MDA) across Europe and supports both maritime safety and the blue economy. The ECOO study identifies maritime safety as one of the principal uses of ocean observation. [2-1]

26-18-3. EU Deliberations on AI and Decarbonisation Policy

On 10 and 17 July, the Shipping Working Party of the Council of the European Union coordinated Member State positions on maritime policy matters due to be considered at the IMO. The discussions covered: (i) the use of AI in shipborne equipment; (ii) IMO measures to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions; and (iii) on-board carbon capture (OCC). [3-1] [3-2] [3-3]

The Shipping Working Party coordinates the EU's approach to IMO negotiations. Member States agree the content of a Union submission—a document jointly submitted by Member States with EU support—in advance so that they can present a common position. Each EU Member State is a full member of the IMO and has speaking and voting rights. The EU itself is not an IMO member; the European Commission participates only as an observer. A common EU position is therefore agreed in the Council's Shipping Working Party, after which the Presidency, the Commission and the Member States coordinate the submission. This unity is not always maintained: at the extraordinary session of the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) in October 2025, Greece and Cyprus took a different approach from the other Member States. On this occasion, the Working Party sought to consolidate positions ahead of the 112th session of the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC 112), the 12th session of the Sub-Committee on Carriage of Cargoes and Containers (CCC 12) and the intersessional GHG meetings. [3-1] [3-2]

On AI, the Working Party considered a Presidency compromise text for a draft Union submission to MSC 112 on performance standards and testing methods for AI incorporated into shipborne equipment. The draft would propose a new IMO output to develop recommendations on performance standards for AI used in navigational and communications equipment. AI is increasingly used in navigational support, communications, machinery monitoring, anomaly detection and predictive maintenance, but current IMO standards do not contain AI-specific criteria for assessing performance or reliability. The EU is therefore seeking international standards for the safety, transparency and reliability of AI-enabled shipborne equipment, together with appropriate testing and certification methods. The proposed work would address the performance requirements and testing methods for such equipment rather than regulate AI technology itself. [3-2]

On GHG reduction measures, the European Commission reported on the status of work at the IMO. In line with the 2023 IMO GHG Strategy and the mid-term measures under consideration, namely the fuel GHG standard (GFS) and an economic measure, the EU has consistently supported an international framework combining regulation of fuel GHG intensity with an economic measure. Council Decision (EU) 2026/1067 also confirms that the EU position for MEPC 84 is to seek to achieve net-zero emissions around 2050 while maintaining a global level playing field. [3-4] [3-1] [3-2]

On on-board carbon capture (OCC)—referred to at the IMO as onboard carbon capture and storage (OCCS)—the Working Party considered a draft information paper presenting the

results of a technical assessment by the European Commission. The paper is intended for submission to CCC 12. [3-1]

None of the discussions resulted in a new measure; each concerned advance coordination of the approach to be taken at the IMO. The draft Union submission on AI remained under consideration in the form of a Presidency compromise text, indicating that some issues still required agreement among Member States. The GHG item was a progress report from the European Commission, while the OCC item involved sharing the results of a technical assessment. Neither required the adoption of a new EU position at this stage. The EU therefore remains in the process of coordinating its internal position ahead of MSC 112 and related meetings. [3-1] [3-2] [3-3]

26-18-4. Extension of the UK ETS to the Maritime Sector

On 1 July, the maritime sector was added to the UK Emissions Trading Scheme (UK ETS). The scheme now covers greenhouse gas emissions from vessels of 5,000 gross tonnage (GT) and above engaged in domestic voyages within the United Kingdom or in activities in UK ports. In addition to carbon dioxide (CO_2), it covers methane (CH_4) and nitrous oxide (N_2O), calculated on a CO_2-equivalent basis. [4-1]

The scheme covers voyages between UK ports, including movements within a single port, and emissions while vessels are at anchor or alongside in UK ports. Operators must monitor, report and verify (MRV) their emissions and surrender UK Allowances corresponding to those emissions. The first reporting period runs from 1 July to 31 December 2026, and the deadline for surrendering allowances is 30 April 2027. The scheme is being introduced in stages. Offshore vessels of 5,000 GT and above will be brought within scope from 1 January 2027, and the Government is considering extending the scheme to international voyages. [4-1] [4-2]

Since January 2021, following its departure from the EU ETS, the United Kingdom has operated its own emissions trading scheme. Its extension to maritime transport brings market-based decarbonisation policy into the shipping sector. The UK ETS and EU ETS share the same basic cap-and-trade design, but the UK scheme currently covers domestic voyages only, whereas the EU ETS covers a proportion of emissions from international voyages. The UK ETS also differs fundamentally from FuelEU Maritime in what it regulates. [4-3]

FuelEU Maritime is a fuel regulation that requires a progressive reduction in the greenhouse gas (GHG) intensity of the energy used by ships, thereby promoting low-carbon and zero-emission fuels. The UK ETS, by contrast, is a carbon pricing scheme under which operators must purchase and surrender allowances in line with their CO_2-equivalent emissions. It uses the cost of emissions to create an economic incentive for reductions. FuelEU Maritime regulates the GHG intensity of the energy used by ships, whereas the UK ETS places a price on the quantity of greenhouse gases emitted. The two instruments are therefore complementary rather than competing. Within the EU, the EU ETS and FuelEU Maritime apply in parallel. Through the UK ETS, the United Kingdom has introduced an economic incentive broadly comparable to that provided by the EU ETS. The United Kingdom currently has no fuel regulation equivalent to FuelEU Maritime. In its Maritime Decarbonisation Strategy of March 2025, the UK Government indicated that it intends to introduce a domestic fuel regulation following the IMO's regulation of fuel GHG intensity. The details will depend on progress towards adoption of the IMO framework. [4-4] [4-5]

The UK ETS is also closely linked to the global GHG reduction framework under consideration at the IMO: the IMO Net-Zero Framework. The framework combines regulation of fuel GHG intensity with an economic measure. Although approved at MEPC 83 in April 2025, its adoption was deferred for one year at the second extraordinary session in October 2025. Following MEPC 84, held from 27 April to 1 May 2026, the question of adoption is due

to be reconsidered when the extraordinary session resumes on 4 December. MEPC 85 will be held immediately beforehand, from 30 November to 3 December. The EU ETS, UK ETS and FuelEU Maritime, introduced earlier at national or regional level, provide important implementation experience and practical insight. However, if an IMO framework is adopted, avoiding duplicate obligations and ensuring consistency with regional schemes will become major issues. The United Kingdom is therefore likely to operate the UK ETS with a view to maintaining consistency with the international framework. [4-6]

The significance of this development extends beyond the expansion of a domestic UK scheme. While maintaining an independent system following its departure from the EU, the United Kingdom has introduced a maritime carbon pricing mechanism comparable to the EU ETS and begun operating it against the backdrop of discussions on a global IMO framework. The next issue will be how the UK ETS, EU ETS and FuelEU Maritime should be aligned and coordinated if the global framework is adopted at the extraordinary session in December 2026.

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