



Appendix C — Minor treaty actions

Minor treaty actions are identifiably minor treaties, generally technical amendments to existing treaties, which do not impact significantly on the national interest. Minor treaty actions are tabled with a one-page explanatory statement. The Joint Standing Committee on Treaties has the discretion to formally inquire into these treaty actions or indicate its acceptance of them without a formal inquiry and report.

The following minor treaty actions were considered by the Committee on the dates indicated. In each case the Committee determined not to hold a formal inquiry and agreed that binding treaty action may be taken.

Minor treaty action tabled on 18 November 2009

Considered by the Committee on 24 November 2009:

- Amendment to the Convention Establishing a Customs Cooperation Council, adopted at Brussels in 1952.

The amendment to the Convention Establishing a Customs Cooperation Council allows customs and economic unions to join the Customs Cooperation Council, also known as the World Customs Organisation (WCO), subject to the approval of the Council. The primary purpose of the amendment is to allow the European Community (EC) to be admitted to the WCO as a member.

The Australian Customs and Border Protection Service advises that the change will not confer any additional voting rights in the WCO on customs or economic unions or their member states. The financial and legal effect of the ECs accession is also said to be negligible.¹

¹ Explanatory Statement 10 of 2009, p. 1.

Minor treaty action tabled on 25 November 2009

Considered by the Committee on 2 February 2010:

- Amendments to the Annex of the Protocol of 1997 to Amend the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, as modified by the Protocol of 1978 relating thereto.

The amendments revise Annex VI of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships to give effect to a resolution adopted by the Marine Environment Protection Committee of the International Maritime Organization to further reduce harmful emissions from ships.

The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government advises that the practical, financial and legal effect of these amendments for Australia is negligible. The amendments are said to primarily involve a technical change to reduce the global sulphur level in shipping fuel oil. The amendment proposes a two-step reduction in the global sulphur cap from the current 4.5 per cent to 0.5 per cent in 2020. There is not expected to be any cost impact from the initial step on Australian vessels or fuel suppliers, and the second step is subject to a review in 2018 before it is confirmed.²

2 Explanatory Statement 6 of 2009, p. 1.