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A way forward for regulating a merchant nuclear fleet

This paper addresses the regulation of merchant shipping using nuclear propulsion. With the main international relevant legal instruments, the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the IMO Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) and the IMO Convention on The Liability of Operators of Nuclear Ships and the Code of Safety for Nuclear Merchant Ships, as a starting point the paper suggests how a merchant shipping using nuclear propulsion may be licensed for design, construction, decommissioning and spent fuel management. An important element has been the historical experiences with the merchant ship Otto Hahn and the present regime for licensing military vessels using nuclear propulsion, in addition to the well-established framework managed by national regulatory authorities and classification societies, providing a dedicated rule set and full service for the entire ship lifecycle of conventional shipping. The paper summarizes the results of the effort in the research project NuProShip and has been financed through a grant from the Norwegian Research Council.

Country OR International Organization

Norway

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