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Federation calls for global seafarer vaccination programme

HEALTH & SAFETY

Fatigue relating to lack of shore leave to have safety consequences?

EDUCATION & TRAINING

Seafarer Workforce Report reveals growing global officer shortfall

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the global

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seafarer



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PLUS:

New study shows how port chaplains are supporting seafarers

the global seafarer

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Published by
Nautilus International
on behalf of

**NAUTILUS
FEDERATION**
A Federation of Maritime Professionals

Comment

Workers' rights and good quality employment must be at the heart of any transition to a green economy, Nautilus Federation director **Mark Dickinson** says

With the ever-present fog of Covid-19, it is sometimes hard to see what we might have been doing these last two years if it hadn't been so dominant.

Back in 2018 a young Swedish girl named Greta Thunberg had just begun hitting the headlines with her 'Skolstrejk för klimatet' – 'school strike for climate'. She would go on to be one of the best-known climate activists, accusing the United Nations of 'stealing her childhood and her dreams'.

This summer, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released a report stating that man-made climate change is 'inevitable and irreversible', and in November the port city of Glasgow will play host to the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP 26).

Against this backdrop, the maritime industry is being called on to play its part in emissions reduction more than ever. It is timely, therefore, that I have been working with the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) to produce a Sustainable Shipping policy, which calls for large scale reform to improve standards in the maritime sector and demands that maritime professionals be placed at the heart of a 'just transition' to a green economy.

This policy sits alongside the Union's ongoing Build Back Fairer campaign, designed to inspire a better maritime industry which truly values the seafarers and other maritime professionals who drive world trade.


The policy focuses on eight key areas, including the need for rapid and comprehensive decarbonisation, the



Decarbonisation of the global shipping industry can be an opportunity for maritime professionals, if they are active participants

importance of the human element and training, and the need for real investment from government and industry.

Trade unions including Nautilus International and the Nautilus Federation will be working hard to ensure the maritime industry takes the climate emergency seriously, and together we will be building links with other environmental organisations and social movements to help create a just transition that provides a fair future for all maritime shipping professionals.

Decarbonisation of the global shipping industry can be an opportunity for all workers, if they are active participants. Health and safety, training, improving working and living conditions, and protecting jobs are at the core of what Nautilus International does for its members, and we will continue to work with governments and employers through collective bargaining and our campaigns work to achieve our aims. 



In brief

Vaccinations available in Rotterdam

From 2 August 2021, all seafarers can receive vaccinations at the port of Rotterdam in a two-month long trial, where 10,000 vaccines are available to seafarers from all parts of the world.

The port of Rotterdam has been committed to assisting seafarers during the pandemic, including receiving vessels that have been refused in other countries and assisting in crew changes.

Nautilus has worked with other maritime organisations to advocate for Covid testing in other Dutch ports.

Cyprus to vaccinate seafarers on flagged and managed vessels


Cyprus is reviewing its plans to provide Covid-19 vaccination for seafarers.

The Cyprus Shipping Deputy Ministry (SDM) has issued a circular outlining plans to provide vaccinations to seafarers on Cyprus-flagged and Cyprus-managed vessels.

Cyprus had also been exploring the potential to become a vaccine hub for all visiting seafarers, but indicated this relies on surplus vaccines becoming available from other countries.

In Circular 32 the SDM said: 'Cyprus has decided to make vaccines against Covid-19 available on a first come first serve basis, as long as the stock lasts, to those seafarers serving onboard ships which: (1) are flying the flag of Cyprus (2) are managed by a legal entity based and taxed in Cyprus, if the ship in question calls at a Cyprus port, anchorages or roadstead located with the territory of Cyprus.'

The present intention is to review the availability of vaccines in stock at the end of August 2021, and, 'if it is justified, to revise the offer during September 2021,' said the SDM.

Vaccination should be offered to all seafarers onboard on a non-discriminatory basis, and this includes seafarers who are scheduled to be repatriated, said the SDM. 

ITF names seven more flags of convenience

The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) has added seven more countries to its list of Flags of Convenience (FoCs) after they failed to honour the responsibilities that go with being a flag state.

Ships are typically registered in countries that the ITF considers to be FoCs to reduce tax obligations, employ cheap labour or skirt safety standards.

Four of the countries added to the list – Cook Islands, Palau, St Kitts & Nevis and Togo – are signatories to the Maritime Labour Convention 2006 (MLC). The other three countries are Cameroon, Sierra Leone and Tanzania (Zanzibar).

'What flags of convenience countries do is morally irresponsible,' said David Heindel, chair of the ITF Seafarers' Section. 'They all take the registration fees but do not




▲ FoCs have failed to act during the crew change crisis Image: Getty

have the will or the means to ensure the wellbeing of the seafarers who operate the vessels. The crew change crisis is the perfect example of the havoc the FoC system creates. When becoming a flag state, a large responsibility must be accepted along with it. Too many seafarers end up suffering so that ship owners can trim a few dollars from their crew cost.'

'For more than 70 years the ITF has fought against this crazy

system,' added Steve Trowsdale, ITF inspectorate coordinator. 'Many FoC countries ratify the MLC, but in practice, they simply ignore it, even when we write to them demanding action.'

The FoC system has been blamed by the ITF for exacerbating the crew change crisis, as well as worsening the recent spate of crew abandonment.

The full ITF FoC list can be found at bit.ly/3m16INq. 

ITF calls on Mauritian government to release Wakashio crew on anniversary of grounding

The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) has called for the immediate release and repatriation of the MV Wakashio crew, who have been held by Mauritian authorities for over a year since the vessel ran aground off the coast of Mauritius in July 2020.

ITF Seafarers' Section chair David Heindel said in July: 'This week marks the one year anniversary of the grounding, and the environmental catastrophe associated with it.




▲ Wakashio off Mauritius Image: Getty Images

This week also marks one year since the Mauritian authorities have held members, most detained without charge.'

The ITF has raised its concerns in a letter signed by

Mr Heindel and ITF general secretary Stephen Cotton to the President of Mauritius, appealing for his support to see legal proceedings advanced and the expeditious conclusion of the crew's now-year-long saga.

Nautilus International has also previously warned against the criminalisation of crew aboard the Wakashio, and called for a full investigation into the incident and for Panama to step up to its flag state responsibilities. 



MARITIME EDUCATION PODCAST

President of World Maritime University Dr. Cleopatra Doumbia-Henry discusses the future of education: bit.ly/maritime-education-podcast



FORGOTTEN AT SEA

News channel Al Jazeera covers the recent increase in seafarer abandonments: bit.ly/forgotten-at-sea



ILO global summit acknowledges impact of Covid on seafarers

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) acknowledged the impact of Covid-19 on seafarers, as an agreement on pandemic recovery measures was reached at its 2021 global World of Work Summit.

A report to the 109th International Labour Conference (ILC) by ILO director-general Guy Ryder – 'Work in the Time of Covid' – acknowledged those hardest hit by pandemic, including frontline workers such as seafarers.

'The world's 2m strong maritime workforce has played a critical role in keeping global supply chains moving, but as a consequence has suffered from the seizing up of crew replacement procedures due to anti-Covid-19 restrictions,' he said in the report..

At the ILC delegates from 181 countries unanimously adopted a global call to action outlining measures for a 'human-centred' Covid-19 recovery.

Mr Ryder said the pandemic had shown the world the 'multiple, growing inequalities in our societies'.

The pandemic had also shown,




▲ Opening plenary session of the 109th ILC Conference. Image: ILO

however, that 'we have learned that we can allocate resources differently, reassess social priorities – for example how we reward the front-line workers who have emerged as heroes.'

The conference also heard from US President Joe Biden, who said: 'As we emerge in this pandemic, that has

exacerbated inequity... we have to prove democracy can deliver.

'We do that by empowering workers, raising wages, standing up for union rights, holding bad actors everywhere accountable... centering workers in our trade policy, and building economies that bring everyone along.' 

Scandinavian Star survivor criticises reporting failures

A Norwegian support group for survivors of the Scandinavian Star ferry disaster, in which 159 people died because of suspected arson onboard, has criticised the lack of reporting to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) as a failure to learn from the tragedy.

All serious and very serious marine casualties and incidents must be registered by the flag state with the IMO's public Global Integrated Shipping Information System database (GISIS).

The Scandinavian Star is not listed under Marine Casualties and Incidents. The vessel was registered in the Bahamas and caught fire en route from Denmark to Norway. Several fruitless



▲ Scandinavian Star Image: Sjöhistoriska museet/Wikimedia

investigations have been carried out over the years.


The Danish Maritime Accident Investigation Board said that, as the fire was not an accident, it does not need to be reported to

GISIS. 'Conscious, criminal actions such as arson or terror are not regarded as being covered by the definition of accidents,' it said.

GISIS was set up 15 years after the disaster. However, that does

not prevent reports of earlier incidents being made.

Jan Halvor Horsem, whose pregnant wife died in the fire and who runs a Norwegian support group for survivors and relatives, said the incident should have been reported to IMO. If an incident is not reported, it cannot be investigated or analysed.

Bahamas Maritime Authority deputy director Tom Jenkins said a joint investigation committee was established after the incident. He told Nautilus there was no requirement to upload reports prior to GISIS inception. He did not respond to explain whether the Bahamas itself had investigated. 



News every day at:
www.nautilusint.org

INDUSTRY

LATEST NEWS & INSIGHT



In brief

Historic appointments for women in the Falklands

Two women maritime professionals have made history in the Falkland Islands as its Maritime Authority implements a new structure.

Captain Joanna Cox, an experienced master, was appointed as the new harbour master and was due to take up her appointment in the Islands in June.



▲ Captain Joanna Cox All images: Falkland Islands Maritime Authority

Much of her career has been spent on research ships operated by the British Antarctic Surveys.

She also worked as government officer on the island of South Georgia between 2012 and 2014.

Capt Cox is joined by Lydia Hutchinson, who will be taking up a role as one of two maritime officers in the islands.

Ms Hutchinson started her career as a radio producer, worked as a development manager for the Association of Port Health Authorities in London, and as third officer for Carnival UK (P&O and Cunard Lines) after qualifying from Warsash Maritime Academy.

She recently studied for an MSc in Environmental Consultancy at Plymouth University. **i**

ITF inspectors recover \$45m in unpaid wages in 2020

The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) inspectors have recovered nearly US\$45m in unpaid wages for crew in the past year.

Inspectors work on behalf of the ITF's long-running FOC Campaign, which aims to eliminate the flag of convenience (FOC) system and ensure that seafarers who serve on FOC ships are not exploited.

Inspectors helped thousands of seafarers left unpaid by their employers. They performed 7,476 inspections, many in flag of convenience states, including Panama, Liberia, the Marshall Islands, Malta and Antigua. Inspectors recovered \$44,613,000 in owed wages worldwide even though the number of inspections was down 25% on 2019.



▲ ITF Inspectorate coordinator Steve Trowsdale Image: ITF

ITF Inspectorate coordinator Steve Trowsdale said: 'Despite there being fewer inspections that we were able to undertake due to Covid restrictions, our inspectors actually recovered almost the same amount of owed wages for seafarers.'

'The pandemic has proved genuinely difficult for some shipowners who were

already running marginally viable operations. But financial challenges faced by companies are no reason to suspend the payment or not uphold seafarers' human rights.'

ITF also helped hundreds of seafarers to survive and get home after they were abandoned by shipowners. **i**

UK withdraws red list quarantine exemptions for cruise crew

The UK withdrew red list quarantine exemptions for cruise industry crew from 04:00 hrs on 19 May 2021.

Any seafarer arriving in the UK from a red list country to work on a cruise ship, or who has worked on a cruise ship in a red list country in the last 10 days, must enter managed quarantine for 10 days, the Department for Transport confirmed.

Affected cruise crew will be required to book a managed quarantine package before arriving in the UK.



▲ Image: Getty Images

The change does not affect exemptions for seafarers on any other ship type.

Seafarers working on a cruise ship in an amber list country are not affected.

Seafarers requiring hotel quarantine must enter England via one of the following sites: Heathrow Airport; Gatwick Airport; London City Airport; Birmingham Airport; Farnborough Airport; Bristol Airport; any military airfield or port.

Different rules may apply in devolved administrations, with the Welsh government mirroring UK arrangements but Scottish rules stricter and more complex than those in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. **i**



OUT OF SIGHT...

...Not Out of Mind is the ITF Seafarers' Trust photography competition for Day of the Seafarer: bit.ly/itf_seafarers_trust



GLOBAL MINIMUM TAX

ETF explains the effects a global minimum tax would have on flags of convenience: bit.ly/global_minimum_tax



FOR COVID-19 FAQ

INDUSTRY



nautilusfederation.org

Union recoups unpaid crew wages from SijFa Cruises following dockside protest

Dutch company SijFa Cruises has paid more than €20,000 (£17,087.55) in outstanding crew wages and social benefits following a dockside protest by Nautilus International.

On Sunday 11 July, Swiss and Dutch Nautilus officials launched a protest during the embarkation of a rivercruise vessel in Arnhem, Netherlands, against SijFa Cruises.

From 2018-2020 Nautilus received complaints from members about outstanding wages, overtime and pension contributions; poor working conditions; and refusal to offer medical treatment. Crew on three ships were employed by a subsidiary, SijFa Crewing in Switzerland.

Legal action in 2019 brought on behalf of members in Switzerland was thwarted when SijFa Crewing ignored the court's invitations and shortly afterwards dissolved. SijFa Crewing then restarted its business in Switzerland with a new address.

In 2020 the Union again filed for court action to recoup unpaid wages. On 10 September a first conciliation hearing took place at the court in Glarus, Switzerland.

The lawyer acting for SijFa in Switzerland said that he had had no contact with Dutch management since April 2020 and could not



▲ Nautilus official Holger Schatz (left) at the SijFa Cruises protest

comment on the wage demands.

In October 2020 SijFa Crewing filed for bankruptcy in Switzerland and was liquidated. Nautilus International is now trying to hold SijFa legally responsible in the Netherlands.

'Nautilus believes that all management decisions and all instructions to employees were always made by SijFa Cruises in Holland,' Nautilus official Holger Schatz said.

'We are of the opinion that SijFa Cruises BV, Malden Nederland is responsible and

liable for the claims of the employees against SijFa Crewing Switzerland.'

After using the Swiss flag in the past, SijFa now partly operates under the Maltese flag and issues employment contracts through a 'branch' in Cyprus according to local law.

'This case is just one example of the non-transparent corporate structures in the rivercruise industry,' Mr Schatz continued. 'Companies often choose favourable tax and labour law and, as this example shows, are very difficult to reach legally. A lot needs to change in the rivercruise industry.' **i**

Recruitment scams flushed out by new global service

The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) has launched a new website, ITFSkipBeSure, as part of its ongoing project to ensure seafarers are not scammed by fake crewing agents.

The website aims to be a unique reference point for seafarers during the recruitment process. It includes information on their rights, and how to identify recruitment scams and rogue or fake agents. It also aims to enable seafarers to look up details on the latest



▲ The new International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) website ITFSkipBeSure Image: ITF

crewing scams and browse a list of registered crewing agents.

The ITF receives information regarding the illegal practices

of some crewing agents, and will be implementing a rating system. Those where the ITF has no information they are engaged in activities that violates seafarers' rights will appear on the green list. An agent is red listed when the ITF has confirmed evidence of non-compliance with the MLC.

The ITF will post press and social media releases after they confirm valid allegations against an agent and have moved them to the red list, to warn seafarers. **i**

ETF RENEWS CALLS FOR ACTION PLAN ON INLAND WATERWAYS

Questions must be answered over the legal framework for the inland waterway transport sector, including enforcement of working time rules, and legislation on social security and posting, writes **Estelle Brentnall** of the European Transport Workers' Federation



In late June, the European Commission published a communication on NAIADES III: Boosting future-proof European inland waterway transport.

The European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF) has for years highlighted the loopholes in the governance system of inland waterway transport in Europe, and eventually the penny seems to have dropped. The Commission clearly identifies in this action plan that due to the cross-border nature of many work contracts in the sector, there is a need to evaluate the legal framework for inland waterway transport; in particular enforcement of the working time rules, legislation on social security and posting, and how the rules are implemented by member states.

The Commission highlights the fundamental importance of ensuring a genuine link between the owner/operator of the company and workers' rights. There is a clear recognition that the sector needs a reliable, real-time, digital controlling capacity.

The rivercruise fleet in Europe has constantly increased since 2004, centred on the Rhine and Danube. IG RiverCruise estimates there are currently 12,000 persons active in hotel- and catering-related activity on rivercruise vessels, compared to 2,500 persons who are working in the nautical field.



As a recent report on European inland navigation published by the Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR) shows, the industry is characterised by international and complex company structures. A rivercruise vessel may be registered in Switzerland, with Cypriot employment contracts, hosting guests from Europe and overseas, and might cross several countries.

Regrettably, ETF's members have witnessed some rivercruise companies taking advantage of the EU single market rules to hire workers from countries with limited economic opportunities to minimise wage costs, their wages thereby not reflecting the hardships of the work on a cruise vessel. Unacceptably low wages, excessive working hours, unpaid overtime, and appalling working and living conditions have been reported.

▲ The river Rhine port of Basel in Switzerland
Image: Nautilus International

Since the late 1990s we have seen ever more companies move employment to countries which offer cheaper social security and/or income tax systems, initially Luxembourg and Switzerland. Employers could offer employees the same net salary and access to a comprehensive social security at costs some 30% lower than in Germany or the Netherlands.

Then Cyprus and Malta started to open up their maritime registers to rivercruise vessels, and provided licences to recruit staff. Both Cypriot and Maltese social and labour legislation are being used to increase profit margins at the expense of the crew members who find themselves without comprehensive social security coverage and long-term benefits.

The ETF has raised many concerns about employees working on rivercruise vessels on the Rhine or Danube and employed by a company registered in Malta or Cyprus, bearing in mind that these two countries do not even have any navigable rivers.

Now the European Commission and the member states have a duty to deliver. We expect adequate and coherent follow-up of the Naiades III action plan from both the European Commission and member states.

It's imperative to act swiftly and to clarify the legal situation: which legislation applies, which rights employees enjoy and what protection can employees expect.



Seafarer kidnappings: global action needed in the Gulf of Guinea

The Gulf of Guinea is a hotspot for piracy, with the International Maritime Bureau reporting 130 cases of kidnapping in 2020 – over 95% of all crew members kidnapped worldwide. The situation continued to worsen in the first quarter of 2021, prompting an international response from the shipping community and maritime organisations to tackle this growing threat to vessels and seafarers, **Saffiyah Khalique** reports

There were reports of 195 cases of piracy and armed robbery worldwide in 2020, an increase from the 162 reported in 2019, according to the International Maritime Bureau (IMB). This rise in cases has been attributed to the increase of piracy reported in the Gulf of Guinea, as well as more cases of armed robbery in the Singapore Straits.

In 2020, 161 vessels were boarded, there were 20 attempted attacks and 11 vessels were fired upon. Some 135 crew were kidnapped

globally, with the Gulf of Guinea accounting for over 95% of crew kidnapped. In 80% of incidents the attackers were armed with guns.

In the first quarter of 2021, the IMB reported 38 incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships compared with 47 in the first quarter of 2020. This threat of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea has only grown, with the area accounting for 43% of all reported incidents and – as mentioned above – a shockingly high percentage

▲ The Gulf of Guinea, where a surge in piracy is putting seafarers' lives at risk
Image: Getty

135 crew were kidnapped globally in 2020, with the Gulf of Guinea accounting for over 95%

of kidnappings. These incidents include two vessels being fired upon and the hijacking of a vessel.

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNDOC) just four to six groups were responsible for nearly 25 kidnappings of seafarers in the Gulf in 2020. The pirates have received a total of nearly \$4 million USD in ransom. The report suggests that pirate groups appear to have connections at the political level in the Niger Delta region in Southwest →

Nigeria, which could provide an explanation for the lack of action taken towards piracy in the area.

The UNDOC said the weak level of prosecution could be a ‘motivating factor for pirates that see great opportunity and very little risk’.

The Gulf of Guinea was listed as an at risk area by the Joint War Committee (JWC), a Lloyd’s market committee looking at insurance reporting requirements. Seafarers have the option of leaving their vessel before it enters the area and payrates are higher, reflecting the risks of operating there. The JWC notes that oil cargo seizures have been a problem in the Gulf of Guinea, but the recent focus is on abductions.

What is being done?

On 17 May BIMCO and Danish Shipping produced the Gulf of Guinea Declaration on Suppression of Piracy. It demands that no seafarer should have to face the risks of kidnapping and violence when transporting cargo, supporting the offshore sector, or fishing in the Gulf of Guinea.

More than 300 shipowners, charterers and flag states have joined this pledge so far. Co-signatories include A.P. Møller-Maersk, CMA CGM and Hapag-Lloyd.

The declaration names the ways in which they aim to combat piracy in the Gulf, including supporting anti-piracy law enforcement, supporting the deployment of law enforcement from regional coastal states, facilitating the implementation of effective shipboard defensive measures, and improving the domain awareness and sharing of relevant information between anti-piracy law enforcement forces and agencies. Signatories will support the fight against piracy onshore by providing prison facilities for arrested pirates and encouraging coastal states in the Gulf of Guinea



▲ Barbed wire to protect crew against pirate attack in the Gulf of Guinea
Image: Lucia Gajdosikova / Getty

to actively prosecute.

The Declaration sets goals for the end of 2023, according to which, as a bare minimum:

- the number of attacks by pirates should be reduced from current levels by at least 80%
- no seafarers should have been kidnapped from a ship in the preceding 12-month period

Danish Shipping CEO Anne H. Steffensen said: ‘Denmark cannot take this big task on alone, so more people both in and outside the region must follow suit. Otherwise, creating better security for seafarers in the area will just happen too slowly.’


On 18 May, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) released a resolution on recommended action to address piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea adopted by the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC). It calls on member states, national authorities, the United Nations and other organisations to consider strengthening law enforcement to arrest and prosecute pirates in relevant jurisdictions, in accordance with international law and national legal frameworks.

The resolution also calls for improved governance of available solutions, such as security escort vehicles to assist other vessels. Member states, other authorities and organisations are encouraged to support wider participation in the work of the Gulf of Guinea

Maritime Forum, Friends of the Gulf of Guinea and other platforms.

The IMO highlights the need for greater collaboration with all critical stakeholders, including information sharing on maritime criminality and illegality, use of maritime domain awareness and the use of surface and/or air patrols.

Meanwhile, although facing growing instability in the country from multiple sources, Nigerian authorities have launched the Deep Blue Project, their own initiative to tackle piracy with land, sea and air assets: a ‘Command, Control, Communication, Computer and Intelligence Centre’ (C4i) to gather data and intelligence; 16 armoured vehicles for coastal patrol; around 600 specially trained troops; two surveillance aircraft, four unmanned aerial vehicles and three helicopters for search and rescue; two special mission vessels and 17 fast interceptor boats.

The Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) began the final phase for the delivery and installation of assets on 12 May. NIMASA director general Dr Bashir Jamoh said there had already been a drastic reduction in the rate of attacks in the country’s Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ): ‘The figures we are getting from the International Maritime Bureau are encouraging. We ultimately aim to completely eradicate security hindrances to shipping and business generally in the Nigerian maritime domain.’ 


KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

The most recent update to international employment rights for seafarers captured by pirates came into effect on 26 December 2020. The new rights – set out in the 2018 amendments to the ILO Maritime Labour Convention – ensure that a Seafarer Employment Agreement (SEA) will remain in place while a seafarer is held captive by pirates on or off the ship. This still holds even if the seafarer’s contract expires or is terminated by the shipowner, ensuring that seafarers will still be paid their full wages whilst in captivity and receive any other entitlements due from the shipowner under the terms of their SEA, collective bargaining agreement or national law of the flag state. These entitlements could include holiday pay and pension contributions.

According to the International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF), seafarers working on vessels that are covered by the International Bargaining Forum (IBF) and Total Crew Cost (TCC) agreements are entitled to be informed at the time of assignment if the vessel is bound for or may enter any Warlike Operations or High-Risk areas, and an up-to-date list of IBF Warlike Operations areas should be kept onboard and made accessible to the crew. Seafarers are also entitled to know if they are entering a Warlike Operations area while at sea.

Entitlements depend on the area entered. If a vessel enters a Warlike Area you:

- have the right not to proceed to such an area and are entitled to repatriation at the employer’s cost
- are entitled to double compensation for disability and death
- are entitled to be paid a bonus equal to 100% of the daily basic wage for the duration of the ship’s stay (minimum of five days’ pay)
- have the right to accept or decline an assignment in a Warlike Area without risking losing employment or suffering any other detrimental effects

There is also employment protection in place if a seafarer becomes a captive because of piracy or hijacking inside or outside the IBF and ITF designated areas. For vessels covered by non-IBF (TCC) agreements, the areas are designated by the ITF. 



▲ Atlantic Princess Image: Alf van Beem/Wikimedia Commons

May 2021 cases

A day after BIMCO and Danish Shipping announced their declaration to tackle piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, five crew members were kidnapped from a Ghanaian fishing vessel.

On 19 May 2021, the Atlantic Princess became the first reported kidnapping in the Gulf in nine weeks. Security analysts at Dryad Global said the vessel was approached by one speedboat with eight pirates onboard. The vessel was reportedly fired upon prior to being boarded by five armed men. The vessel is understood to have been hijacked and sailed south before pirates departed the vessel. The five kidnapped crew are a Korean captain, Russian bosun, and Chinese chief officer, engineer and second officer.

Two weeks later, Dryad Global reported another kidnapping in the Gulf. The Iris S was attacked and boarded 108nm south of Cotonou resulting in the kidnapping of five crew members. The vessel was reportedly attacked by armed men on two speedboats. The pirates are understood to have stolen crew property.

According to Dryad, trends have shown that in the past 18 months pirates have begun to expand their attacks beyond the Nigerian EEZ. This is possibly due to the increased security in the area. 

SAILS OF THE CENTURY

After many years at the fringes, wind propulsion technology for large commercial vessels is suddenly being considered as a serious proposition. **Sarah Robinson** looks at some of the existing players and the new systems that are attracting interest as the shipping industry works to meet its emissions reduction targets

The shipping industry likes to talk up its green credentials, and it's true that transporting goods by sea and inland waterways is – pound for pound – much less polluting than air freight and can get trucks off the roads. However, there's no escaping the fact that shipping as a whole accounts for over 2% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions, and burns some particularly dirty fuels.

With that in mind, new ways of using wind propulsion have been explored for some years as a way of cutting fossil fuel use, and we could now be on the brink of widespread take-up of this technology.

Sailing back to basics

Before we look at recent innovations in wind propulsion, it's worth noting that there are proponents of a full return to the golden age of sail. One 21st-century freight company run according to this

principle was featured in a past edition of the Nautilus Telegraph, and is still flourishing.

The Netherlands-based firm Fairtransport started trading in 2007, working with ethical food producers to transport high-end products such as coffee, chocolate, olive oil, wine and rum by tall ship. Fairtransport's stated mission is 'to revive cargo shipping under sail, to build an impactful and strong worldwide movement, and to inspire others with alternative shipping methods'.

Fairtransport is partnered in the UK with New Dawn Traders, which does not yet have its own tall ship but has co-created the Sail Cargo Alliance 'to support a new and growing community interested in shipping ethical cargo under sail'.

Operators in this community are genuine freight transporters employing STCW-qualified crew, but they often carry paying passengers and offer sail training to help keep their businesses viable; and although

▲ The cruise ferry Viking Grace having its chimney-shaped rotor sail installed in 2018. In April 2021 it was reported that the three-year trial of the Norsepower device had been successful. Image: Viking Line

their movement is growing, they readily admit that their traditional tall ships will never fully replace motorised shipping. Other options are needed to bring wind propulsion to mainstream cargo shipping as an auxiliary power source, and one well-established piece of technology is the SkySails towing kite.

A modern wind tech pioneer

The SkySails device looks rather like a parachute, but is for pulling a vessel along rather than slowing a person down. It is installed at the bow of a ship and deployed (away from port) by using a telescopic mast to unfurl the kite and launch it into the air.

Germany-based SkySails was a leader in the development of modern wind propulsion technology, and has spent the last two decades refining its product to the point where it can now claim that C 320 kite generates up to 25 times more energy per square metre than conventional sails. This means that, with a kite area of 400m², the C 320 replaces up to 2 megawatts of propulsion power from the main engine.

When it was founded in 2001, the company was advocating for green tech at a time when carbon emissions were a low priority for most shipowners, and having boldly led the way, it is good to see that it is still in business today. Yet it would be fair to say that the SkySails has never had a major breakthrough; it is not common to see the world's cargoships being pulled along by towing kites.

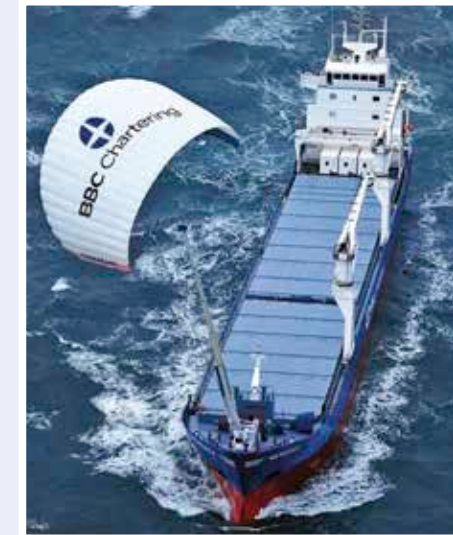
But maybe SkySails's big moment could be soon to come – offering its tried-and-tested product alongside new players in the wind propulsion market as momentum finally builds towards mass adoption.

Where are we now?

Things have changed a great deal in the last few years. International conventions on reducing emissions from shipping have been coming into force, so inventors and entrepreneurs have seized the moment to design wind propulsion devices to meet the decarbonisation need.

One example is Norsepower's 'rotor sails', which are large cylindrical devices rotated by a relatively low-power battery. They generate thrust using the Magnus Effect, in which pressure changes are created as the wind hits a spinning object. Under development and evaluation since 2012, the rotor sails can be spotted in trial on a variety of vessels, including a Maersk tanker, a Sea-Cargo ro-ro and a Viking Line cruise ferry.

Another innovation along similar lines is the 'eSail' by bound4blue. A rigid 12-metre-high sail equipped with an autonomous control system, the eSail was developed with the support of EU funding schemes and entered commercial operation



▲ The SkySails towing kite, a pioneer in modern wind propulsion tech Image: SkySails



▲ The bound4blue eSail in operation on the fishing vessel Balueiro Segundo in June 2021. Image: bound4blue



▲ Artist's impression of the planned WindWings system by BAR Technologies and Yara Marine Technologies

in June 2021 on its first ship: the fishing vessel Balueiro Segundo.

A further product, WindWings, is in development through a collaboration between marine engineering consultancy BAR Technologies and Yara Marine Technologies – a manufacturer known for its fuel scrubber systems. WindWings is still at a conceptual stage, but the aim is to build solid wing sails that measure up to 45 metres, fitted to the deck of bulk carriers, tankers and other large vessels. Simulations suggest by combining wind propulsion with 'route optimisation', WindWings could offer fuel saving up to 30%.

There are many more wind propulsion devices out there in development and operation, as evidenced by the fact that manufacturers and users of the technology now have their own industry body: the International Windship Association (IWSA) – which also counts traditional tall ship operators like Fairtransport among its members.

The tipping point for wind?

With the UN Climate Change Conference COP 26 approaching in November 2021, IWSA is taking the opportunity to get its message out about the benefits of wind propulsion. In March this year it sent an open letter calling on the shipping community to put 'readily available and proven wind propulsion solutions... at the heart of decarbonisation deliberations'.

IWSA is also highlighting the momentum building in the wind propulsion movement and the rapid technological developments seen over the last two years.

If the industry body's words aren't just hot air, it looks like many more Nautilus members could soon be seeing auxiliary wind propulsion devices installed on their

vessels – until perhaps all newbuilds include this tech as standard. But are the safety, workload and training needs of seafarers being considered in the rush towards widespread adoption?

Nautilus professional and technical officer David Appleton says this is one to watch. 'Through our work with bodies like the International Maritime Organization, International Labour Organization and International Transport Workers' Federation, we will keep a close eye on the regulatory framework surrounding new wind propulsion tech,' he notes. 'We welcome ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in shipping, but we need to make sure seafarers stay safe. If any members have concerns about operating wind propulsion devices on their vessels, please come to us to discuss this and we will offer assistance as well as collecting feedback to pass on to the regulatory authorities.'



TRAPPED ONBOARD

The International Chamber of Shipping, International Maritime Organization and International Transport Workers' Federation are concerned with the growing problem of crew abandonment, which leaves hundreds of seafarers trapped on their vessels, sometimes for years. **Rob Coston** reports

International organisations are expressing concern about the rise in cases of crew abandonment worldwide during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Although abandonment has long been a scourge, figures collected recently show that it has been worsened by the pandemic.

The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) maintains a database of abandonment cases. According to the ITF, the number of ship abandonments the organisation is dealing with has more than doubled since

the start of the pandemic, from 40 cases on the database in 2019 to 85 in 2020. The scale of the problem becomes clear when it is understood that these 85 cases involved more than 1,300 seafarers. The problem is also worldwide, with cases from China to the UAE to Italy.

A further 28 cases have been added in 2021. ITF Inspectorate coordinator Steve Trowsdale warns that these officially reported cases are just 'the tip of the iceberg', with many more going unreported.

The International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) reported in June that it has been involved

in the repatriation of more than 100 seafarers during the past two years.

Meanwhile, in collaboration with the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) maintains a database of cases of abandonment involving seafarers (the ITF database also feeds into this).

In the IMO Legal Committee session from 26-30 July 2021, delegates noted the alarming increase in the number of abandoned seafarers added to this database. From 1 January 2020 to 1 April 2021, 111 new cases had been reported.

Image:
Lee Patten /
Nautilus

The 85 cases in 2020 had already set a record high, but an additional 26 cases were added in the first quarter of 2021 alone.

On 26 July, when the committee met, of these 111 cases, only 43 had been resolved. Another 27 were added in the second quarter of 2021, continuing the disastrous trend.

Living up to responsibilities

Organisations examining the problem have found that it is often related to a failure on the part of nations worldwide to fulfil their obligations to seafarers – both legal and moral.

'Abandonment is on the rise, and sadly a reason for that rise has been flag states not living up to their responsibilities to seafarers,' said Mr Trowsdale. 'Flag states are supposed to ensure that ships that fly their flags are paying seafarers on time, repatriating them at the end of contracts, and providing the necessities of life.'



Flag states are supposed to ensure that ships are paying seafarers on time, repatriating them at the end of contracts, and providing the necessities of life

The flag of convenience system (FoC) does seem to be a major contributing factor. The ICS has identified an issue over the past year with FoC states that have not ratified the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC), which guarantees basic rights for seafarers and mandates that shipowners have insurance to cover abandonment. Many of the recent cases are related to vessels registered in these countries, especially Ukraine, Cameroon, Bahrain, and Bolivia.

However, other countries that do have reputable flags and are signatories to the MLC have also been condemned for failing to live up to their obligations. These countries include India, which has the largest number of abandoned seafarers, and Panama, which had the largest number of cases of ship abandonment in the past year.

Information is vital

The IMO Legal Committee emphasises that keeping the abandonment databases up to date is vital to tackling this growing problem. It encourages member states to report incidents of abandonment to the database when they occurred in their ports or on vessels flying

their flag; and to further ratify and effectively implement the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC, 2006).

Nautilus members can assist in this process. Various stakeholder organisations at the IMO can report a case of abandonment if they are informed that it has taken place. This includes flag states, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) with consultative or observer status.

According to the 2001 IMO/ILO Guidelines, abandonment is characterised by the severing of ties between the shipowner and seafarer.

This occurs when the shipowner fails to fulfil fundamental obligations to the seafarer regarding timely repatriation, payment of outstanding wages, and provision of the basic necessities of life (e.g. food, accommodation, and medical care). Abandonment is considered to have taken place when the master has been left without the financial means to operate the vessel.

If you suspect a ship has been abandoned, you should contact ITF Seafarer Support via abandonment@itf.org.uk. The ITF will then log the incident and report it to the IMO.

IMPLICATIONS OF A LOOMING SHORTAGE

The latest Seafarer Workforce Report reveals a growing shortfall in STCW-qualified officers globally. **Rob Coston** looks at what this means for training

L launched by BIMCO and the International Chamber of Shipping, the 2021 edition of the Seafarer Workforce

Report – previously known as the Manpower Report – has a clear message for the maritime industry: do not neglect recruitment and training if demand for officers and ratings is to be met.

The report emphasises the need to retain maritime professionals – and highlights the effect that Covid-19 and the crew change crisis will have on retention. It should remind the industry that companies must provide attractive jobs with good pay and conditions if they are to keep the experienced officers and ratings they need.

The report – which gathers data from flag states, maritime administrations (countries), educational institutions, shipping companies and industry regarding STCW-certified seafarers – was launched in 1990 to analyse developments in officer training. The first edition identified a serious shortage globally of qualified officers and played a part in stimulating the expansion of maritime training that has taken place over the past 30 years.

It also contributed to the decision by governments in 1995 to completely rewrite the IMO STCW Convention concerning seafarers' competence and certification standards.

The supply situation

The report, as in previous years, looks at both the supply and demand for seafarers and makes predictions for five years into the future (to 2026).

Qualified seafarers

The global supply of both officers and ratings has increased since 2015, with officers increasing by 10.8%. There are now 857,540 STCW-certified officers worldwide, and 1,035,180 ratings. The Philippines, Russia, Indonesia, China and India are the largest suppliers.

Gender diversity

The estimated global supply of female STCW certified seafarers stands at 24,059 (including 7,289 officers), an increase of 45.8% from 2015 estimates. This represents a significant rise in the number of ratings. However, this is not matched by officers, with the number of female officers qualifying actually dropping in 2020. This is probably because nearly 80% of female seafarers worldwide are in ferries and cruise – sectors hit hard by the pandemic.

Turnover

Officer turnover rates have dropped from 8% to 6% since 2015, and the number of years officers spend at sea has increased, which has caused the average age of operational-level officers to rise.

The Seafarer Workforce Report shows:

- estimates of the current supply and demand for seafarers
- details of the demographic composition of the workforce
- forward projections for the next five years
- maritime training, recruitment and retention trends and their potential consequences

Current demand

The report estimates global demand for STCW-certified seafarers as approximately 883,780 officers and 997,540 ratings. That represents a total increase of 336,320 since 2015, with the demand for officers increasing by 11.8% – 1% higher than the rise in global supply, which has created a shortfall.

'We believe this is first and foremost a matter of increased demand as the world merchant fleet continues to grow,' says Georgia Spencer-Rowland, policy adviser at the ICS. 'Even before Covid-19, demand for certified officers was outstripping the natural pace of growth of the workforce.'

The sectors most responsible for the demand are general cargo ships (26%), bulk carriers (19%) and offshore vessels (13%).

Companies that reported trouble recruiting said that 'experience on a specific ship type' posed the greatest challenge. Some officer categories are already in especially short supply and therefore in high demand; in the tanker and offshore sectors there is a reported shortage of management level deck officers, for example.

Shortfall of officers

There is a current shortfall of 26,240 STCW certified officers.

Demand for officers has clearly outpaced supply, with companies

struggling to recruit engineering officers and electro-technical officers in particular.

The report's authors suggest that the overall shortage may be due to an increase in the number of officers needed onboard each vessel (due to factors such as larger ships and technological change), with an average of 1.4 officers required per berth.

Officers needed

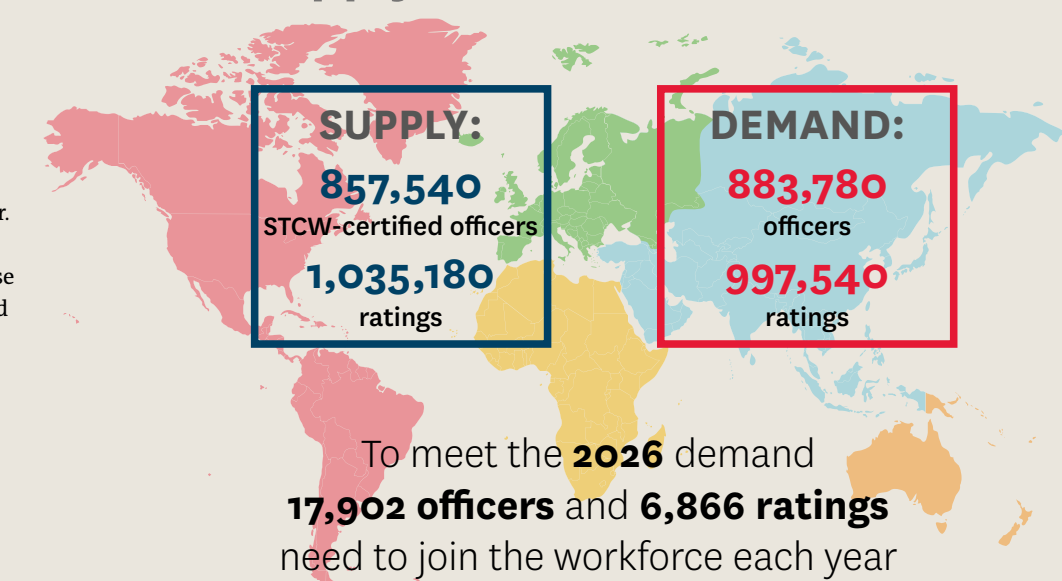
Looking ahead to 2026, the demand for officers will continue to grow, in part because the world merchant fleet will expand by 6.4% over that time. Liquefied natural gas (LNG) and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) carriers, container ships and passenger ships lead percentage increases in officer demand for the next five years.

As well as the current shortfall, the report estimates that, to meet the predicted demand for officers in 2026, an additional 17,902 officers need to join the workforce each year. This is roughly a 2% annual increase, which fits with current rates of growth. There will also need to be an increase of 6,866 ratings every year to meet demand.

'If current trends continue, we could see a serious potential officer shortage by 2026,' Ms Spencer-Rowland says. 'We already know there is a shortage of certified officers available now, and looking at the workforce as a whole, we are incredibly close to reaching "capacity", where total demand for seafarers outstrips supply. This year, we've seen what can happen when fragile supply chains are disrupted, with incidents like the Ever Given for example, but governments need to realise the severity of what could happen if we face a global shortage of seafarers.'

'Both governments and industry need to invest in seafarers of the future now. It's clear from the findings of this report that shipping will continue to be a major employer and represents a growth market for many countries. Governments need to recognise this and invest in training. Shipping too must invest in skills and training to attract and retain talent, with a

Seafarer supply and demand



specific focus on the green and digital skills needed for the future.'

Recommendations

The report states that in the wake of Covid-19, the predicted demand for officers in 2026 will require continued high intakes of STCW-certified officers. Therefore:

- maritime education and training and careers at sea must be promoted
- any negative trends in seafarer retention must be addressed
- levels of seafarer recruitment and retention should be closely monitored by maritime administrations to inform the industry and policymakers

The report does note an encouraging training trend: since 2015, there have been positive indications that availability of seagoing berths for officer cadets has increased, with the ratio of officer cadets to qualified officers standing at 1:4.8, up from 1:7.6 in 2015. However, Covid-19 has affected this.

'Unfortunately, the pandemic has disrupted many recruitment programmes and we are still seeing cadets and trainees unable to secure berths at sea,' Ms Spencer-Rowland says. A number of maritime education and training institutions have had to shut their doors, and not all have had the infrastructure to operate online programmes. Not to mention the real

concern that existing officers and potential new cadets could turn away from careers at sea because of their experiences during the pandemic. This makes it even more important for industry to focus on recruitment and ensure that seafaring continues to be an attractive career.

'Over the last 10 years we have as an industry been targeting wider audiences in schools and colleges. We should also be targeting top technical universities to ensure that we attract officers with the right skills for the future, those that are familiar with future fuels, with digital technology, coding, AI and automation.'

Ms Spencer-Rowland says that different approaches to training may also be required to ensure that officers have the skills they will need in future. 'With that goal in mind, ICS is championing a comprehensive revision to the STCW Convention to ensure that new technologies are encompassed and basic standards of training are fit for the needs of the 21st century.'

'Traditional classroom teaching certainly has its place, but so too does hybrid and non-traditional classroom teaching. Augmented reality and virtual reality training, as well as concepts such as gamification, are now seen as excellent tools to train seafarers in technical topics as well as training in more dangerous areas such as firefighting. It's also more in line with how younger generations are used to learning or prefer to learn.'



Faith, funding and reform: seafarers' port welfare services

New research has confirmed that seafarers of faith and no faith draw vital support from port chaplains around the world. The findings on the work of chaplains, volunteers and paid staff at seafarers' centres raise challenging questions over who should fund these services, as well as shedding light on the nature of faith and welfare at sea. **Deborah McPherson** reports

A new study led by the Seafarers International Research Centre (SIRC) has been published at a watershed moment for maritime welfare services. It has not only revealed the ways in which religious seafarers construct their own set of beliefs to cope better with living and working conditions, but also provided insights into how those with no faith want to use seafarers' centres and their services.

▲ **Seafarers at work**
Image: Helen Sampson, SIRC

The study was led by the SIRC at Cardiff University and funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) as part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). Researchers investigated the faiths and welfare of 55 seafarers onboard two cargo vessels carrying multinational crews. It is believed to be the first study of its kind to combine in-depth research with seafarers (on their beliefs, spiritual and welfare needs, and how these are negotiated/managed onboard and ashore), with detailed and rigorous

fieldwork in ports looking at the work of chaplains, volunteers and paid staff at seafarers' centres and interviewing them. The research also involved an interdisciplinary team from the UK and a co-investigator from the USA, reflecting the international scope of the project – the voyages were also with ships in different parts of the world with multinational crews and run by companies in Asia and the Pacific. In confirming the value of chaplains and seafarer services to seafarers, the study showed the

huge range of tasks carried out by chaplains and services provided by seafarer centres, and the amount of fundraising the chaplains had to do to support their work. Researchers also found evidence that the voluntary sector is under financial pressure and therefore unable to provide enough support, so welfare might need a far more systematic and widespread funding approach.

Superhuman effort

SIRC director and principal investigator Professor Helen Sampson explained in the film that some of the most revealing findings included the amount of effort that port chaplains go to on behalf of all seafarers, and in particular the 'emotional labour' that was involved, as well the huge amount of fundraising they do.

'It isn't necessarily the case that seafarers onboard every ship will welcome chaplains onboard; sometimes at the gangway, a seafarer is under instruction from the captain not to allow the port chaplain onboard. I think it's a real credit to port chaplains, the way in which they simply pick themselves up, dust themselves off, and get back out there again to support and help seafarers of all different faiths and all different nationalities regardless of the circumstances,' Professor Sampson said.

Research associate Dr Nelson Turgo of Cardiff University, who conducted most of the fieldwork, agreed: 'Sometimes the seafarers were sharing some stories, for instance, about how they weren't able to attend the funeral of a loved one, or they weren't able to attend milestones in their children's lives – such as a graduation, birthday party – normal stuff, but people who work in the seafarer centres do this on a daily basis. The amount of emotional work that they do is quite revealing of the superhuman effort that many



▲ Reverend Ijeoma Ajibade, regional director Europe for The Mission to Seafarers UK
Image: The Mission to Seafarers

of those who work in centres perform.'

Seafarer welfare funding

The results of the SIRC study have now been made into a film, which can be viewed here:

bit.ly/sirc_study

The film heard from two knowledgeable stakeholder representatives on maritime welfare services: Andrew Linington, a senior policy advisor at Nautilus International UK; and Reverend Ijeoma Ajibade, regional director Europe for The Mission to Seafarers UK.

Mr Linington says in the film: 'This research is critically important because it comes at something like a watershed moment for seafarer welfare. Over the last few years, we've seen a much greater awareness of psychological needs as

the industry has changed dramatically and the complexity of needs along with it.

'By tapping into those changes, highlighting the need for a restructuring of services and for a reappraisal of what seafarers need by asking the questions of the seafarers themselves, then we have the basis for what could deliver a quantum shift in seafarer welfare.'

The Mission to Seafarers did not help sponsor the study, but Rev Ajibade, a member of the study advisory board, commented: 'The study shows that the organisations involved in providing maritime welfare face challenges of fundraising and sustainability.

'The onus of fundraising has largely been left to the voluntary sector, with many chaplains having to focus on fundraising instead of being able



▲ SIRC film clip of Andrew Linington, Nautilus senior policy advisor, being interviewed holding the 1943 report on levies Image: SIRC

to provide welfare. This is clearly unsustainable and inefficient. Many shipping organisations do provide funds for maritime welfare but a much greater understanding of the importance of welfare is needed from both industry and government.'

In the UK, some ports operate a voluntary levy to provide funds, but this has not generally been found to be effective, the researchers agreed.

Professor Sampson commented: 'My own view is that there should be a seafarers' centre available to all seafarers in every port (funded by port levies, government, port corporations etc.), and we are a million miles from that.'

Her views were echoed by Mr Linington: 'I think there's a feeling that we almost need to be moving, again, to what was recommended in the 1943 compulsory levies proposal.'

The reference is to a 1943 report called *Seamen's Welfare In Port*, which was published by a special committee appointed by the UK government and suggested that ships pay a compulsory levy which specifically goes towards funding seafarer welfare services.

The report's recommendations led to the formation of the Merchant Navy Welfare Board (MNWB), and funding did come partly from such levies on British shipowners, but was withdrawn in

the 1970s. The report is available at bit.ly/1943_report

New Zealand's government has just set an international precedent by updating its Maritime Transport Act 1994 to allow for such maritime levies to fund seafarer welfare services in its ports, a move welcomed by the MNWB (*see facing page*).

Rev Ajibade, who is also on the council for the MNWB, said: 'Under the Maritime Labour Convention 2006 (MLC) the Government must promote the development of welfare facilities in designated ports and provide access to adequate welfare facilities and services. However, it would be highly beneficial for the UK government to explore how it might support the future development of these facilities. This should not be left to the voluntary sector alone.'

She said seafarers' and fishers' welfare had also been boosted by the recent Maritime & Coastguard recognition of the MNWB as the UK's national seafarers' welfare board.

'The Merchant Navy Welfare Board and Port Welfare Committees are doing a very good job of bringing stakeholders together, but investment from government would be very helpful and enable maritime welfare organisations to extend their outreach and care of seafarers,' added Rev Ajibade.

Where can I get help in port?

Various charities work internationally to provide services for seafarers in port. These include the following:

THE MISSION TO SEAFARERS

bit.ly/mission_to_seafarers

Works in over 200 ports in 50 countries, offering a range of support services:

- ship visits
- SIM cards to connect with loved ones
- help with transport while on land
- referrals to other organisations
- emergency support
- seafarers centres
- advocacy
- spiritual support. Connect to a Mission chaplain using the 'contact a chaplain' form
- help on a welfare or justice issue, via crewhelp@mtsmail.org

STELLA MARIS

bit.ly/stella_maris_chaplains

Has an extensive global ship-visiting network helping seafarers and fishing crew in 316 ports across 54 countries.

SAILORS' SOCIETY

bit.ly/sailors_society

Also has a global network of chaplains. They visit 400 ships every week in more than 90 ports around the world, and can also be found in seafarers' centres.

SEAFARERS' WELFARE ROTTERDAM (Stichting Welzijn Zeevarenden Rotterdam)

bit.ly/_seafarers_welfare_rotterdam

A non-profit social welfare foundation set up for seafarers who are in the port of Rotterdam. The foundation strives for cooperation with all parties involved in seafaring welfare work in the Rotterdam port area, as well as with the Port Welfare Committee (PWC). Its aims include:

- providing financial support;
- maintaining contacts with maritime related organizations and institutes;
- recruitment and management of financial resources.

Members of Nautilus Federation affiliates needing emergency help can access Nautilus 24/7: bit.ly/3kDuiZQ

Importance of faith to seafarers

Professor Sampson said:

'Seafaring is an extremely dangerous occupation, relatively speaking, and we found a lot of seafarers who had experience of being very afraid onboard a ship at some point in their career. When they felt particularly hopeless, many turned to their gods for assistance, which isn't that surprising. However, when they were able to positively help themselves and their colleagues, [we found] many had not thought about god at all, but only focused on dealing with the situation at hand. That idea of calling on your god when you feel helpless, but not in other circumstances when you can do something to help yourself was something that I wasn't expecting.'

Co-investigator Professor Graeme Smith of the University of Chichester describes the way seafarers construct their beliefs as a 'popular theology' – one constructed by ordinary people, rather than given to ordinary people by religious professionals like clergy or academic theologians. It was also a private construct rarely spoken about before now.

'What's very interesting about the way [seafarers of faith] construct their beliefs is that it's very functional,' he says. 'So they're not concerned with philosophical questions, rather they're concerned with how God can help them as seafarers.'

Professor Sampson said this also meant seafarers 'felt released in some way from observing some of the practices that would indicate piety ashore.' This led the researchers to consider some difficult issues.

Rev Ajibade explained: 'Seafarers might do things that they don't normally do, like drink alcohol or seek commercial sex [after spending time in a tough and dangerous environment].

The fact that some seafarers seek out commercial sex or intimacy or comfort, and the risks that go with that, presents a challenge for the Mission.' One way in which a northern UK Mission centre responded practically to these risks was to partner with the Terence Higgins trust to provide free condoms to seafarers, but Rev Ajibade acknowledged such an approach was liable to 'spark a huge debate' about the role of the Mission.

The value of chaplaincy

Co-investigator Professor Wendy Cadge of Brandeis University in the USA pointed out that in the UK, as well as in the US, the majority of port chaplains are Christians but 'over time, they've shifted from really primarily serving Christian seafarers to serving seafarers from a range of backgrounds, and seeing their work as much more social service oriented.'

Services provided by chaplains in ports globally include taking seafarers shopping, or to worship at mosques, and the welcome provisions of wi-fi. The provision of seafarer centres staffed with friendly volunteers and chaplains is particularly significant, agreed the researchers.

Professor Sampson summed up: 'By drawing on the perspectives of serving seafarers of all faiths and none, chaplains, and volunteers and paid staff in seafarers' centres, we were able to arrive at a very comprehensive understanding of the current need for, and provision of, welfare services in the cargo sector. Sadly, the research revealed the enormous pressure that existing welfare services are operating under in the context of inadequate funding. It also indicated that there are very many ports where no welfare provision is made for seafarers at all. This is a situation which needs urgent attention and comprehensive reform.'



▲ NZ transport minister Michael Wood

New Zealand sets 'international precedent' on maritime levies legislation to support seafarer welfare centres

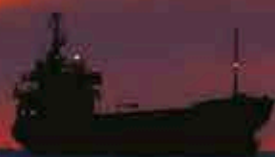
New Zealand's government has updated legislation to allow maritime levies on vessels visiting its ports to help fund seafarer welfare services.

The historic move to improve welfare support in ports reflects lobbying undertaken by the Seafarers Welfare Board for New Zealand (NZ SWB), which coordinates the work of maritime charities in the country, including The Mission to Seafarers, Stella Maris, and Sailors' Society (New Zealand).

Announcing the change, New Zealand's minister of transport Michael Wood tweeted: 'The government will provide secure, stable funding for the critical work of our seafarer welfare centres. Visiting seafarers regularly tell me that our SWCs provide amazing support, and this will make it sustainable.'

'The changes to the Maritime Transport Act 1994 were made to allow a portion of the Maritime Safety Levy, also known elsewhere as 'Light Dues', to be used to support seafarer welfare,' explained Mission to Seafarers regional director and Wellington port chaplain Reverend Lance Lukin.

the global **seafarer**



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