**The 5th Meeting of the NSR Navigation Stakeholders Council took place in Vladivostok**

The Northern Sea Route (NSR) Navigation Stakeholders Council met for the fifth time on September 11, 2023. This year meeting held as part of the business program of the VIII Eastern Economic Forum in the Marine Conference Hall brought together both permanent members of the Council and invited participants.

The meeting discussed the NSR navigation results for 8 months of 2023, development of portinfrastructure and hydrographic support, as well as the measures that need to be taken to raise the NSR competitiveness. The Council members and invited participants were also presented with theinformation on the Taymyr coal cluster project that is important for the NSR cargo base establishment; the results of the EMERCOM exercises that were conducted in the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation this year; and the progress of rescue centres construction. The participants paid special attention to the functionality of the ERS space system being developed jointly with the Government of the Russian Federation to ensure the NSR monitoring.

“The Council meeting participants noted that cargo owners and shipping companies keep up the momentum for the NSR development plans. A lot of preparatory work has been done to organize a year-round navigation in the eastern sector of the NSR. The focus is, first of all, on maintaining the current pace of the modern icebreaker fleet development, improving ice observation equipment and other safety navigation systems, which will help increase the commercial speed of ships and raise the competitiveness of the Northern Sea Route in general. The issue of construction of the new Gen arctic cargo vessels needs to be considered most seriously. The mechanisms are necessary to be found that would allow for increasing the pace of construction of ice-class cargo ships and of modernization of the existing fleet”, emphasized Sergey Frank, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Sovcomflot PJSC.

Alexey Likhachev, Director General of Rosatom, in his address to the Council, said that it had been a year since Rosatom was granted its extended mandate to manage the NSR. "Over this period, there were no major incidents on the Northern Sea Route, and no vessel requested an emergency icebreaker assistance. For the NSR water area, GlavSevmorput acts as a single navigation and icebreaker-fleet management centre that can ensure safe navigation and stable shipping operations," emphasized Alexey Likhachev. He also pointed out that one of the most important areas is the preparation for the year-round navigation along the NSR that is being done jointly with NOVATEK. "We plan to organize regular through voyages in the Eastern part of the NSR as soon as this winter. The round-year navigation along the whole NSR will bring the NSR to a new level, and it will inevitably turn into an integral component of the global logistics," added Alexey Likhachev.

Sergey Zybko, Director General of GlavSevmorput, reported to the Council about the first in the NSR navigation history transit of a non-ice-class bulk carrier of 17.8-meter draft with 164 501-ton cargo in late August - early September. “Most of the route, the vessel making a voyage from Murmansk to Qingdao with iron ore concentrate on board, went independently with information and navigation support from the HQs of the GlavSevmorput. In the East Siberian Sea, the nuclear icebreaker Sibir provided assistance in the areas of mild ice conditions as part of convoy with the crude oil tanker Olympiysky Prospect and then the nuclear icebreaker Taymyr," noted Sergey Zybko.

Vladimir Panov, ROSATOM Special Representative for the Arctic Development, brought up an issue concerning the need to develop the Arctic logistics for a long term and to set trends towards its cost reduction for all consignors. "Our immediate objective is to shift from the task of unconditional priority to develop the NSR infrastructure to Arctic logistics cost management in order to ensure the competitiveness of all types of cargo, primarily on energy markets. At the same time, it is important that the approach should be long-term in its nature and specified in the program documents, so that each NSR consignor could see the state policy that guarantees the shipping efficiency and competitiveness," noted Vladimir Panov.

**For reference:**

The NSR Navigation Stakeholder Council was created in 2022. The Council permanent members: Nornickel, Gazprom Neft PJSC, NOVATEK PJSC, NK Rosneft PJSC, GDK Baimskaya OOO, Severnaya Zvezda OOO, Rossiyskaya Palata Sudokhodstva OOO, Rosmorrechflot, Rosatom, Atomflot FSUE, Sovcomflot, NSR Arkhangelsk JSC, Hydrographic Enterprise FSUE, FESCO, Rusatom Cargo, Delo Management Company, Sovfracht OOO.

The Council consider and develop proposals for more efficient interaction between investment project operators, the companies engaged with cargo shipping along the Northern Sea Route, and Rosatom as the NSR infrastructure operator.

The comprehensive development of the Russian Arctic is a national strategic priority. To increase the NSR traffic is of paramount importance for accomplishment of the tasks set in the field of cargo shipping. This logistics corridor is being developed due regular freight traffic, construction of new nuclear-powered icebreakers and modernization of the relevant infrastructure. Rosatom companies are actively involved in this work.