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Global news round up

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P&O supporting the diversity drive

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TIRED OF WAITING

Will new IMO guidance on fatigue make a difference?

NAUTILUS
Federation

A Federation of Maritime Professionals

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Welcome

Nautilus general secretary **Mark Dickinson** looks back at two months of Union campaigning, protesting, debating, organising and pledging for progress...

Every year, Seafarers Awareness Week in the UK and the International Day of the Seafarer take place in June. They provide an excellent opportunity to make the public aware of how much they depend on the world's seafarers and their vital role in delivering 90% of global trade – not to mention the work of the leisure and transport sectors.

Our members, of course, know the value of their industry, and Day of the Seafarer allows us to spread the word of what they do every day. This year Nautilus celebrated the occasion with a number of events and activities.

In the UK, the Union ran a highly successful advertising campaign informing members of the public that the petrol they fill their cars with was brought to them by seafarers. The adverts are a reminder of the impact that seafarers have on their everyday lives.

In the Netherlands a number of members joined a protest at the port of IJmuiden against Borr Drilling Limited, the new owner of Paragon. Borr Drilling wants to close the former Paragon Offshore office in Beverwijk, putting more than 70 jobs at risk.

Another event of interest this summer was the annual Switzerland branch conference and symposium focusing on organising in the river cruise sector. The event attracted a good cross-section of the industry, and I was delighted to be able to draw attention to the problematic working conditions which exist in river cruising,



and also to the wealth of support the Union can offer this rapidly expanding sector. It was interesting to hear my fellow speaker Harald Ludwig talking about the realities of being a skipper in the river cruise sector. A lively discussion followed with representatives of companies and authorities. This is a sector that you will be reading much more about as we ramp up our organising activities.

Our Netherlands branch has also held its 2018 conference and symposium in the last few weeks, this time with a focus on the offshore wind sector – another growth sector for us. At this symposium I emphasised the importance of our strategic campaigning on jobs, skills and the future and related some of our experiences from the UK wind energy sector. I shared the platform with my colleague Marcel van den Broek, who argued above all for 'employment that is just as sustainable as the energy it generates'.

Away from industrial work, there is another growth area for the Union that we are working on at the moment, and that is the recruitment of women into the profession. In July, the Union took part in two meetings focused on the recruitment of women into the maritime industry. Nautilus has signed a pledge to support the recruitment of women and attended an event organised by the European Transport Workers' Federation where we shared our female members' experiences on barriers to entry into the profession. I hope to see this work continue over the year to come. 

● ● ●
Nautilus is organising in the river cruise and wind energy sectors - watch this space as we ramp up our activities

In brief

Bulker condemned: French ITF inspector Laure Tallonneau has condemned conditions onboard a Panama-flagged bulk carrier held in the port of Lorient last month. The 24,110dwt St Elias was found to have defects including no drinking water, no working showers or toilets, non-functional safety equipment and limited provisions. Romanian officers and crew on the Greek-owned vessel were repatriated after the ITF and local unions recovered their outstanding wages.

Pilot killed: an investigation has been launched after a US marine pilot died while boarding a ship in Port Aransas, Texas. The US Coast Guard is trying to determine what caused a gangway to collapse, causing the pilot and another person to fall some 20ft into the water between the vessel and the dock.

Rescue 'miracle': a seafarer who fell overboard from the cruiseship Norwegian Getaway off the coast of Cuba last month was rescued after being spotted in the water by a steward on the Carnival Glory some 22 hours later. 'It was nothing short of miraculous,' said Carnival Cruise Line president Christine Duffy.

Spanish plea: Spanish shipowners have called for action by the government to make it easier to put ships under the national flag. They warn that red tape means too much tonnage is being flagged away from the mainland register, which now has 216 ships on its books.

Canal boost: Panama Canal authorities are aiming to boost LNG traffic through the waterway by allowing round-the-clock transits from October this year.

SINGAPORE

Collision officer is jailed

The chief mate of a dredger that was involved in a fatal collision with a tanker off the coast of Singapore has been jailed for two years after a court heard that he was not qualified to be serving on his 4,695gt vessel.

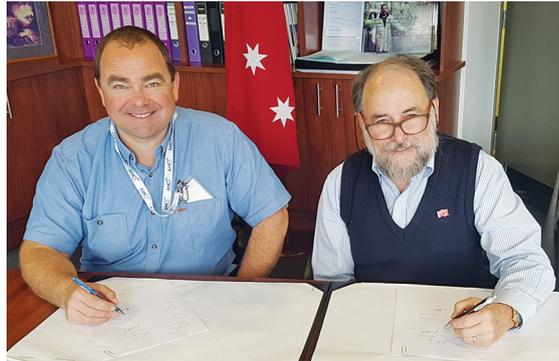
Five crew on the Dominica-flagged suction hopper dredger JBB De Rong 19 died when it sank after the collision with the 30,743dwt Indonesian-flagged tanker Kartika Segara off the southern island of Pulau Sebarok in September last year.

Singapore district court heard that the dredger's Chinese chief officer Ding Zongde was neither qualified nor certificated to be in

control of a vessel of that size. Prosecutors said that he was unable to speak English and was having to communicate by hand signals with a Malaysian colleague who was on the bridge at the time of the accident.

The officer ignored instructions from Singapore vessel traffic services to slow down and give way as he considered the dredger could pass ahead of the tanker, the court was told. Only when he recognised that a collision was imminent did he seek to take avoiding action.

He was sentenced to two years in prison after pleading guilty to causing the deaths of five of his crew by 'performing a rash act'. **i**



AUSTRALIA

OFFICER UNIONS AGREE TO CLOSER WORKING LINKS

The Nautilus Federation of Australia has taken another step forward following a meeting between senior officials of the Australian Institute of Marine & Power Engineers and the Australian Maritime Officers Union in Melbourne.

AMOU president Captain Tim Higgs and AIMPE federal president Martin Byrne are pictured signing a revised memorandum of understanding covering proposals for the unions to share their offices in some key locations and for possible further co-location arrangements in other ports.

The officials have set target dates for relocations in Sydney, Melbourne and Fremantle which will see both unions operating from the same address in each of these three ports. Similar arrangements are also being explored in Brisbane, Newcastle and other ports.

The moves will provide cost savings for both unions and are also intended to provide for closer integration of working relations between the two officer unions.

The Nautilus Federation of Australia has also discussed opportunities for joint campaigning on key issues relating to the interests of Australian deck and engineer officers. **i**

AUSTRALIA

Arrests over unsafe ship

The owners of a ship detained in Australia after an inspection revealed a string of safety problems were arrested and charged with operating an unseaworthy and substandard vessel.

The two owners of the passenger vessel Tomin are facing a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison and/or a fine of A\$126,000 (€79,600) if found guilty of the offences under the Commonwealth Navigation Act.

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) inspectors boarded the Australian-flagged vessel in the port of Yamba and detained it on the grounds that it was suspected to be unseaworthy, substandard and a threat to the marine environment. AMSA said it had information suggesting the vessel undertook a voyage to Australia from the Solomon Islands without required certification.

The Agency warned that it would 'continue to take strong action in response to suspected contraventions that may pose a threat to maritime safety or the marine environment'. **i**



French cruise company Ponant has taken delivery of Le Lapérouse, pictured above – the first in a series of six new ‘expedition’ vessels.

Built in Romania and Norway by the Fincantieri subsidiary Vard, the 9,900gt Explorer-class vessel can carry up to 184 passengers and 110 crew.

The five other vessels in the series are due to be delivered over the next two years.

Special features on the new ships include an ice-strengthened hull for polar cruises and the ‘Blue Eye’ – a ‘multi-sensorial’ underwater observation lounge. **i**

Image: Eric Hour

INDIA

Seafarers hold hunger strike over pensions

Indian seafarers staged a hunger strike at several ports across the country last month in support of calls for proper pensions and an increase in minimum wage rates.

The protests, organised by the Forward Seaman’s Union of India (FSUI) and the All India Retired Seafarers Federation, also called for action to improve the employment of trainee seafarers, family medical insurance and travel concessions.

The unions claim that many shipping companies are paying Indian crews as little as US\$105 a month, compared with the ILO/MLC minimum rate of \$614. They also complain that seafarers who have as much as 40 years of seagoing experience are not receiving pensions.

The protests were supported by the widows of seafarers who died at sea and who are demanding that the Indian government provide them with pensions.

FRANCE

P&O MASTER’S POLLUTION TRIAL DELAYED

A French court has postponed the trial of a P&O Cruises shipmaster accused of breaking pollution regulations earlier this year.

The Marseilles Criminal Court agreed to reschedule the hearing to 8 October following a request from the prosecutor’s office. Lawyers representing the master and

A spokesperson for the UK-based maritime pension provider Ensign commented: ‘The hunger strike action being taken by Indian seafarers demonstrates how vitally important it is to look after workers, not just during their employment, but when they retire.

‘The UK government has looked to improve the position of UK employees with the introduction of auto-enrolment and workplace pensions, but that only provides minimal pension provision which will be far from enough to support a seafarer in retirement.

‘Ethical employers understand that a lifetime of dedication to a profession must be backed up by long-term financial security post active employment. Ensign – the maritime industry’s only dedicated pension plan – is helping employers and employees achieve this goal.’ **i**

the company opposed the delay.

The unnamed master is faced with up to one year in prison and a €200,000 fine if he is found guilty of using fuel with a sulphur content higher than the authorised standards when the 115,055gt Azura visited the port of Marseille on 29 March. **i**

In brief

Safety move: US politicians have unanimously backed a bipartisan bill seeking to enhance maritime safety in response to the loss of the ro-ro containership El Faro and its 33 crew members in 2015. The bill includes provisions that require the Coast Guard to ensure proper inspections are undertaken, that vessels and crew have necessary safety equipment and timely weather forecasts, and that voyage data recorders float free after an accident.

Pension plea: the Russian Seafarers’ Union (SUR) has called for the country’s government to withdraw plans to raise the national pension age – currently 60 for men and 55 for females. The union says Russian workers clock up some of the longest hours in the world and many die before retirement or suffer a range of chronic diseases.

Crewing call: Italy’s new government has called on the country’s shipowners to reveal the ‘real’ number of Italian seafarers they employ – with ministers warning of ‘paradoxical’ claims of difficulties in recruiting national crews and complaints of high unemployment levels.

Danish blaze: 10 seafarers were taken to hospital after a fire onboard a Dutch-flagged general cargoship in the Danish port of Esbjerg last month. The crew from the 5,198gt Eems Dundee were treated for the effects of smoke inhalation.

Rope deaths: a ship’s officer and a dock worker died last month when a mooring line snapped as the Panama-flagged bulk carrier Anzac Splendor was berthing in the US port of Longview.

In brief

Cruise concern: the boom in cruiseship visits is posing a growing threat to the health of people living near ports, Denmark's Ecological Council has warned. It says emissions contain carcinogenic particulate matter and can increase the risk of heart disease, asthma and bronchitis. The council says 80% of cruiseships arriving in Denmark are not able to connect to greener power from ashore.

Seafarers saved: following intervention by the human rights charity Justice Upheld, 17 seafarers abandoned in dire conditions on Kish Island, Iran, for up to a year have been repatriated. The 12 Indian nationals, three Ethiopians, and two Filipino seafarers were owed up to two years of wages and had been left on the island with limited access to food and water when their contracts expired.

Chinese crew: China's seafaring workforce has grown by 6.5% over the past year, to hit a new total of 1.48m. Figures from the country's transport ministry show that just over one-third of the seafarers are serving in international shipping, 52% in domestic services and 12.4% in coastal trades.

Moby merger: Italian maritime unions have sought assurances from the Moby and Tirrenia ferry companies that there will be no job losses as a result of a merger between the two operators that is due to come into effect by the end of 2018.

Tankers hit: Saudi Arabia suspended oil shipments through the Red Sea last month after two Bahri tankers were attacked by Houthi rebels in Yemen.

UNITED STATES

Action call as fleet falls

A hard-hitting official report has warned that the US may not have enough seafarers to meet national needs in a crisis and has urged the country's government to finalise a strategy to halt the decline of the US-flagged fleet.

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) report warns that the number of foreign-going US-registered merchant ships has slumped from 199 in 1990 to just 82 last year, and it estimates that there is a shortfall of more than 1,800 qualified seafarers to crew the country's strategic ships for a sustained period.

The study notes that the US government has provided support to maintain merchant ships for defence needs. But, it warns, 'recent increases in the cost differential of US-flag

vessels versus foreign flag vessels and decreases in the volumes of government cargo have made it more challenging to ensure the financial viability of US-flag vessels'.

The GAO said Congress had called for a national maritime strategy to be developed in 2014, but there is no sign on when this will appear. 'The continued lack of such a strategy limits decision-makers' ability to make policy choices related to these challenges,' the report warns.

It recommends that such measures as income tax concessions and training support for US seafarers and cargo preference rules for US-flagged ships should be considered as part of the strategy. **i**

LNG FIRST FOR US SHIPPING COMPANY



The US shipping company Crowley Maritime has taken delivery of what it claims is one of the world's first LNG-powered combination container/ro-ro (con-ro) ships – the 36,796gt El Coquí, pictured left.

Built by the US yard VT Halter Marine, El Coquí is the first of two 2,400TEU ships that will run between Florida and Puerto Rico, carrying up to 400 cars and a wide range of container sizes and types. The vessels will result in a 100% reduction in SOx and particulate matter emissions on the service, as well as cutting NOx by 92% and CO2 by more than 35% per container.

The two ships have been built as part of a US\$550m programme to upgrade the shipping and logistic links between Puerto Rico and the US mainland, and under the terms of the Jones Act both will be US-crewed and US-flagged. Seafaring unions belonging to the American Maritime Partnership have hit back at a new campaign seeking to repeal the Jones Act rules protecting domestic shipping operations from foreign competition, pointing to a new report which shows that it has no significant impact on consumer costs in Puerto Rico. **i**

AUSTRALIA

Spill fine warning

Seafarers could face multi-million fines for pollution off the Australian coast under new rules which came into effect in July.

Marine insurers have warned operators about the changes, which introduce a new maximum penalty of A\$4.2m (€2.7m) for shipmasters and A\$21m (€13.4m) for owners found responsible for oil pollution.

The new penalties apply to oil spills that occur in 'Commonwealth waters' – more than 3nm from the shore. State-level fines for seafarers found guilty of breaching pollution rules range between A\$652,750 to A\$50,000 and/or up to four years in prison.

P&I clubs have warned that the discharge of oil in Commonwealth, state or territory waters is a strict liability offence for owners and masters and, potentially, crew members and others involved in the operation and maintenance of the ship. **i**



ITALY

Owner supports unions' protests over job losses

A leading Italian shipowner has supported a growing campaign to protect the country's seafarers by painting a supportive message on the side of his newest ship.

Vincenzo Onorato, president of the Onorato Armatori Group, has had the colours of the Italian flag and the words 'Onorato in defence of Italian seafarers' painted on the hull of the new 32,770gt Sicily-Sardinia freight ferry, Maria Grazia Onorato, pictured above, which was launched at the Flensburg yard in Germany last month.

'This vessel is a political manifesto aimed at communicating the desperate situation of more than 60,000 Italian seafarers, especially in the southern Italian cities,' he said.

Mr Onorato said Italian owners had been given tax incentives to use Italian seafarers and to fly the national flag, but a growing number of companies have been flagging out and using low-cost non-EU crews. 'We are denouncing this unfair competition and by this new vessel we intend to attract the

attention of the new Italian government,' he added.

Mr Onorato helped to launch a national petition calling for the Italian government to ensure that ships flying the Italian flag and operating regular services between EU countries must have Italian or EU crews if they are to benefit from tax concessions. The petition also demands that the contracts of non-EU personal onboard Italian ships in international service must be in line with those of Italian/EU seafarers. It also calls on the government to ensure that training and safety standards are guaranteed and verified for all seafarers.

One of Italy's biggest shipping firms, Grimaldi, has defended its crewing policy – claiming that only 14.86% of its seafarers are non-EU nationals, down from 15.60% a year earlier. The family-owned group operates 120 vessels, with 91% of employees based in European countries, and with Italy accounting for 39% of the total and Finland 22%. **i**

SOUTH KOREA

FERRY DISASTER PROBE IS INCONCLUSIVE

A year-long investigation into the 2014 Sewol ferry disaster has failed to determine what caused the South Korean vessel to capsize with the loss of more than 300 lives.

An eight-member panel of maritime experts and lawyers concluded that the 6,825gt ferry suffered problems such as the loss of stability caused by a sudden turn and excessive cargo loaded onboard, or may have sunk as a result of striking a submarine or other unknown object.

The inquiry found that modifications made to the 20-year-old vessel had adversely affected its stability and buoyancy. Sewol was

carrying twice the permitted cargo tonnage at the time of the capsize and the crew had reduced ballast to compensate.

A South Korean court has found that the country's government and the ferry operator were responsible for the disaster and has ordered them to compensate the victims' families. The ship's master was found guilty of gross negligence and sentenced to 36 years in prison but escaped the death penalty.

Relatives have taken legal action against the state after evidence emerged that the response and salvage operations after the sinking were mishandled. **i**

In brief

Safety rules: politicians in the United States have backed a package of shipping safety measures drawn up in response to the El Faro disaster, in which 33 seafarers died. As well as tightening up ship inspections and classification society operations, the Save Our Seas Act also calls for the US to lead action to get global rules requiring float-free EPIRB-equipped voyage data recorders to be fitted to all ships.

Vietnam blow: Vietnam's plans to become a major global supplier of seafarers have run into problems – with a 13% reduction in numbers over the past four years. Poor pay rates and substandard working conditions have been blamed for the maritime workforce slumping from more than 45,000 in 2014 to barely 39,000 this year.

Cruise boom: Asian cruise passenger numbers increased by 20.6% last year, hitting a record total of 4.05m. Asia now accounts for almost 15% of the global cruise market and the number of cruiseships being deployed in the region will rise to 78 this year, up from 66 in 2017.

UAE crackdown: as part of a drive to improve standards of ships operating in its waters, the United Arab Emirates is introducing strict new classification rules for visiting ships under 25 flags which are on the Paris MOU port state control black and grey lists.

French jobs: half of all French seafarers are now employed in the ferry sector, a new report has revealed. It also shows that 80% of the seafarers serving on ferries are either working on cross-Channel or Mediterranean routes.

In brief

Italian takeover: Italian maritime unions have requested an urgent meeting with the ferry operator Moby following its €100m deal to acquire the former state-owned operator Tirrenia. The agreement will create a fleet of 34 ships and 1,750 employees which will control almost all ferry routes between Sardinia and the Italian mainland.

Rescue warning: aid agencies have warned of an increased risk of migrants' lives being lost in the Mediterranean following the withdrawal of rescue vessels operated by non-governmental organisations after they were refused access to ports in Malta and Italy.

Wages won: the Marine Transport Workers' Trade Union of Ukraine has helped to secure repatriation and partial payment of owed wages for 57 seafarers who were abandoned for almost three years following the collapse of the Greek shipping company Free Bulkers.

Total jobs: French seafaring unions have been given assurances over future jobs following the oil major Total's takeover of Marseilles-based Gazocéan, creating a fleet of 18 gas carriers.

Kenyan plan: Kenya's president Uhuru Kenyatta has signed an agreement with the Mediterranean Shipping Company to revive the state-owned Kenya National Shipping Line.

Border boost: European Commission president Jean-Claude Juncker has announced plans to boost coastguard and border force numbers throughout the European Union.

IRAQ

Owners warn on plight of crew held for over a year

Concerns have been raised over the crew of a bulk carrier who are still detained in Iraq more than a year after the vessel was involved in a night-time collision which killed 21 people.

The owners, managers and insurers of the St Vincent & Grenadines-flagged Royal Arsenal say they are 'exasperated' that it has been held in the port of Umm Qasr since August 2017, following a collision with the diving support vessel Al Misbar, which was operated by the General Company Ports of Iraq (GCPI).

Concerted efforts to resolve the matter have made little progress, the ship managers said. Because no quantified claims have been filed in court, it has not been possible for security to be provided to enable the ship and crew to leave.

Roy Khoury, managing director of the vessel's managers, Blue Fleet Group, said it was 'most unfortunate and most unfair that the crew are being made to suffer in this situation' and he described their plight as distressing.

'Every time we try and move towards a resolution, fresh obstacles are created,' he added. 'We want to work with the families and the GCPI in a constructive manner, but it is just



not possible when the goalposts are moved at every turn.'

The company has continued to pay its crew's wages and ensure the vessel has provisions and power. To date, the owners have incurred expenses in excess of US\$1.8m.

The incident happened on 19 August 2017 when the 48,203dwt Royal Arsenal, which had a local pilot onboard, collided with Al Misbar, which was ferrying port employees from an offshore oil terminal. Concerns have been raised about the qualifications of the Al Misbar's deck crew and the fact that the vessel only had lifesaving equipment for 16 persons when 32 were onboard. **i**

GREECE

FERRY UNIONS WIN PAY RISE AFTER TAKING STRIKE ACTION

Seafarers serving in the Greek domestic ferry network have won their first pay rise in almost a decade after staging a 48-hour strike last month.

The action was organised by the Panhellenic Seamen's Federation (PNO) in support of a 14-point set of demands, including a 5% pay claim and action on tax concessions, pensions and crewing levels.

An initial 24-hour strike – which stranded an estimated 180,000 passengers, 50,000 cars and more than 3,000 lorries – was extended for a further day after the union rejected an initial offer of a 1% increase this year and a further 1% next year. Owners claimed that most of the union demands were the responsibility of the government, and argued that, unlike other sectors, ferry workers have seen no salary reductions as a result of the national austerity programme.

The dispute ended after the owners tabled a 2% offer, backdated to 1 January 2018, and agreed to begin negotiations later this year on a further increase in 2019. **i**

SWEDEN

CBA protest

The Russian owners of a Palau-flagged containership were forced to conclude a collective bargaining agreement (CBA) for the vessel after it was blockaded in a union protest in the Swedish port of Köping.

ITF inspector Mikael Lindmark, of the SEKO Sjöfolk union, says the 4,178gt Navi Star was met at the quay after a tip-off to the local unions and all cargo loading was stopped in support of a demand for a CBA. After 10 days of negotiations, Navi Star's owners, Navicor, agreed to sign an agreement with the Seafarers' Union of Russia, in line with the ITF total crew cost CBA. **i**



GERMANY

GREEN GROUP CONDEMNS CRUISE FIRMS

An environmental group has accused cruise ship companies of dragging their heels on the introduction of clean fuels.

The Berlin-based organisation NABU said it was 'scandalous' that there are still new ships coming into service which have been built to use heavy fuel oil despite growing concerns over the health risks posed by emissions.

NABU said the 183,900gt Aida Nova – pictured above being launched last month at the Meyer Werft yard – is the only one of nine

cruiseships coming into service this year which has been designed to operate with LNG. It warned that companies will face growing pressure to ban ships from some areas unless they can use clean fuel or tap in to shore power.

NABU head of transport Dietmar Oeliger said it was 'praiseworthy' that AIDA had invested in green technology and he said other companies should 'find solutions for cleaning the exhaust gases of their existing fleets, as these ships are still the most pressing pollution sources'. **i**

UNITED STATES

Fewer crew are denied shore leave in US ports

Almost one in 10 seafarers on ships visiting US ports were denied shore leave last year – more than half of them because they lacked a valid visa, a new report reveals.

An annual survey carried out by the Seamen's Church Institute Centre for Seafarers' Rights says that just over 17% of ships reported having at least one crew member being refused shore leave.

Almost half the seafarers denied shore leave were Filipinos or Chinese nationals, and 19 of the 344 seafarers detained for not having a valid visa came from UK-flagged ships.

Some 7.5% of shore leave refusals followed inspections by US Customs & Border Protection officers. In one case, 21 seafarers were denied shore leave because a crew

member had jumped ship at a previous US port.

Some 3.6% of shore leave denials were attributed to ships' operational requirements and 2.7% as a consequence of company policy.

SCI director Douglas Stevenson said the survey showed a trend of gradual improvement over the past decade in seafarers' ability to get ashore in the US, with the percentage refused shore leave declining from more than 17% in 2015 to 9.1% this year.

However, he said there needs to be greater recognition of the importance of shore leave and access to seafarers' welfare organisations.

'We must work together to facilitate crew morale, readiness, and personal well-being, while also remaining steadfast in ensuring port security,' he added. **i**

FRANCE

UNION QUESTIONS RELEASE OF DETAINED SHIP

A French maritime union has questioned why a flag of convenience bulk carrier detained four times since 2016 is still being allowed to operate.

The CGT union said European port authorities should blacklist the Panama-

flagged St Elias as a result of repeated problems. ITF inspectors managed to secure unpaid wages for crew members, but said replacement seafarers had been told to lodge a US\$1,500 guarantee with a manning agency before they joined the vessel. **i**

In brief

Port protest: French seafaring unions have protested over a new European Commission plan for revised 'motorways of the sea' which will create new direct routes between the European mainland and Ireland, avoiding the UK. The unions said it was 'incomprehensible and unacceptable' that the proposed links miss out ports such as Calais, Dunkirk and Le Havre.

Ferry fire: an investigation has been launched after a vehicle deck fire forced a 38,261gt Greek ferry to return to port, where shoreside emergency teams spent three days extinguishing the blaze. The 875 passengers and 141 crew onboard the Anek Lines vessel Eleftherios Venizelos were safely evacuated in Piraeus port.

China boom: China is now the world's second largest shipowning country, overtaking Japan and closing the gap on top-ranking Greece, according to a new report. Clarksons Research statistics show the Chinese fleet has expanded by 34% since the end of 2014 and now totals 7,744 ships of 170m gt.

Emission alarm: four crew members on an Albanian-flagged cargoship carrying wheat flour from Croatia were taken to hospital in the Italian port of Ravenna, suffering respiratory difficulties believed to have been caused by emissions from the cargo.

Tunisian strike: seafarers serving with the Tunisian ferry operator CTN took strike action in a row over pay last month. Authorities brought in naval personnel to ensure the ferry Carthage was able to sail to Italy from the port of La Goulette.



◀ Pacific Explorer hotel director Melissa Yates, centre, is pictured with third officers Hilary Cassano, Laura Abbruzetti, Rachel Davies, Lauren Brunton, Bryony Rodger, and Emma Forbes-Gearey

Six women officers spend one month on Pacific Explorer

Supporting the diversity drive

P&O Cruises Australia ship plays host to first woman-only mentoring programme

Princess Cruises and P&O Cruises Australia are supporting industry moves to improve the gender balance in shipping and six of their female third officers have taken part in a special mentoring exercise onboard the UK-flagged passengership Pacific Explorer.

The six officers – who come from varied backgrounds, with experience on bulk carriers, cargo ships and in the offshore oil sector – were the first woman-only group to take part in the companies' deck mentoring training programme.

They spent a month onboard the 77,441gt vessel learning about their company, undergoing training and being mentored by senior officers – including hotel director Melissa Yates. After completing some additional

training, the six officers will receive their first assignments on either a P&O Australia or Princess ship.

During their time onboard Pacific Explorer, they took part in a Women in Maritime event organised by the SE Australia branch of the Nautical Institute. In the panel discussion, Melissa noted that in her career in cruising she had always found warmth and acceptance. But she was aware that this was not always the same for other women involved in different areas of shipping.

'There are many women working on cruiseships and, during my years at sea, I have always been and felt accepted as part of the team,' she said. 'But it is distressing to hear from women who have had different experiences in other areas of shipping and having spoken to them I know how lucky I have been.' 

Leanne marks engineer 'milestone' for Carnival

P&O Cruises has appointed its first female first engineer. Leanne Robertson, who joined Carnival UK in 2013, has been working in the position onboard the 115,055gt while awaiting her first contract in rank.

Leanne began her seafaring career in January 2005, studying at South

Tyneside College. She served with Saga Shipping until 2013, rising to the rank of second engineer, and has spent the last five years working onboard Azura and Ventura, with a brief spell on Cunard's Queen Mary 2.

Leanne – who is aiming to secure her chief engineer's qualifications next year – said she was 'incredibly proud' to become P&O Cruises' first female first engineer. 'I hope that my success will inspire and motivate other women to achieve their dreams,' she added. 'It just goes to show that if you study and work hard, you can succeed, even in a career such as engineering that is traditionally male-dominated.'

P&O Cruises senior vice president Paul Ludlow commented: 'Everyone at P&O Cruises is absolutely delighted that Leanne has achieved her promotion to first engineer. This is such an important milestone in our company's history and I look forward to seeing more women taking on similar roles over the coming years.'



Nautilus calls for flag state probe of crew member's 'unexpected' death

Nautilus is calling for flag state authorities to conduct a full and public inquiry into the 'sudden and unexpected' death of a stewardess onboard a superyacht in Greece.

Australian national Sinead McNamara was reported to have been found unconscious and entangled in ropes on the Cayman Islands-registered Mayan Queen IV off the Ionian island of Kefalonia.

Fellow crew members attempted to revive Ms McNamara before she was taken ashore for medical treatment. A local coroner said she was 'unconscious but not dead' when she was found and had died in a helicopter taking her to hospital.

Family members have raised concerns about the circumstances of her death, and their lawyer said an inquiry is required 'so that

the whole truth can be revealed and they can learn what actually happened'.

Greek police initially suggested there was sufficient evidence to indicate that Ms McNamara had taken her own life.

But the chief coroner was reported to have said he had 'doubts and questions' and that 'there were signs that she may have tried to stop it'.

Mayan Queen IV is owned by Mexican mining magnate Alberto Baillères, who was not onboard at the time. The 3,879gt yacht is flagged with the Cayman Islands registry.

Nautilus strategic organiser Danny McGowan has offered guidance to Ms McNamara's family and said the flag state should take responsibility for investigating her death.

'It is vital that the registry fulfils its mandate to undertake an investigation to ascertain the causes and circumstances of this tragic death and to determine whether there are any wider implications for safety at sea,' he added.

'We still await the final report of the investigation into the death of an officer onboard the superyacht Ocean Victory during anchoring operations off Thailand in March 2016,' he pointed out.

'It's now more than a year since the Cayman Islands published its interim report on that accident, and we believe the registry needs to demonstrate greater urgency in discharging its duties and making the findings of investigations promptly and publicly available,' he added. 

Fresh hope for crew as Indian Empress sells

Nautilus has welcomed news that the long ordeal suffered by members on the superyacht Indian Empress is set to end after a court received confirmation that the vessel is being bought for €35m.

The 95m vessel – which was arrested in Malta in March this year after being abandoned by its former owner in September 2017 – was re-auctioned after an earlier court-ordered sale resulted in the buyer failing to pay the €43.5m bid in time.

Nautilus lawyers initially secured more than US\$615,000 in owed wages for the seafarers through negotiations with the insurers and managers of the superyacht. Following the sale, it is now expected that all remaining outstanding wages will be paid.

Nautilus strategic organiser Danny McGowan commented: 'After the disappointment of the first sale falling through, we are pleased to see this fresh and very welcome development.' 



Green light for new UKSA facilities

Nautilus has welcomed the approval of a major new project that should boost superyacht crew training and maritime courses run by the Isle of Wight-based organisation UKSA.

The £3.5m scheme to build new flexible and modular accommodation and training facilities in Cowes is set to get underway in winter 2019 after securing planning permission last month.

UKSA chief executive Ben Willows said the development programme will 'improve our efficiency and the experience of all our students during their stay here'.

Mr Willows said the charity is stepping up its fundraising work now that it has planning

approval. 'We are making steady progress towards achieving this goal, including raising £850,000 in grants and commitments towards the programme before planning permission was secured,' he added.

Nautilus strategic organiser Danny McGowan commented: 'We are delighted to see our partner organisation UKSA making important progress on this project. The charity makes a significant contribution to the training of maritime professionals in the UK, and it is great news that it has been given the go-ahead for these new facilities.'

• To donate, visit: uksa.org/capitalcampaign 

More ships given port bans

Inspectors say standards seem to be stabilising despite 'dramatic' rise in banning orders

Inspection results
Image: Paris MOU

Port state control authorities have raised concern over an 'alarming' increase in the number of substandard ships having to be banned from the waters of the 27 Paris MOU member states. Last year saw an all-time record of 33 ships being refused access to the Paris MOU region as a result of multiple detentions or failing to go to a repair yard. The exclusion numbers were up from 20 in 2016 and 11 in 2015, and 10 ships were barred for a second time.

Despite the 'dramatic' increase in banning orders, the organisation's annual report suggests that overall safety standards seem to be stabilising – with the proportion of inspected ships having to be detained dropping slightly, from 3.84% in 2016 to 3.82% last year.

A total of 17,916 ship inspections were made in Paris MOU member state ports during 2017, resulting in 685 detentions. There was a slight decrease in the number of deficiencies that were discovered – down to 41,820 from 41,874 in the previous year.

More than half of the inspections were made in the seven member states with the highest number of ship visits: Spain, Italy, the UK, the Russian Federation, the Netherlands, Canada and France.

The flag states whose ships had the best inspection records were France, the Cayman Islands, the Netherlands, Denmark and the UK. Bottom of the black list were Congo, Comoros, Togo, Tanzania and Moldova.

The vessel types with the highest detention rates were commercial

yachts (7.7%), general cargo/multipurpose ships (7.7%), heavy lift ships (4.3%) and bulk carriers (3%).

The most common deficiencies were related to the ISM Code, fire doors and fire-resisting divisions, nautical publications, and voyage or passage plans.

Deficiencies linked to working and living conditions accounted for 15.6% of the total. Within this, health and safety and accident prevention totalled almost 40% of Maritime Labour Convention-related deficiencies, followed by food and catering (16.3%), hours of work and rest (9.5%), accommodation (8.9%) and seafarers' employment agreements (7.8%).

15.6%
of deficiencies were linked to crews' living and working conditions

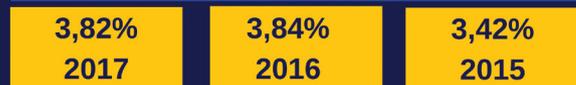
The report notes that an increase in deficiencies related to safety of navigation was probably the result of a concentrated inspection campaign held during the year.

It also highlights the patchy performance of a number of classification societies – pointing out that 14.5% of detentions last year were classed as 'recognised organisation related', up from 13.9% in the previous year. Three class societies – the International Register of Shipping, the Shipping Register of Ukraine and the Panama Shipping Registrar – were listed as 'very low performing'.

The Paris MOU says it is closely monitoring the standards of classification societies acting on behalf of flags and has made a series of submissions on the issues to the International Maritime Organisation. It is also looking at new ways to calculate flag and class performance, which are used to target ships for inspection. 

Paris MoU 2017

THREE YEAR TREND DETENTION %



INSPECTION RESULTS



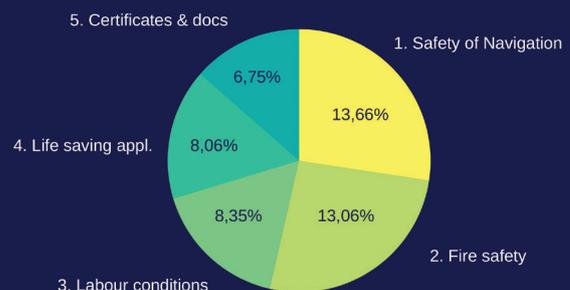
NUMBER OF WHITE, GREY & BLACK FLAGS



PERFORMANCE IN NUMBER OF RO'S



Top 5 Category of Deficiencies



Please read the Paris MoU Annual Report 2017 for further details



Report calls for action on fertiliser cargo safety



▲ Toxic smoke billows from the cargo holds of the Bibby Transport vessel Cheshire Image: Spanish Coast Guard

A report on the loss of a British-owned bulk carrier has called for major changes in the rules governing the carriage of ammonium nitrate-based fertiliser.

The 23 crew of the 56,598dwt Cheshire had to be evacuated after decomposition and overheating of the 42,654-tonne cargo caused a toxic gas cloud during a voyage from Norway to Thailand last year.

Damage was so extensive that the Isle of Man-flagged vessel was declared a constructive total loss.

Investigations have so far failed to determine what caused the cargo to begin decomposing, and the flag state report notes that while existing procedures for its safe carriage had been followed onboard Cheshire the vessel was not required to carry specialist equipment to deal with a thermal

decomposition event onboard.

The report recommends 'improvements in conditions of carriage, equipment carried and information provided, to enhance the safer carriage of these very heat-sensitive products'.

It calls for crews to be given better information on the various grades of ammonium nitrate-based fertiliser 'highlighting the unique dangers decomposition presents', along with improved guidance and additional safeguards in the International Maritime Solid Bulk Cargoes Code.

The report urges the IMO to change the existing 'misleading' categorisation of ammonium nitrate-based fertiliser as a 'non-hazardous' cargo and says ships carrying the cargo should carry additional equipment such as victor lances, thermal detection and additional self-contained breathing apparatus. **t**

Officer burnt after engine failed

A ferry engineer suffered serious burns when his ship's main engine catastrophically failed barely five hours after reactivation following a rebuild by external contractors.

A Marine Accident Investigation Branch report says the blaze onboard the 2,546gt ro-ro Wight Sky was probably caused by debris entering the engine's oil channels while the short block had been exposed to the elements for three days, with only a loose plastic sheet for protection.

Noting that the consequences of the accident could have been far worse', the report praises the

ship's master for 'a series of quick actions that ensured the safety of the vessel, passengers and crew'.

The MAIB said the accident – and a similar incident involving the windfarm vessel Windcat 8 and other failures on Wight Sky's sisterships – may have been prevented had a particle detector system been fitted.

The report notes that Wightlink has agreed with the service engineers that all engines will be fully assembled and load-tested before being delivered back onboard in future. **t**

MRCC failed to respond to MOB incident

Two maritime rescue coordination centres (MRCC) failed to respond to 'multiple requests for assistance' in a man overboard incident off the west coast of Africa earlier this year.

The incident, which involved the 306,567dwt VLCC Seahero, occurred in May when the ship's electrotechnical officer went missing during a voyage between Nigeria and South Africa with a cargo of crude oil.

A Bahamas Maritime Authority investigation report notes that the ship repeatedly tried to contact MRCCs in Angola and Namibia via telephone, email, VHF, and MF/HF but no response or acknowledgment was received.

Cape Town MRCC forwarded the initial reports to the Angola centre – which was the only search and rescue capable organisation within 200nm of the tanker – asking it to coordinate the incident, but also received no response.

Seahero searched the area for the following two days, but no trace of the missing ETO was found. Investigators found nothing to explain why the man had gone missing.

The report calls for Angola to investigate the reliability and operational effectiveness of the centre 'in order to provide reassurance to the maritime community operating in the region of the availability of this vital resource'. **t**

Hepatitis alarm

A leading P&I club has expressed concern over the high rate of seafarers suffering hepatitis infections.

The UK P&I Club said hepatitis was the cause of 10.1% of crew failing medical examinations, with 8.5% found unfit as a result of hepatitis B.

The club said it is vital that crew are given better knowledge of hepatitis symptoms, prevention and treatment to minimise the risk of infection or consequent spread. **t**

Report urges better ECDIS training

Failure to make effective use of the electronic chart display and information system (ECDIS) was a key factor in the grounding of a cruiseship in New Zealand, an investigation has determined.

The 10,944gt L'Austral suffered hull damage after deviating off the planned track and running aground on a stony bank at the entrance to Milford Sound in February 2017.

A Transport Accident Investigation Commission (TAIC) report says the ship's pilot lost situational awareness while becoming 'overly focussed on the rate of turn'. Crew members – including the ship's master – had failed to challenge the pilot when he made the early turn and a series of ECDIS and radar alarms were set off.

TAIC said the crew of the French ship had not used the ECDIS to its full potential, with inappropriate safety parameters being set. The ship had struck an uncharted rock a month before, and in a report on that accident the commission called for the operator – Ponant – to review its procedures for setting up ECDIS and providing training and support within its fleet. **t**

Australia warns over lookouts

Maritime safety authorities in Australia have called improved lookout standards in a bid to cut the high rate of collisions between merchant ships and small vessels off the country's coast.

The call came after an Australian Transport Safety Board investigation into a collision between a 54,519gt containership and a 209gt trawler in good conditions in the Tasman Sea earlier this year.

The report said there had been at least 65 such collisions since 1990 and most would not have happened had there been a proper lookout and early and effective avoiding action. **t**

The Maltese-flagged Kea Trader broke up after grounding in the South Pacific in July 2017



ECDIS failures led to reef grounding

A containership ran aground on a reef in the South Pacific because crew members had failed to use the electronic chart system properly and had switched off the audible alarm system because it was a distraction in coastal and pilotage waters.

The 25,145gt Kea Trader broke in two and was declared a total loss after grounding on Durand Reef while sailing from Papeete, Tahiti, to Noumea, New Caledonia, in July 2017.

A Maltese flag state investigation found that the passage plan to the pilot station had been revised – with the new route 'virtually passing over' an isolated danger symbol. The second mate had zoomed in on the display and incorrectly assumed that because the symbol appeared outside the starboard cross-track limit there was safe water within the XTL corridor.

An over-scale indication and vertical lines on the ECDIS, showing positional discrepancy of charted objects and loss of navigational information, was missed by the OOW, the report notes.

The master's confidence in the OOW's use of ECDIS meant that no independent check of the revised route was carried out and the system's route check function had not been enabled, the report says. 'Since the safety settings during the navigational watch handover were neither checked nor logged in the deck logbook, none of the watchkeepers was aware of the actual safety settings on the ECDIS, it adds.

A 'caution area' message repeatedly displayed in subsequent watches had been 'largely overlooked by the bridge team', investigators found.

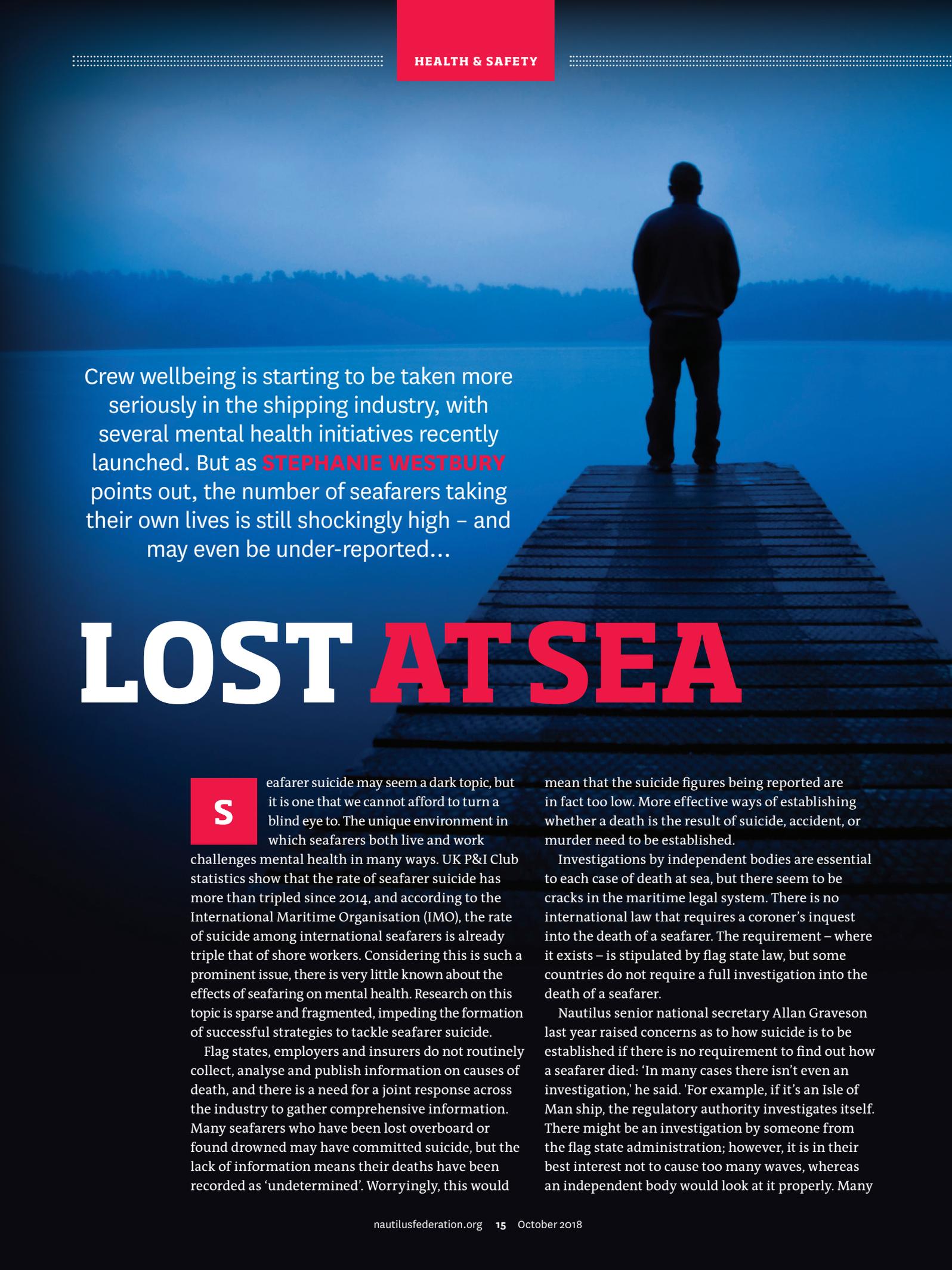
The report notes that two audit reports carried out earlier in the year had identified non-conformities in ECDIS passage planning and monitoring and the previous master had reported that corrective measures had been implemented. The investigation report recommends that the ship's managers, Columbia Shipmanagement, take a series of measures to improve ECDIS training, familiarisation and operation. **t**

Nav safety found 'satisfactory'

Port state control authorities have reported 'satisfactory' results in a concentrated inspection campaign targeting safety of navigation and ECDIS.

The campaign was organised in response to concerns over the high rate of navigational defects – accounting for 16.35% of total deficiencies over a six-year period – and more than 4,200 ships were checked in the three-month coordinated programme undertaken by the port states belonging to the Paris and Tokyo MOUs.

In a report on the findings, the authorities said the campaign resulted in 47 ships being detained with navigational safety problems and had delivered 'sound evidence that the industry has achieved a good level of compliance' with SOLAS rules. The most common problems found involved deficiencies with the voyage or passage plans and a lack of appropriate up-to-date electronic charts or suitable back-up arrangements for the intended voyage. **t**



Crew wellbeing is starting to be taken more seriously in the shipping industry, with several mental health initiatives recently launched. But as **STEPHANIE WESTBURY** points out, the number of seafarers taking their own lives is still shockingly high – and may even be under-reported...

LOST AT SEA

Seafarer suicide may seem a dark topic, but it is one that we cannot afford to turn a blind eye to. The unique environment in which seafarers both live and work challenges mental health in many ways. UK P&I Club statistics show that the rate of seafarer suicide has more than tripled since 2014, and according to the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), the rate of suicide among international seafarers is already triple that of shore workers. Considering this is such a prominent issue, there is very little known about the effects of seafaring on mental health. Research on this topic is sparse and fragmented, impeding the formation of successful strategies to tackle seafarer suicide.

Flag states, employers and insurers do not routinely collect, analyse and publish information on causes of death, and there is a need for a joint response across the industry to gather comprehensive information. Many seafarers who have been lost overboard or found drowned may have committed suicide, but the lack of information means their deaths have been recorded as 'undetermined'. Worryingly, this would

mean that the suicide figures being reported are in fact too low. More effective ways of establishing whether a death is the result of suicide, accident, or murder need to be established.

Investigations by independent bodies are essential to each case of death at sea, but there seem to be cracks in the maritime legal system. There is no international law that requires a coroner's inquest into the death of a seafarer. The requirement – where it exists – is stipulated by flag state law, but some countries do not require a full investigation into the death of a seafarer.

Nautilus senior national secretary Allan Graveson last year raised concerns as to how suicide is to be established if there is no requirement to find out how a seafarer died: 'In many cases there isn't even an investigation,' he said. 'For example, if it's an Isle of Man ship, the regulatory authority investigates itself. There might be an investigation by someone from the flag state administration, however, it is in their best interest not to cause too many waves, whereas an independent body would look at it properly. Many

countries do not have an independent investigator.'

It is possible that there would be less suicide to investigate if there were more thorough investigations of seafarers' mental health during medical examinations. The ENG1 seafarers' medical undertaken at two-year intervals is an opportunity to assess and monitor mental health, though many seafarers report that their mental state is not checked in any way during the examination. It could be argued that mental health issues are more likely to be detected onboard within the working and living environment, but it is still necessary to undergo regular mental health checks by professionals who know exactly what to look for. Better screening to detect mental illness among seafarers needs to be addressed.

Seafarers themselves may not recognise that they need help, and it might fall upon fellow crew to speak up about concerns over someone's mental state in the best interests of everyone's safety. However, the fear of consequences attached to reporting issues of this nature creates a reluctance to speak up. In a study I carried out, a seafarer spoke of how a colleague who was clearly suffering mental health issues was not reported to the company for fear of the account being received as harassment rather than concern. He also pointed out that there was 'simply no procedure for placing an officer on leave for mental health reasons without calling his employability and the rest of the bridge team into question.'

A specific mental health reporting procedure that protects everyone involved would support an open channel of communication, allowing action to be taken. Unfortunately, the barrier to creating any change such as this lies in the low levels of awareness of seafarer mental health issues.

My survey showed that 86.3% of the participating seafarers were unaware of rising suicide rates. Seafarers themselves are the ones at risk, so it should be a priority that they are aware of the dangers inherent to their work. 84.3% of the participating seafarers were not made aware of the mental health risks associated with their career during training for their position, and a staggering 90.2% had not received any onboard training pertaining to mental health. It therefore seems unreasonable to expect seafarers to be equipped to deal with mental health issues that may arise.

Meanwhile, the situation is intensifying. The Seafarers International Research Centre recently released a report on changes in seafarers' health between 2011 and 2016 which noted a significant rise in seafarers suffering psychiatric disorders. The



86.3%
of the seafarers surveyed by Stephanie Westbury were unaware of rising suicide rates

84.3%
of the surveyed seafarers had not been made aware of the mental health risks associated with their career during training

90.2%
had not received any onboard training pertaining to mental health



STEPHANIE WESTBURY

Stephanie's passion for the wellbeing of seafarers has grown over the course of almost 10 years at sea. Having served as a deck officer until now, she has recently been drawn toward the world of academia, where she has achieved a first-class degree with honours in marine operations management and continues to study in the field of psychology.

This article was researched and written under the supervision of Dr Kate Pike of Solent University. It is the intention that Stephanie and Dr Pike will further progress this research on seafarer suicide for academic publication. Should anyone have any experiences or opinions they would like to be heard, please get in touch at: seafaring.research@gmail.com or kate.pike@solent.ac.uk

results of the questionnaire administered revealed an escalation from 28% to 37% over the five-year period.

Much focus is directed at mental health only whilst at sea, but what about supporting our seafarers when on leave? The transition from ship to shore can be hard for many seafarers; abruptly being at home following a voyage without routine and rules can create a feeling of being lost. This is yet another area of seafarer mental health that is lacking research.

Psychological stressors vary greatly and conditions at sea create a tougher environment than on land. Constant noise and movement adds an element of difficulty to everyday tasks. Struggles such as fatigue and social isolation have been emphasised as factors negatively affecting seafarer mental health. However, with increased connectivity and regulated working hours, it could be argued that conditions for seafarers are getting better. So why are suicide rates increasing?

It is possible that other influences such as mounting commercial pressures and fear of criminalisation may not be getting enough attention. Being criminalised for mistakes and feeling undervalued may contribute toward stress, deteriorating mental health and suicide. We need to do more as an industry to develop a no-blame/just culture as standard practice in order to move crew away from the fear of criminalisation. It may also be that this fear of criminalisation is heightened by commercial pressures encouraging crews to take shortcuts.

Suicide is absolutely preventable, but is the industry putting financial priorities above the health of its seafarers? It would seem that the life of a seafarer is worth relatively little and that seafarers are viewed all too often as disposable commodities. Do you as a seafarer feel expendable? 

SAFETY & SHIPPING REVIEW 2018 IN NUMBERS



90% of global trade transported by shipping

1,129 total losses over past 10 years

94 total losses in 2017. Second lowest total in a decade.



Bad weather a factor in 21 losses

30 losses in South China, Indochina, Indonesia and Philippines - the main hotspot

Major risks



Busy seas



Typhoons



Piracy



Safety standards



Political risk

Container ships are getting bigger. Capacity has increased by almost 1,500% in 50 years

Major risks



Fire-fighting capability



Cargo misdeclaration



Salvage challenges



Ports of refuge

75% of shipping insurance losses are caused by human error. Equivalent to \$1.6bn

Source: Allianz Global Corporate & Specialty
Additional references: 1 International Maritime Bureau, Lloyd's List Intelligence Casualty Statistics



180 piracy attacks in 2017. Down year-on-year. Lowest total for 22 years

3 regions account for almost half of all losses

53 losses - cargo ship most frequent vessel lost globally in 2017

↑ Up year-on-year

61 losses caused by foundering in 2017.

↑ Up year-on-year

6 vessels lost to fire in 2017.

↓ Down year-on-year

◀ Key findings from the Allianz Global Corporate & Specialty analysis of shipping safety
Image: AGCS

technology to understand human element issues. 'By analysing data 24/7, we can gain new insights from crew behaviour and near-misses that can help us to identify trends that are behind human error being the main cause of accidents,' he argued.

Some operators have started to use voyage data recorder (VDR)

analytics to improve safety – and others have gone even further to continually monitor VDRs to identify any deviation from procedures, the report notes.

'It is no longer sufficient to analyse data just once or twice a year – it should be done in real time,' said Capt Khanna. 'The industry needs to be proactive and not reactive. We have in the past learned from losses, but predictive analysis is important. This is possible with technology already available.'

AGCS suggests that better use could be made of the increasing number of sensors onboard modern ships. While they are presently mainly used for performance monitoring and preventive maintenance, they could contribute to enhanced risk management and increased situational awareness onboard, the company argues.

The AGCS review says shipping losses fell by 4% over the past year – with the 94 total losses being the second lowest number in the past decade. However, it notes a 3% increase in reported shipping casualties during 2017 – driven by a rise in machinery damage incidents, which were responsible for 42% of all casualties.

The report also points out that foundering was the cause of more than half the 1,129 total losses reported over the past decade and accounted for an even higher share of losses last year – 65% – with bad weather being a frequent factor. **i**

HOW TO CUT HUMAN RISK?

Marine insurers make the case for technology to be used to combat people-related accidents at sea...

Insurers have called for a new drive to combat 'human element' accidents in shipping – suggesting that better use of technology could help to cut the risks.

The call comes in the latest annual safety and shipping review, published by Allianz Global Corporate & Specialty (AGCS). While welcoming a 38% reduction in total shipping losses over the past decade, the study warns of a need to address 'behavioural and cultural risk'.

The report suggests that between 75% to 96% of marine accidents can be attributed to human error and its analysis of claims between 2011 and 2016 shows that human-related incidents cost around US\$1.6bn.

Captain Rahul Khanna, AGCS global head of marine risk consulting, said the shipping

industry is failing to address some crucial aspects of human nature. 'We need to understand how and why seafarers make decisions, especially when this deviates from protocols and training,' he added.

Capt Khanna said commercial pressures and inadequate shore-side support can result in masters and officers making poor decisions, which lead to mistakes and accidents.

AGCS senior marine risk consultant Captain Andrew Kinsey pointed to a 'normalisation of risk' in the decision-making process. 'It's human nature,' he added. 'Many mariners have done it. They are under pressure, take a shortcut once that may not be the safest way to go, and get away with it. This then becomes the norm under stressed conditions.'

Capt Khanna said the shipping industry should make better use of

REFRESHED GUIDELINES FOR UNREFRESHED CREWS

A major project to update the shipping industry's guidelines on preventing seafarer fatigue has come to an end. Will it make a difference? **ANDREW LININGTON** reports...

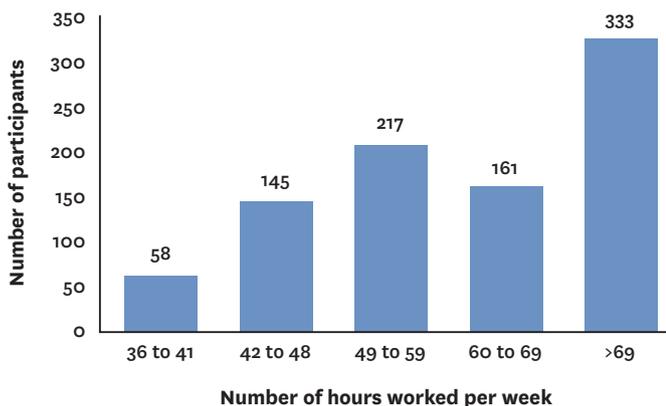
Global guidelines to combat seafarer fatigue have been revised for the first time in 17 years following a major International Maritime Organisation (IMO) review.

An expert working group spent almost four years updating the IMO guidance on fatigue mitigation and management, to reflect the results of recent research into the problems – such as the Project Horizon study published in 2012.

Nautilus professional and technical officer David Appleton attended the IMO human element, training and watchkeeping sub-committee meeting called to approve the new guidelines, which will now go to the maritime safety committee for final approval in December.

'Overall, the new guidance is better than what we had before – but it is not in any way what would be considered sufficient in any other industry, and it is clear that a culture change is required in shipping,' he said.

There was some heated debate at the IMO meeting over the use of fatigue risk management tools and



An Australian study showed seafarers work an average of 61.28 hours a week



evidence-based points in helping to determine work patterns, Mr Appleton noted. Some delegations argued that advice to avoid working more than 70 hours a week or regularly working more than 12 hours a day conflicted with what the working time regulations actually permit.

'To have that as guidance does not mean you can't work more than 12 hours a day, but it does mean you should take it into account as a risk factor and take action to mitigate its effects when there is a solid body of research to show that working to the limits and beyond is not safe,' Mr Appleton pointed out. 'The regulations set maximum permissible limits; they do not represent best practice

and nor should they serve as targets for the industry.'

Among the studies considered by the working group was a report from the Australian Maritime Safety Authority presenting the findings of research into seafarer safety and wellbeing carried out in collaboration with the universities of Queensland and Western Australia.

Almost 30% of the 1,026 seafarers taking part in the study reported working more than 69 hours a week and, on average, they were clocking up 61.28 hours of work a week. Almost 20% said they experienced chronic fatigue, and around 20% suffered high levels of acute fatigue.

'The combination of job insecurity and long working hours, in uncertain operational conditions, while required to maintain high levels of vigilance resulted in seafarers experiencing

increased sleep problems,' the report states.

Around 12% of the seafarers complained of sleep problems, with more than one in five describing their working hours as unpredictable. A similar proportion also pointed to the problems caused by ship motion and loud noise onboard.

The report notes the links between long working hours and mental ill health, sleep problems and near-misses and injuries. Around 40% of the seafarers surveyed said they experienced symptoms of mental ill health, such as depression and anxiety, and around 10% said they experienced these symptoms often.

The study adds to the findings of research such as the EU-funded Project Horizon in demonstrating the way in which the current work-rest regulations do not provide seafarers with adequate protection against fatigue – with the six-on/six-off pattern in particular failing to set aside sufficient rest time for sleep and recovery. 'Work schedules that do not allow for adequate sleep lead to sleep debt,' it points out. 'Sleep debt, especially across a number of days, leads to changes in employees' immune system, psychological functioning and mental wellbeing.'



'Sleep debt leads to changes in employees' immune systems, psychological functioning and mental wellbeing'

Researchers also identified the high demand on seafarers to be vigilant while at work, stressing that this can contribute to fatigue, incomplete recovery between shifts and reduced quality of sleep.

Seafarers' sleep problems are also influenced by factors such as work-related pressures and the safety leadership behaviour of superiors, the report notes. The researchers found that levels of fatigue at the end of a duty period or workday could be 'markedly alleviated' by such things as seafarers being given autonomy, trust and high levels of job security, as well as not working in dirty, hazardous and confined spaces.

'However,' the report concludes, 'with increasingly less stable crews, reduced job security and increased diversity of crews, these quality, trusting and supporting social processes onboard the ships might be impaired.'

Against this background, the report argues, 'an effective fatigue management system that continuously monitors and manages the risk of fatigue is essential'.

It also points to some 'easily implementable' measures to improve crew accommodation, such as more comfortable mattresses, blackout curtains and noise reduction.

As well as proactive policies, the report says there is a need for reactive interventions to minimise

the effects of fatigue-related problems once they have occurred. These should include onboard reporting mechanisms, clear policies for helping seafarers with sleep problems, and employee assistance programmes to provide psychological and psychosocial counselling.

The revised IMO guidelines seek to address these issues by providing information on the causes and consequences of fatigue, and the risks it poses to the safety and health of seafarers, operational safety, security and protection of the marine environment.

The guidelines are aimed not just at shipping companies, but also at seafarers, maritime administrations, naval architects/ship designers and training providers. Flag states and shipping companies will be advised to take them into consideration when determining minimum safe manning, and to take the issue of fatigue into account when developing, implementing and improving safety management systems under the ISM Code.

The new guidelines are composed of six modules and two annexes – with each module addressing a particular stakeholder group within the maritime industry. The modules cover: fatigue; fatigue and the company; fatigue and the seafarer; fatigue, awareness and training; fatigue and ship design; and fatigue, the administration and port state authorities. The annexes provide examples of sleep and fatigue monitoring tools and an example of a fatigue event report information.

'We certainly do not see this as being the end of the matter,' Mr Appleton said. 'Risk management tools to support guidelines on fatigue will be considered as a standing agenda item in the future, and that will provide further opportunities to improve the situation.' 

FINE FOR FATIGUE

Maritime safety officials in New Zealand have warned operators to guard against fatigue after an owner was fined NZ\$27,200 (€15,600) following the loss of a fishing vessel after the watchkeeper fell asleep.

A court heard that the seafarer had worked a full day and had less than two hours of sleep before taking over the watch in the early hours of 11 January 2016. The vessel, pictured right, grounded on rocks and capsized in the Bay of Islands after he fell asleep.

Maritime NZ Northern regional manager Neil Rowarth said it was a matter of luck that no one had died in the accident and the prosecution of



the owners sent a strong message to all maritime operators that they must have an effective system for managing crew fatigue.

A recent Maritime NZ survey found that 61% of commercial fishing crew reported working when overtired and more than one-third had fallen asleep on watch.

ANSWERS FROM AMSTERDAM

Autonomous shipping is the hot topic in the maritime world, but what exactly do we mean by ‘autonomous’, and what’s in store for seafarers over the coming decades? Experts gathered at a conference in the Netherlands this summer to give their views and share the latest technological developments.

ALLAN GRAVESON reports...

The AMI Conference Centre in Amsterdam provided a fabulous venue in June 2018 for three world class events: the Autonomous Ship Technology Symposium; the Hybrid Expo; and the Maintenance Expo. Three designated conference stages and a centre presentational stage in two massive halls offered an insight into ship technology available today and in the future.

Autonomous Ship Technology Symposium 2018

The Autonomous Ship Technology Symposium was the main forum at the conference for discussing the technical, operational and indeed philosophical challenges surrounding the move towards autonomy. Spread over three days, the symposium featured a range of expert speakers and offered several opportunities for well-informed debate.

Keynote presentations and panel discussion

Michael Rodey of A.P. Moller-Maersk provided an insight into the future direction of autonomous shipping. He made it clear that unmanned operation was not on the horizon. Paivi Häikkola of Autonomous Maritime Ecosystems then told how his company



▲ Top: Michael Rodey, from Maersk, and Dr Kalevi Tervo, above, from ABB Marine, spoke on the human impact of automation

intends through research to address issues including remote piloting, connectivity and ‘industry approved’ levels of autonomy.

In a powerful presentation, Raphaël Fabian of Rolls-Royce Belgium said a degree of autonomy linked with remote as a fall-back could reduce the impact of human error on a range of vessels, but the workforce would need appropriate skills. Reduced workload and working hours could be a benefit of the technology consistent with an ethical approach to automation. He stressed the importance of soliciting workforce and union views to dispel misconceptions. Change would be slow and progressive, with most of the present workforce finishing their employment as they would normally have.

Dr Kalevi Tervo of ABB Marine Finland provocatively pointed out that automation was already taking place before many players realised what was happening. However, there has been a clear pulling back from the unmanned concept. The integration of systems to improve situational awareness was where greatest progress could be made relatively quickly, and it is possible we will soon see a periodically unmanned bridge in automotive mode on ocean passages.

The keynote presentations were followed by a

panel discussion during which it was acknowledged that the business case had been made for autonomy on small vessels (ferries) in coastal waters. However, the general desire in the case of larger vessels was not to unman, but for personnel to revert to an onboard safety role.

It was notable that there was no seafarer representative on the panel. A worrying statement from a panel representative relating to seafarers – ‘You need a master, either afloat or ashore, to take responsibility’ – surprised some but not all the audience. The statement demonstrates the lack of forward thinking on this issue and prompts the question as to why the shipowner or DPA should not be responsible. Also of concern was when a panel member asserted without evidence that the ITF was supportive of autonomous shipping.

Navigation and positioning challenges

This session focused on navigation and position fixing. There were five presentations from: Dr Marko Höyhtyä, VTT Research Centre, Finland; Bruno Sourice, DCNC research; Andreas Brandsaeter, DNV GL; Klaas Visser, Delft University of Technology; and Geraint West, Sonardyne International – who presented the preliminary outcomes of the UK government funded project AutoMINDER.

All five presentations touched on connectivity and the high-level architecture and sub-systems required.



▲ From top: conference speakers Eirik Evjen Hovstein; Andrea Morgante; and Ann-Sofie Pauwelyn

Effective collision avoidance necessitates multiple sensors and collision avoidance algorithms, underpinned by very high reliability, redundancy and tolerance to system configuration.

Concepts, case studies and innovation

In this session, Dr Henry Robinson of H Scientific Ltd said that in some instances, a high degree of autonomy was both economic and arguably desirable, e.g. small survey vessels with relatively large crews undertaking routine work. In other cases, the use of the new Lidar technology (3D laser scanning) would assist onboard crews with improved situational awareness and collision avoidance.

Tom Eystø centred on the joint venture of Wilhelmsen and Kongsberg called Massterly, which offers a complete value chain for logistics operations involving autonomous ships.

Adam Ehart of Textron Unmanned Systems traced the development from unmanned aerial vehicles to unmanned vessels for the US Navy, and Andrea Morgante of Wärtsilä drew attention to the longstanding existence of unmanned engine rooms, stressing that seafarers should not fear new technology.

Hans-Christoph Burmeister of the Fraunhofer Centre for Maritime Logistics explained the FernSAMS research project into remotely controlled tugs. On a scale of 0=blue sky to 9=commercial, about 6 has so far been achieved – but, he argued, a solution to line

MODEL TRIALS

The Finnish firm Aker Arctic has demonstrated an autonomous ship model – pictured right – showing its ability to detect obstacles and manoeuvre around them without operator input.

The model vessel used onboard sensors to avoid the obstacles and to moor itself automatically to a target pier in Aker Arctic's test laboratory in Helsinki. The company said the tests were a step forward in the development of autonomous shipping and the technology used in the tests in the laboratory can be adapted to semi and full scale prototypes.



REMOTE TUG

The Dutch towage company Kotug has staged what it claims to be the first long-distance remote-controlled operation of a tug – driving the Rotterdam-based Rotortug RT Borkum from a special control console 1,200km away in the south of France, pictured right.

The company set up the remote command station at the ITS trade show in Marseille, enabling a Kotug captain to pilot the tug using a secure internet connection, video camera feeds and a duplicate bridge console.

Kotug said it believes remote-controlled vessels will be the first step to autonomous shipping and, combined with drone technology to connect the towline, it argues that unmanned operations are increasingly viable from the commercial and technical point of view – although the regulatory regime will need to change.



handling needs to be found before further progress can be made.

Richard Daltry of ASV Global presented the case for unmanned surface vessels, and Michael Johnson of SEA Robotics asserted that smart ship technology with autonomous command and ship-to-shore connectivity provides value, predictability and improved levels of safety.

Situational awareness and decision support

In this session, Dr Tim Barton of Leidos presented work on the design, build and demonstration of Sea Hunter for the US Department of Defense, which applies automation to landing craft. He stated that the operation of the collision regulations was ‘done technology’.



The general desire for larger vessels was not to unman, but for personnel to revert to an onboard safety role

Russ Miles of Guidance Marine (Wärtsilä) identified the use of sensors for position fixing and collision avoidance, and Ralph Dodds of Atlas Elektronik UK explained how the increasingly complex data available to operators could be presented in a 3D visualisation rather than a series of flat screens. Dino Mandic of SailRouter described a wave recognition system that computes wave height, the significant wave period and angle of encounter as a self-awareness system for autonomous ships.

Professor Etsuro Shimizu of Tokyo University of Marine Science and Technology described the operation of a wireless LAN and a mobile phone network as a low-cost communication method between a small boat in confined waters and a remote onshore station. Erik Evjen Hovstein of Maritime Robotics added that for such vessels the human was better ashore – i.e. safer and more productive.

Design and operation (best practice)

Dr Sauli Ahvenjärvi of Satakunta University of Applied Sciences considered the all-important issue of the interaction between manned and unmanned ships.



FERRY'S HANDS-FREE DOCKING

Look no hands... pictured above are trials of an 'world-first autodocking' system being carried out onboard the 1,182gt Norwegian ferry Folgefonn earlier this year.

The system, developed by the technology group Wärtsilä, is based on dynamic positioning and cuts in some 2,000m from the berth, slowing the ship before activating the line-up and docking manoeuvre. It can also be used for automated departures from the berth, and manual intervention and control is possible at any time.

Wärtsilä said the system improves efficiency, saves fuel, reduces wear and tear on the engine, and improves safety. 'The automatic function allows the ship's officers to focus on situational awareness outside the wheelhouse, thereby improving the safety and reliability of the operations,' it added.

This presentation appeared to find problems where none existed – overlooking the obvious solution of unmanned giving way to manned, like steam giving way to sail. Instead he considered that a move beyond the present regulations for preventing collisions at sea to a more automated system of collision avoidance was necessary.

Professor John Cross of the Marine Institute of Memorial University presented work undertaken with Gordon Meadows of Southampton Solent University into the IMO STCW competences for chief engineer. It was advocated that a new sub-set of skills was required for AI ships. There would be less 'hands-on' work and more 'monitoring', hence the role of officers would change. In questions following the presentation, the researchers acknowledged they had not evaluated ETO competencies.

Christer Baltzersen of Inmarsat Maritime spoke about Fleet Express, a system of new satellites for a rapidly developing digitalised and automated society, while Dr Sewon Kim of Daewoo Shipbuilding and



Many speakers argued that new technology could be beneficial for situational awareness

Marine Engineering spoke of developing a 300TEU autonomous ship which, if successful, would be the first truly autonomous trading vessel. Taking off the onboard accommodation has considerable implications for fuel efficiency, he pointed out.

Inland waterways

In this session, Ann-Sofie Pauwelyn of De Vlaamse Waterweg outlined an intended framework for automation research and trials on 1,076km of inland waterways in Belgium and the Netherlands, commencing in 2020. More information is available at www.vlaamsewaterweg.be/smart-shipping.

Aditya Nawab of Robosys Autonomous Unmanned Systems outlined the development of onboard systems to avoid obstacles in narrow channels and waterways. This involved integrated algorithmic processors with inputs from cameras, electronic charts, radar, Lidar, AIS/ARPA/VTS and sonar.

Legal and regulatory frameworks

The symposium ended with presentations given by legal and industry representatives: Iiro Lindborg of Rolls-Royce; Bjarke Holm Hansen of CORE Advokatfirma; Mark Johnson of Reed Smith; and Sean Pribyl of Blank Rome LLP.

It was noted that the UK has now registered an autonomous vessel and the market is providing insurance to this sector. There are still considerable issues to address – not least the responsibilities between ship and shore and between human factors and technology.

Academics and lawyers will be kept occupied for years to come. In the absence of specific regulation, it was agreed that autonomous should give way to manned, as powered gives way to sail. As with hovercraft, the identification of autonomous vessels would be useful for this.

Conclusion

One of the main points to take away from this symposium was that 'autonomous' no longer means fully unmanned, if it ever did. It is a question of degrees, dependent upon technological limitations and economic factors.

Many speakers agreed that new technology could be beneficial for increasing situational awareness and improving safety, and shipowners and governments must recognise the importance of equipping vessels in this way.

Finally, it is likely that technological change will render obsolete the structures and organisations that we have today, and we must not let the opportunity slip to shape the future rather than be overtaken by events. 

BRINGING HOME THE BACON?

Denmark's merchant fleet has grown by a record 25% over the past year, but the question remains of how much this is likely to benefit the country's seafarers. **ANDREW DRAPER** finds out...

Abolishing the registration fee to join the Danish flag and opening up the Danish international register (DIS) to the offshore sector has led to a boom in ships joining the Danish flag.

But unions fear that the maritime labour supply may not keep up with the fleet's growth. Young people in particular are not being turned on by the prospect of a career at sea, they say. A large cohort of senior officers will retire in the coming years and unless they are replaced, a gaping hole may be left in the Danish merchant fleet.

Fresh data from the national shipowners' association, Danish Shipping, show that the national-flagged fleet grew 25% over the past year. With 3.8m gt being added to the books, the fleet totalled 703 ships of 19.4m gt by April 2018 compared with 480 ships of 11m gt in 2010.

Part of the growth is accounted for by Maersk's acquisition of Hamburg Süd and, in terms of gross tonnage, the container fleet is the largest sector under the Danish flag. But more than half the fleet now consists of offshore and specialised vessels – which, thanks to a change in the law, are now allowed to go on the DIS register.

'The massive reflagging of vessels to the Danish flag in the first four months of 2018 underlines Denmark's position as a strong and attractive shipping nation and



▲ Above: John Ibsen, of the Dansk Metal union, which represents ratings and some officers



▲ Above right: Fritz Ganzhorn, of the Søfartens Ledere officers' union

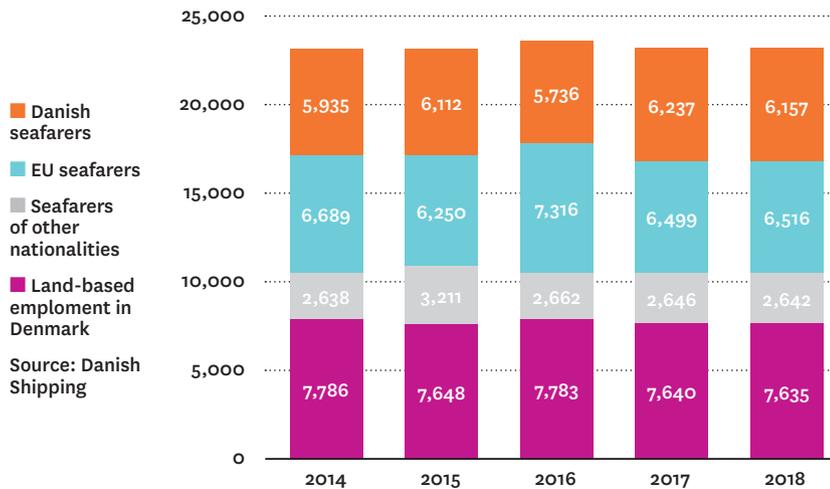
as a global maritime power hub,' the owners claimed in a report earlier this year.

They say they are keen to train more Danish seafarers, but raising the numbers coming in – and staying in – is proving to be a big challenge.

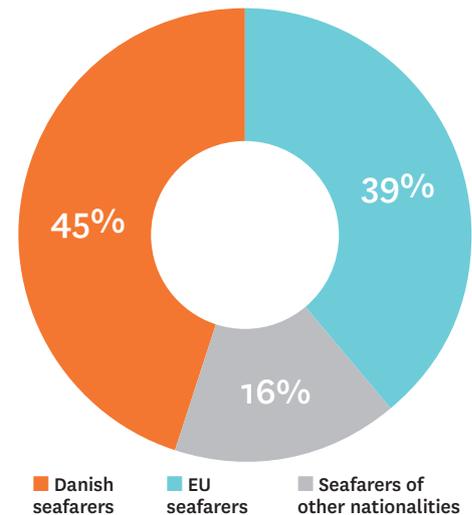
Fritz Ganzhorn, secretary-general of officers' union SL, comments: 'The union has fewer members now because fewer Danes want to go to sea. It's not always interesting at sea, not exciting enough. They don't want to spend a long time at sea.'

He says some Danish shipping companies now have fewer officers than before the financial crisis of 2008, and shipping is struggling to attract young people, who expect to have influence over their work

Employment in Danish shipping sector



Seafarers' nationalities in Danish shipping sector



and enjoy decent standards of treatment by their employers.

After years of decline, the proportion of Danish seafarers in the national fleet seems to have stabilised at just under half. But Mr Ganzhorn adds: 'We have to see growth in the number of officers in order to support growth in the industry. There are ship officer competencies that are not the only prerequisite – but one of them – for having maritime companies in Denmark. I still think alarm bells are ringing until the industry trains more.'

The shipowners say they are increasingly concerned about a shortage of qualified labour – and with plans for a further 10% growth of the fleet by 2022, they are seeking to at least maintain the number of Danish seafarers.

The government is supporting attempts to retain a good pool of maritime expertise and its Blue Maritime policy package underlines the importance of making young people 'aware and informed of the opportunities in an industry which offers a global perspective, competitive salaries and a progressive and structured career path'.

Ministers have also invited ideas for improving seafarer training programmes, and have backed a plan to guarantee 350 training positions a year through a new apprenticeship programme, while also setting up a special pilot scheme for seafarer training in the ferry sector.

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'The owners say they want to train more Danish seafarers, but young people don't want to go to sea'

SL is continuing to lobby political parties for tax reform to ensure that Danish officers are internationally competitive – noting that Maersk Supply Service has to pay 30% to 40% more in salaries to Danes working on Isle of Man vessels than if they were working on DIS ships.

John Ibsen, head of secretariat at the seafaring section of the Dansk Metal union, says the 350 promised trainee positions are payback by the owners for the country's tonnage tax regime. The union says 240 of the trainees will be officers and 110 ratings.

Dansk Metal used to represent catering officers, but they have now all but been wiped out after Maersk moved the role to the Philippines and offered attractive redundancy terms. The union now represents ratings and an increasing number of officers.

Mr Ibsen says the new cadet and trainee posts are crucial to the future of the Danish shipping industry and the owners have been good at running recruitment campaigns in schools and colleges. The growing offshore wind energy sector is also creating new demand for seafarers.

But, he warns, many young people are put off because of the social isolation at sea. And it is also not just a question of money, he argues, the work needs to be interesting.

Mr Ibsen remains hopeful, however. 'I'll see how it goes,' he says. 'It could go either way, but I hope the offshore DIS goes the right way. We've said that it was a good idea. There's been a lot of pressure from AP Møller to get offshore DIS so they can flag ships from the Isle of Man. If they flag in to DIS, it will create a lot of jobs. Whether they'll be Danish jobs, I don't know, but they'll be on Danish terms. That will be super.'

LOW COSTS, LOW STANDARDS?



French seafarers are stepping up their campaign against the ‘crews of convenience’ used on Brittany Ferries’ no-frills service between Ireland, France and Spain. **JEFF APTER** reports...

French maritime unions have warned that they are prepared to take further protest action over the introduction by Brittany Ferries of a vessel operating with low-cost crews under a flag of convenience.

The CFDT and CGT officers’ and ratings’ unions have several times condemned the company’s decision to use the Cyprus-registered ro-ro Connemara to launch its new twice-weekly service between Ireland, France and Spain last May.

The 27,414gt vessel – which

had been operating between Italy and Greece – was chartered in from Stena Ro-Ro to run the new no-frills service linking the ports of Cork, Roscoff and Santander, with a capacity for some 518 passengers, 195 cars and 130 trucks. Its inaugural voyage sparked demonstrations by seafarers – who remain angry about the use of ‘Community’ crews on Connemara.

Since it was established in 1972, Brittany Ferries has traditionally used the French mainland flag and French crews on its ships. The only previous exception

to this policy occurred in 2005, when the company chartered the fast craft Normandie Express to operate a service between Portsmouth, Le Havre and Cherbourg under the UK flag. The vessel was switched to the French register a year later.

The unions claim that the pay and conditions of the Connemara’s crew are well below French standards, and have highlighted concerns over the safety of the ship.

They staged protests in the ports of Roscoff and Brest under the banner of the European Transport

Workers’ Federation Fair Transport campaign to highlight the need to establish a common European ‘maritime space’ with decent terms and conditions for all crews and without social dumping.

The CGT and CFDT have warned of further action after the summer season if the company’s leadership continues to refuse to talk to the unions. They are still awaiting answers to their request to meet management to discuss the operational costs of the new service and have hired an accountant to investigate the charter arrangements.

The unions have also demanded that Brittany Ferries chairman Jean-Marc Roué resign as president of the national shipowners’

French seafarers ▶ protesting against Brittany Ferries' decision not to register the Connemara under the French flag

The Connemara, which is currently crewed by seafarers from Eastern Europe



organisation, Armateurs de France (AdF).

Mr Roué has said publicly that if the new link shows its commercial viability within two years, he would reflag Connemara to the full French register.

But the unions are concerned that the 'economy' service and its low-cost crewing model will damage Brittany Ferries' reputation for quality operations.

CGT-ITF France inspector Laure Tallonneau said she believed Connemara is a substandard ship. Crews are from eastern European countries – Lithuania, Latvia, Poland and Estonia, with replacement crews including Romanian nationals – and she is concerned about their ability to communicate

amongst themselves and with passengers. 'As we could see onboard the Costa Concordia, lack of communication makes situations more difficult when problems arise,' she pointed out.

Ms Tallonneau said the seafarers are employed through a non-French manning agency, with contracts formulated under Singapore law and the ship managed by Glasgow-based Northern Marine.

The crewing arrangements amount to 'social dumping', she added, 'in order to avoid taking on French seafarers, being under French law and negotiating with French unions – including preventing union representatives from going onboard to see what is happening on the ship'.

Ms Tallonneau said the crews are working 12-hour days, seven days a week, over two-and-a-half-month tours of duty. 'Such working arrangements are totally

forbidden under French law for obvious reasons of safety,' she stressed.

'Such arrangements increase crew tiredness, and fatigue is the main cause of accidents. Minimum safe manning is below French standards, and when there is a full cargo their workload increases.'

She pointed out that a port state control inspection carried out soon after Connemara had come into service uncovered 26 technical deficiencies. Some of the defects included a failure to establish an acceptable common working language onboard, a lack of control on abandon-ship drills, and a lack of familiarity with the operation of machinery and equipment.

The checks also showed the vessel lacked an SAR Cooperation plan and its stability information booklet was not as required. There were also problems with fire doors, fire

dampers, fire protection and extinguishing systems, as well as defective life-saving appliances, missing nautical publications, and the VDR and scuppers and inlets not as required.

The company has sought to ease the union concerns by promising to reassess Connemara's flag and crewing arrangements at the end of the ship's two-year charter. Mr Roué said the decision to opt for a non-French operating model had been made as part of a risk management strategy 'in the very uncertain context of Brexit'.

He said the company continues to be committed to the French flag, and will use 100% French crews on three new ferries being introduced over the next four years as part of a fleet renewal programme valued at around €450m.

But the unions are not wholly convinced by these assurances. 'Connemara definitely does not meet the company's reputation and this could affect all the fleet,' Ms Tallonneau added. 'How many passengers with a negative experience of this ferry will trust Brittany Ferries again?' **1**

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'The working hours of these crews would be forbidden by French law for obvious reasons of safety'

WARM WELCOME

The Black Sea port of Novorossiysk is one of Russia's largest, and is expanding rapidly. The UK Merchant Navy Welfare Board has just helped to launch a scheme that will provide care and support for the crews of the 6,000-plus ships that visit every year...

A

pioneering programme to promote seafarer welfare around the world has passed a major milestone, with the launch of Russia's first port welfare council.

Established in the port of Novorossiysk – Russia's main Black Sea port – the new welfare board has been developed under the International Port Welfare Partnership Programme (IPWPP).

Developed and managed by the UK Merchant Navy Welfare Board (MNWB), the programme aims to encourage and support the creation of similar organisations worldwide, in line with objectives set by the international Maritime Labour Convention for seafarers to have appropriate 'access to shore-based facilities and services to secure their health and well-being'.

Also known as port welfare committees, welfare boards provide a forum for local representatives of government, shipowners, unions, ports and voluntary organisations to regularly meet and develop welfare services and facilities.

Following a successful pilot project in Australia, the IPWPP – which is funded by the TK Foundation, the

MNWB, Seafarers UK and the ITF Seafarers' Trust – has gone on to develop further initiatives in such countries as the United States, the Netherlands, South Korea, and Nigeria.

The Novorossiysk project was launched following interest in the programme from the International Confederation of Water Transport Workers Union (ICWTWU) and the ITF-affiliated Seafarers' Union of Russia (SUR).

Former ICWTWU member Roald Alyakrinsky, vice president of the International League 'Care of Seafarers', became the IPWP's first Russian ambassador. As a result of a substantial amount of preparatory work that he undertook, IPWP project manager Sharon Coveney and UK port welfare committee manager Katherine Lockwood visited the port in July and helped set up the new Novorossiysk Port Welfare Council.

The port handles some 20% of Russian seaborne imports and exports, is home to the Black Sea fleet of the Russian Navy and is also the terminus of the pipeline from the rich Tengiz oil field in western Kazakhstan – making it the biggest oil port on the Black Sea.

◀ Novorossiysk, Russia's main Black Sea port





Novorossiysk Commercial Sea Port (NCSP Group) is Russia's largest commercial sea port operator and the third largest port operator in Europe. The company is headquartered in the city of Novorossiysk and operates the Port of Novorossiysk and the Baltic ports of Primorsk and Baltiysk.

The transport hub in Novorossiysk connects NCSP's facilities at the port to extensive rail and road networks providing access to the major industrial, agricultural and population centres and other key cargo origins and destinations in southern and central Russia, Transcaucasia and central Asia.

Between 2000 and 2005 the ITF Seafarers' Trust provided grants to the SUR to help implement a programme to improve seafarers' welfare. A number of seafarers' clubs were built, including the Novorossiysk International Seamen's Centre. Located centrally just outside the port, the centre provides internet and computers, washing facilities, a pool table, a chapel, money exchange and the free use of a gym situated close by in SUR's regional office.

The centre manager Vitold Yatskevich and Sailors' Society chaplain Nikolay Motrenko are both highly respected within the local community and work together with their team of dedicated volunteers, ensuring that visiting crew are made to feel welcome, and providing free port transportation, ship welfare visits and pastoral care when needed.

There is a dedicated port transportation system; the Sailors' Society possesses an ITF Seafarers' Trust grant-funded port chaplain vehicle and the centre uses a SUR-funded minibus,

▲ Members of the new Novorossiysk Port Welfare Council

▼ Novorossiysk International Seamen's Centre, which was funded by the ITF Seafarers' Trust



both of which are used to visit ships and transport crew to and from the centre.

Following an IPWP presentation, the inaugural meeting of the Novorossiysk Port Welfare Council (PWC) took place on 24 July 2018. Representatives from key maritime organisations were in attendance and resolved to establish the council with immediate effect.

The newly-formed PWC has been charged with undertaking a review of the seafarers' welfare facilities in the port at the earliest opportunity. The review will also consider the provision of drop-in centres at distant berths, port-wide wi-fi and port access for ship welfare visitors.

The PWC has been encouraged to consider the need to apply to maritime funding organisations to help financially support improvements to seafarers within the port.

'There's a cosy park near the City Beach in Novorossiysk,' Mr Alyakrinsky says. 'Visitors may see names of this port's twin-cities, designed there on a symbolic compass. Portsmouth, in the UK, is one of them. Unfortunately, nobody can now remember when the last exchange visit between these two ports took place.'

'Ports everywhere are mostly engaged in business,' he notes. 'There is often no time to think about human relations between port communities working far away from each other. But this Russian port has been lucky, and we are working hard to benefit seafarers and make Novorossiysk port more hospitable for the multinational crews that come here.' [t](#)

the global
seafarer



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