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IFSMA NEWSLETTER

The Shipmasters' International Voice

Kiwirail RoRo "*Kaitaki*"

See story on page 12.

UNITY FOR SAFETY AT SEA
IFSMA

Contents

Secretary General's Message

It has been a rather quiet month on the IMO front although with the Secretariat there has had a very heavy administrative load as we prepare for a busy summer and the run up to our BGA in the Faroe Islands in August. There have been many reminders from the Assistant Secretary General, so I hope you have booked your place – I and look forward to seeing you there.

On the security front, there has been much bombing by the United States on the Houthi rebel strongholds and ammunition dumps and as yet this has not translated into more attacks on shipping in the Red Sea.

For shipping the Black Sea remains very quiet but the Russian heavy bombing of the Port of Odessa continues despite the best efforts of the international community, led by the US, to achieve a permanent ceasefire. Let us hope this is successful.

At the IMO, in the middle of May we have the Navigation, Communications and SAR Sub-Committee (NCSR12) taking place. There are a few items for IFSMA to consider, the most important of which will be the discussion of the implications of the SAR requirement for autonomous ships (MASS).

Before I sign off it is important that I mention our study into enclosed space fatalities.

We recently published information on our website home page entitled Enclosed Space Fatalities – Action Points.

Members and the wider maritime community are requested to share as widely as possible the link to the connected survey here:
https://tinyurl.com/4a63b69x

Your assistance here would be much appreciated enabling us to carry out this investigation to reinforce the need for positive action to prevent future such fatalities.

In 2018 the first survey had 4986 responses. Can we beat that? Let us hope so.

Finally, don't forget to book your hotel and send in your registration form to attend the Biennial General Assembly being held in the Faroe Islands on 20, 21 and 22 August 2025.

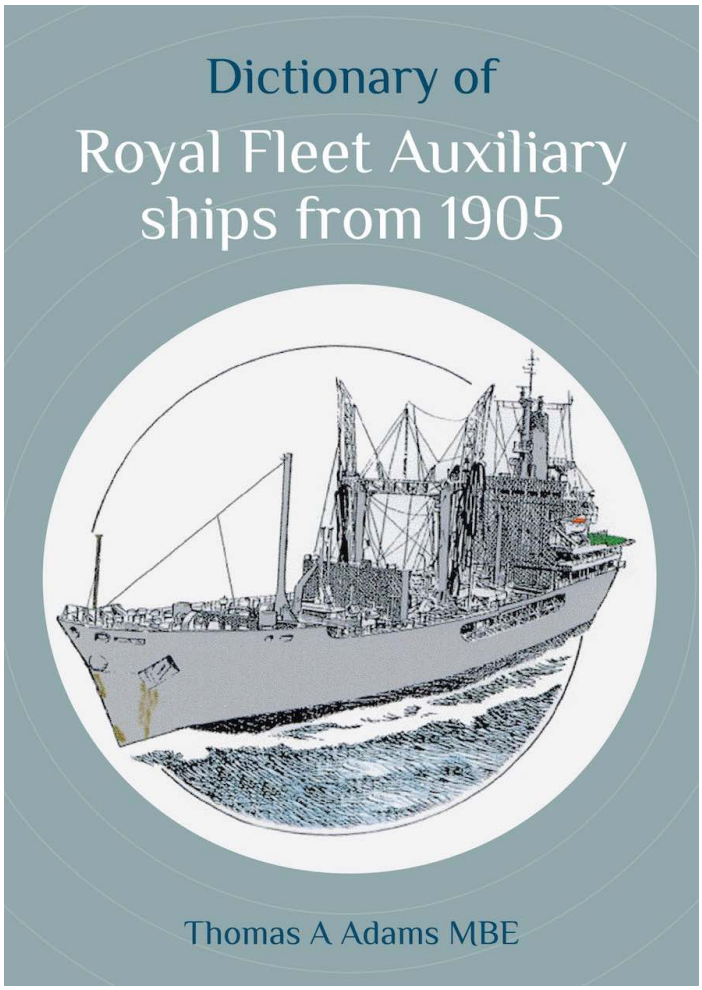
Wherever you are, whether at sea or at home, take care and keep safe.

Jim Scorer
Secretary General

From the News Editor

Dictionary of Royal Fleet Auxiliary ships from 1905

The Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) is a civilian-manned merchant navy organization within the Royal Navy, providing vital logistical and operational support to the Royal Navy and Royal Marines. They are a key enabler of Royal Navy operations, delivering fuel, supplies, and support across the globe.



The RFA employs a highly-trained civilian maritime workforce yet does not comprise military personnel. Staff here provide essential supplies, fuel, and stores to Royal Navy warships at sea, enabling them to operate effectively. There is a strong ethos of cooperation with Allied navies and this is frequently seen on, for example, NATO exercises.

RFA ships are deployed globally, supporting a range of Royal Navy missions, including combat and counter-piracy operations, disaster relief, and emergency evacuations.

A key function of the RFA is Replenishment at Sea (RAS), where supplies and fuel are transferred to Royal Navy ships while they are underway, a very well-practised operation.

The RFA is considered a crucial component of the Royal Navy's capability, enabling its global reach and operational effectiveness.

While owned and managed by the Ministry of Defence, RFA ships are not considered part of the UK Armed Forces and are designated as Government Ships under the Merchant Shipping Act of 1995.

RFA Fort Victoria, on anti-piracy patrol off the Horn of Africa.

Photo: NATO MARCOM ©

Dictionary of Royal Fleet Auxiliary ships from 1905 is a comprehensively researched reference work detailing over 430 RFA vessels. Published by Whittles Publishing of Caithness, Scotland: (www.whittlespublishing.com ISBN 978 184995 575 3); at 440 pages in A4 format, softback, the book has a cover price of £35.00.

By Thomas A Adams this work showcases the often overlooked ships that have supported the Royal Navy in the twentieth century and to date. Here are presented a detailed guide to vessels that were essential in the wide field of British maritime operations, in all theatres including the South Atlantic on 1982 in Operation Corporate. There is a record of those ships from the traditional tankers taken up from commercial trade to the ships of the 21st century designed for the sophisticated and critical role of sea-going logistics support.

RFA Tiderace at US Navy Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, Japan, August 2017

Photo: MCS 1st Class P Burghart US Navy ©

The author is a recognised authority on the history and ships of the RFA. The dictionary features tonnage from the tanker *Petroleum* and hospital ship *Maine* of

1905 to the multi-role assets *Proteus* and *Stirling Castle* of 2023.

Additionally, there is information on a number of projected RFA vessels and equipment including a cancelled hospital ship and a nuclear-powered replenishment tanker that remain on the drawing board.

Where appropriate there is a summary of service and for the historian each entry is provided with a list of sources for further study. The 440-page volume is supported by an abundance of 190 photographs and forty drawings. Here is an amazing, extensive, first of its kind review of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, a welcome addition to the civilian fleet lists.

For more on the present day activities of the RFA readers are invited to see the Ministry of Defence link here: https://tinyurl.com/mubad3hc

The IMO Digest

A summary of some of the news received with grateful thanks from the excellent IMO Media service in recent weeks.

Illustrations per www.imo.org ©

IMO approves net-zero regulations for global shipping

Draft regulations will set mandatory marine fuel standard and GHG emissions pricing for shipping to address climate change.

On 11 April IMO reported that it had achieved another important step towards establishing a legally binding framework to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from ships globally, aiming for net-zero emissions by or close to 2050.

A world first

The IMO Net-zero Framework is the first in the world to combine mandatory emissions limits and GHG pricing across an entire industry sector.

A new fuel standard; global pricing

Approved by the Marine Environment Protection Committee during its 83rd session (MEPC 83) from 7–11 April 2025, the measures include a new fuel standard for ships and a global pricing mechanism for emissions.

These measures, set to be formally adopted in October 2025 before entry into force in 2027, will become mandatory for large ocean-going ships over 5,000 gross tonnage which emit 85% of the total CO_2 emissions from international shipping.

IMO S-G's comments

Closing the meeting, IMO Secretary-General Mr Arsenio Dominguez commended the spirit of cooperation and commitment demonstrated by Member States during the week of MEPC.

He commented: '*The approval of draft amendments to MARPOL Annex VI mandating the IMO net-zero framework represents another significant step in our collective efforts to combat climate change, to modernize shipping and demonstrates that IMO delivers on its commitments.*

'*Now, it is important to continue working together, engaging in dialogue and listening to one another, if we are to create the conditions for successful adoption*.'

Key elements of the IMO Net-Zero Framework

The IMO Net-Zero Framework will be included in a new Chapter 5 of Annex VI (Prevention of air pollution from ships) to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL)[1].

MARPOL Annex VI currently has 108 Parties, covering 97% of the world's merchant shipping fleet by tonnage, and already includes mandatory energy efficiency requirements[2] for ships.

The goal is to achieve the climate targets set out in the 2023 IMO Strategy on the Reduction of GHG Emissions from Ships,[3] accelerate the introduction of zero and near zero GHG fuels, technologies and energy sources, and support a just and equitable transition.

Under the draft regulations, ships will be required to comply with:

1. **Global fuel standard:** Ships must reduce, over time, their annual greenhouse gas fuel intensity (GFI) – that is, how much GHG is emitted for each unit of energy used. This is calculated using a well-to-wake approach.

2. **Global economic measure:** Ships emitting above GFI thresholds will have to acquire remedial units to balance its deficit emissions, while those using zero or near-zero GHG technologies will be eligible for financial rewards.

Ensuring compliance

There will be two levels of compliance with GHG Fuel Intensity targets: a Base Target and a Direct Compliance Target at which ships would be eligible to earn '*surplus units*'.

Ships that emit above the set thresholds can balance their emissions deficit by:

- Transferring surplus units from other ships.
- Using surplus units they have already banked.
- Using remedial units acquired through contributions to the IMO Net-Zero Fund.

IMO Net-Zero Fund

The IMO Net-Zero Fund will be established to collect pricing contributions from emissions. These revenues will then be disbursed to:

- Reward low-emission ships.
- Support innovation, research, infrastructure and just transition initiatives in developing countries.
- Fund training, technology transfer and capacity building to support the IMO GHG Strategy.
- Mitigate negative impacts on vulnerable States, such as Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries.

Next steps

Upon approval, the draft amendments to MARPOL Annex VI will be formally circulated to IMO Member States, followed by:

- **October 2025 (MEPC/ES.2):** Adoption of the amendments during an extraordinary session of the Marine Environment Protection Committee.
- **Spring 2026 (MEPC 84):** Approval of detailed implementation guidelines.
- **2027:** Expected entry into force, 16 months after adoption (in accordance with MARPOL articles).

The IMO Net-zero Framework will combine mandatory emissions limits and GHG pricing across an entire industry sector.

Other MEPC 83 outcomes

The meeting discussed a range of issues related to protecting the marine environment from shipping activities, with the following key outcomes:

- Adoption of 2025 Action Plan to combat marine plastic litter.
- Progress in the review of the Ballast Water Management Convention.
- Approval of a proposal to designate the North-East Atlantic as an Emission Control Area and agreement in principle to designate two new Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas off South America's Pacific coast.
- Approval of the draft Work plan on the development of a regulatory framework for the use of Onboard Carbon Capture Storage systems (OCCS).
- Approval of draft amendments to regulation 27 of MARPOL Annex VI regarding accessibility of the IMO Data Collection System.
- Adoption of amendments to the 2021 Guidelines on the operational carbon intensity reduction factors relative to reference lines (CII reduction factors guidelines, G3).
- Approval of a new output to develop a legally binding framework on biofouling management, to prevent the spread of harmful invasive aquatic species.

[1] https://tinyurl.com/3xdkuwpv

[2] https://tinyurl.com/y9ba76mc

[3] https://tinyurl.com/2xcxr2x2

ITLOS-IMO

Joint Workshop: maritime legal issues

The IMO and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) joint Workshop of 28 March[1], held at IMO HQ in London, brought together a range of legal experts from both organizations to discuss key maritime issues.

IMO – ITLOS important links

Opening the Workshop, IMO Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez highlighted the important linkages between IMO and ITLOS: '*When UNCLOS was adopted, in 1982, the IMO already had in place a comprehensive body of international conventions […]. That is why many articles in UNCLOS refer to legal frameworks developed by a competent international organization - and therefore IMO treaties are referred to in many provisions of UNCLOS*.'

ITLOS defined

The International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea is an independent judicial body that has jurisdiction over any dispute concerning the interpretation or application of the United Nations Conventions on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)[2].

Thomas Heidar, President of ITLOS, provided an overview of the ITLOS Advisory Opinion on Climate Change and the Ocean, published in May 2024 at the request of the Commission of Small Island States.

Key questions

This Advisory Opinion addressed two key questions: one related to marine pollution, with a particular focus on Article 194, and the other concerning the general obligations of States.

Heidar provided valuable insights into key questions surrounding the application of UNCLOS in the context of climate change: '*It [ITLOS Advisory Opinion] reaffirms that the Convention is not a static treaty but a living instrument capable of addressing evolving environmental threats.*

'*It provides much-needed clarity on the obligations of State parties to prevent, reduce, and control marine*

pollution caused by anthropogenic GHG emissions from various sources, including from vessels.

'*Flag States, in particular, have a specific obligation to ensure compliance by vessels with international standards, and the IMO's work in setting these standards is pivotal. Looking ahead, it is clear that fulfilling these obligations will require not only determined action by individual States but also meaningful cooperation between them*.'

Range of topics explored

The Workshop, held following the IMO Legal Committee (LEG 112) session, provided an opportunity for legal experts to explore a range of topics including vessel arrests, key aspects of ITLOS case law and procedures, prompt release, ship nationality, registration, and the challenges posed by fraudulent ship registries.

The Workshop concluded with a presentation from Cyprus, offering a Member State's perspective on due diligence in ship registration.

[1] https://tinyurl.com/bf5y3aht

[2] https://tinyurl.com/3pbd3v86

Oil spill response

IMO shares expertise

IMO outlined key insights for tackling marine pollution incidents at INTERSPILL 2025[1] held in London from 8-10 April.

Focusing on the potential issues raised by future spills, hundreds of professionals from the international spill response community, private sector, government, and non-governmental organizations came together at the conference to discuss challenges, innovation and share spill preparedness and response expertise from around the world.

Topics covered included: alternative fuels as a pathway to decarbonisation of the maritime transport sector; discussions on maintaining preparedness in a continuously evolving pollution risk landscape; innovation in surveillance, monitoring and visualization; and oiled wildlife.

During the event, the IMO team delivered the following:

Red Sea incidents

Patricia Charlebois, Deputy Director, Subdivision for Ocean Policy, Marine Environment Division, chaired a Panel session on recent incidents in the Red Sea, highlighting the importance of regional and international cooperation in emergency response and preparedness.

IMO has played a key supporting role in the United Nations-coordinated efforts aimed at preventing an oil spill from the *FSO Safer* and MV *Rubymar*, as well as the more recent cases MV *Sounion* and ASL *Bauhinia*.

Regional frameworks for preparedness and response

Chiara Della Mea, Head of Pollution Preparedness and Response Section, chaired a session on regional frameworks for preparedness and response, focusing on multilateral and regional cooperation and capacity-building for effectively dealing with marine pollution incidents, which is an area strongly supported by the IMO.

During another session Ms Della Mea highlighted the challenges of dealing with a spill of alternative fuels, and explained how IMO's regulatory framework is evolving to take into consideration the development of low sulphur and alternative fuels in marine transportation.

Diversity, Equality and Inclusion

A poster on IMO's activities to promote and implement Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (DEI) was on display in the poster section dedicated to how spill response organizations have integrated DEI principles into their work practices.

IMO, together with representatives from IOPC Funds, Ipieca, ITOPF and OSRL, co-organized and participated in a DEI working lunch session on 9 April, attended by over eighty INTERSPILL registered delegates. Following a panel discussion where IMO, ITOPF and CEFAS presented their posters, the session attendees participated in table-top discussions, sharing their experiences and lessons learned on how the oil spill response community at large and the individual organizations/companies implement measure to foster diverse workforce, inclusive culture, equality and equitability for all.

The importance of mentorship programmes and networks were highlighted to encourage more widespread access to training opportunities for women and minorities in the oil spill response field. An outcome of the discussions, building on a side event held during INTERSPILL 2022, highlighted the need for concrete actions, both small, everyday actions and systemic changes, including the development of an

industry-wide DEI framework, and leadership-led efforts to create equitable and inclusive environments.

Support for participation

IMO's Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme (ITCP) funded the participation of five delegates from Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, and Ukraine to attend the conference.

Delegates were able to undertake a number of short courses on how to optimize spill response transitioning from emergencies to projects, HNS spill response, and response strategy development using net environmental benefit analysis (NEBA).

E-learning

The IMO's e-Learning course *An Introduction to Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Cooperation* was promoted at the conference. This self-enrolled course, which is available in English, French and Spanish, provides individuals new to the oil spill response community with a comprehensive overview of the essential elements of oil spill preparedness and response. This course, as well as future remote courses are part of the IMO e-Learning portal, aim to increase the capacity of Member States to effectively implement IMO instruments.

IMO was present throughout the conference with a stand on the exhibition floor, which provided information on IMO conventions, manuals and other publications, and which served as the nexus for connecting delegates and organizations with the IMO with a view to raising visibility of the Organization's work, and its relationship with the oil response sector.

Since 2000, IMO has been a regular contributor and sponsor of the triennial oil pollution prevention, preparedness and response Conference Series, composed of the three international conferences for the Americas (IOSC)[2], Europe (INTERSPILL) and Asia (SPILLCON), respectively.

At the end of the conference, the baton was passed to SPILLCON, with the next in the triennial conference series[3], to be held in Australia in 2026. IMO co-sponsors the event through the IMO Integrated Technical Cooperation programme.

[1] https://www.interspill.org/2025/
[2] https://www.iosc.org/
[3] https://tinyurl.com/4zaaduyb

To combat biofouling

Global push gains momentum

A global task force made up of partner countries and organizations of the GloFouling Partnerships Project[1] is laying the groundwork for a follow-up initiative to address biofouling, which continues to be a major threat to ocean health.

MEPC 83

This comes as IMO's Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 83)[2], which met from 7 to 11 April agreed to develop a new legally binding framework on biofouling management.

Since 2019, the GloFouling Partnerships Project, implemented jointly by IMO, UNDP and GEF, has supported developing countries in tackling the spread of invasive aquatic species via ships' hulls.

With the project completing this month (May) stakeholders are evaluating lessons learned and exploring the development of a successor initiative that will focus on long-term funding, stronger regional collaboration, private-sector engagement, and alignment with the IMO-Norad TEST Biofouling Project[3].

Comment

GloFouling Project Manager Lilia Khodjet El Khil commented: '*With IMO moving towards a mandatory framework on biofouling management, developing countries need stronger technical support to keep pace.*

'*A follow-up initiative is essential to help them prepare for the development and implementation of future rules, strengthen regional cooperation, and ensure the risk of invasive species is mitigated*.'

Potentially, the next phase of the project would continue to support implementation of the 2023 IMO Biofouling Guidelines[4] as well as any future mandatory regulations and integrate biofouling policy more deeply at both national and global levels, it is reported.

Bali meeting

A meeting of the GloFouling Partnerships Project's Global Project Task Force (GPTF-3) held in Bali from 10–12 March brought together representatives from twenty-four countries, eight regional bodies, and strategic partners such as the Maritime Technology Cooperation Centres (MTCCs) and Global Industry Alliance (GIA).

The event highlighted the main achievements of the GloFouling Project (2019-2025) and outlined a sustainability roadmap to ensure long-term impact.

Spotlight on women in biosafety

The Bali event was followed by the Asia-Pacific Women in Maritime Biofouling Management Workshop of 13 March which launched a mentorship programme to boost women's leadership in the sector, in line with IMO and Maritime SheEO[5] initiatives.

Eight mentors and six mentees from government, academia and industry committed to advancing gender equality in a traditionally male-dominated field, through skills-building, networking and other support.

Video introduction

Readers area invited to watch a short film: *Silent Invaders: the Unseen Impact of Invasive Aquatic Species* by the link here: https://tinyurl.com/bp9skd4m

[1] https://www.glofouling.imo.org/
[2] https://tinyurl.com/5n9yu4xn
[3] https://testbiofouling.imo.org/
[4] https://tinyurl.com/2u37p327
[5] https://maritimesheeo.com/

Comoros

Port State Control Officers' advanced training

A training session led by IMO was held in Anjouan, Comoros, from 7-11 April to strengthen Port State Control (PSC) capabilities and support maritime safety, security and environmental compliance in the region.

Port State Control refers to the inspection of foreign-flagged ships at national ports to verify their compliance with international regulations and ensure that they are safely and properly operated.

A total of sixteen Port State Control Officers (PSCOs) participated in the training, including twelve officers from the Comoros Maritime Agency (ANAM – *Agence Nationale des Affaires Maritimes*) and four from the Madagascar Maritime and Port Agency (APMF – *Agence Portuaire Maritime et Fluviale*).

The training combined classroom instruction, practical case studies, and hands-on inspection simulations aboard a vessel docked at the Port of Mutsamudu.

Participants from Comoros and Madagascar exchanged expertise and best practices, including on inspection techniques and security-related compliance, fostering regional cooperation.

Key objectives of the training included:

- Providing direct support for conducting PSC inspections, in line with international safety, security, and environmental standards.
- Ensuring all designated PSCOs in Comoros are fully equipped to conduct effective PSC inspections that contribute to the overall security of the port.
- Strengthening the quality and effectiveness of PSC inspections in ports across the Eastern and Southern Africa and Indian Ocean region, supporting broader port safety and security compliance efforts.

EU-funded Port Security Project

The training was part of the EU-funded Port Security Project*, implemented by IMO, the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to support maritime security in the Eastern and Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean (EA-SA-IO) regions.

* https://tinyurl.com/2p8bk47n

New Maritime Labour Convention amendments

Set to boost seafarers' conditions

Seafarers are set to benefit from improved working and living conditions following the adoption of important amendments to the Maritime Labour

Convention (MLC), 2006. This was reported by IMO on 17 April.

The IMO which participated in the MLC Special Tripartite Committee meeting at ILO in Geneva from 7 to 11 April welcomed these developments.

To ensure fair treatment

Amendments here reflect a continued commitment by the international community to ensure fair treatment, enhance safety and wellbeing at sea, and recognize the vital contribution of seafarers to global trade.

More specifically the meeting adopted the following amendments:

- Protecting seafarers against violence and harassment on board.
- Calling for the designation and recognition of seafarers as key workers.
- Strengthening the rights of seafarers with respect to shore leave, for the benefit of their health and wellbeing.
- Facilitating the movement of seafarers for the purpose of repatriation.
- Requiring States to cooperate and take due account of the IMO/ILO Guidelines on the fair treatment of seafarers in the event of a maritime accident, and the recently adopted IMO/ILO Guidelines on the fair treatment of seafarers detained in connection with alleged crimes.
- Recommending that ships have the most up-to-date medical information and guidance on board, to be available for the person responsible for medical care on board.

Expected in force by December 2027

The amendments will now be submitted for approval at the next session of the International Labour Conference, taking place from 2 to 13 June 2025. If endorsed, they are expected to enter into force by December 2027.

Alongside the amendments, the Special Tripartite Committee also adopted a number of key resolutions. Of particular relevance to IMO are the recommendations to extend the mandate of the Joint ILO/IMO Tripartite Working Group (JTWG), to conduct a final review to update the ILO/IMO Joint Database on Abandonment of Seafarers and continue cooperation on seafarers' welfare.

This meeting in Geneva underscored the power of tripartite dialogue and multilateral cooperation in delivering meaningful, effective solutions to global challenges.

Of the amendments Mark Dickinson, of Nautilus International an IFSMA Member, and ILO Seafarers' group Vice-Chairperson said: '*For the first time in any ILO instrument we have a reference to seafarers as key workers in the Code. How seafarers were treated during Covid-19 cannot be forgotten, and we have made sure, as best we can, that it won't be repeated. Tripartism once again delivered, and we look forward to continuing to progress and to delivering more for seafarers around the world*.'

Full text

Readers are invited to read the full six-page text of the amendments to:

Fifth meeting of the Special Tripartite Committee established under Article XIII of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended Geneva, 7–11 April 2025 by means of the link here:
https://tinyurl.com/2cdcryas

Bangladesh tackles GHG emissions

A National Action Plan

Bangladesh has officially launched the development of a National Action Plan (NAP) to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from shipping.

Critical step

This marks a critical step toward aligning the country's maritime sector with the 2023 IMO GHG Strategy and MARPOL Annex VI. IMO resolution MEPC.367(79), adopted in 2022, encourages Member States to develop and submit voluntary NAPs outlining respective policies and actions to address GHG emissions from ships.

Multi-stakeholder workshop

Led by the Department of Shipping under the Ministry of Shipping, and supported by the IMO's GreenVoyage2050 Programme*, the initiative was launched at a multi-stakeholder workshop in Dhaka. The event brought together over 100 policymakers, private sector leaders, shipbuilders, academics, and energy specialists to identify actionable measures for greening Bangladesh's extensive maritime network, including over 24,000 km of inland waterways.

Comment

Director-General of the Department of Shipping, Commodore Mohammad Maksud Alam, emphasized the national importance of this initiative: ''*Bangladesh is a proud maritime and riverine nation - home to thousands of seafarers, a thriving shipbuilding and recycling industry, with an extensive network of inland waterways. As we look to the future, we are seeking to understand how the global energy transition can unlock new economic opportunities for our people. This National Action Plan is a critical step in exploring how we can reduce emissions from shipping while strengthening our maritime workforce, catalysing the ship building industry, modernizing our ports, and building a cleaner, more resilient economy*.'

Astrid Dispert, GreenVoyage2050 Programme Manager at IMO, acknowledged Bangladesh's leadership in the region added: '*Bangladesh's ambition to integrate shipping, ports, and energy into*

a unified National Action Plan is commendable. With its extensive inland waterways and growing shipbuilding industry, the country is well-positioned to become a leader in sustainable maritime development. Through our GreenVoyage2050, we are proud to support Bangladesh in taking practical steps towards a decarbonized maritime future.'

Priority actions

The workshop highlighted several priority actions:

- Improving data collection.
- Developing emission baselines.
- Incentivizing the use of cleaner fuels.
- Retrofitting domestic fleets.
- Enhancing training for seafarers and port managers.

Opportunities

Participants also identified opportunities for greener ship design and localized innovation, leveraging facilities such as the Khulna shipyard. Integration of port development strategies, energy policies, and sustainable shipbuilding were considered as key enablers of long-term success.

Finance

Discussions further explored financing solutions, including concessional loans and incentives for shipowners, as well as capacity-building programmes to support a skilled maritime workforce. The NAP will provide a strategic framework for aligning Bangladesh's maritime decarbonisation efforts with national development goals and international climate commitments.

As a next step, a national baseline assessment will be undertaken and a dedicated NAP Task Force established to steer the development of the plan.

GreenVoyage2050 Programme

GreenVoyage2050 is a major technical cooperation programme initiated by the IMO to assist developing countries in reducing GHG emissions from shipping, aligning with the 2023 IMO GHG Strategy. Phase I of GreenVoyage2050 (2020–2023) supported partnering countries in developing policy frameworks and pilot projects to reduce GHG emissions from ships. Phase II (2024–2030) continues and expands this support, leveraging funding from the Governments of Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Norway.

*https://greenvoyage2050.imo.org/about-the-project/

Training for alternative fuels

The large-scale rollout of the Train-the-Trainer Programme on Alternative Fuels for Sustainable Shipping, led by the IMO has begun, with the first training for thirty-five participants at the Maritime Technology Cooperation Centre (MTCC-Asia) held at Shanghai Maritime University, from 14 to18 April.

This programme was implemented by the World Maritime University (WMU) to empower maritime professionals with the skills to train others on key fuels for shipping decarbonization: ammonia, methanol and hydrogen.

Baseline Training Framework

The training course was developed under the project on Baseline Training Framework for Seafarers in Decarbonisation, in collaboration with the Maritime Just Transition (MJT) Task Force*, and the IMO Secretariat.

Trialled at WMU

The Programme was first trialled at WMU in December 2024 with feedback collected through the post-course evaluation survey from the participants. Updates include additional practical sessions, using scenario-based learning derived from real-world cases, and providing demonstrations of safety equipment and procedures.

Broad range of participants

IMO-funded participants were from Bangladesh; India; Indonesia; Malaysia; Pakistan; the Philippines; Thailand; and Viet Nam.

Self-funded participants were from China; Hong Kong, China; Japan; Republic of Korea; and Singapore, MTCC Asia, and non-governmental organization (NGO) and industry representatives nominated by the partners of the Maritime Just Transition Task Force, including the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC), International Chamber of Shipping (ICS), International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), and Lloyd's Register Foundation.

* https://tinyurl.com/4k3pepah

MENA region audit preparation

At the end of April it was reported that senior maritime administrators from nine countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region completed a five-day workshop in preparation for their respective audits under the IMO Member State Audit Scheme (IMSAS)[1].

Mandatory audit requirement

Under IMSAS, all Member States are required to undergo a mandatory audit within a seven-year audit cycle, to assess their performance in implementing applicable IMO instruments.

UAE hosted

The workshop was jointly organized in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from 21-25 April by IMO and the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure of the UAE, as the host country.

Strengthening capacity

Twenty participants received training on how to strengthen their maritime administrations' capacity to implement and enforce mandatory IMO instruments as well as the IMO Instruments Implementation Code (III Code)[2].

Participants discussed specific guidance for the following:

- Preparation and conduct of audits under IMSAS.
- Development of corrective action plans (CAP) to address findings.
- Action to be taken by a Member State to identify and eliminate the root causes of any finding or observation from the audit, in order to prevent their recurrence were provided.

Since the IMSAS was made mandatory in January 2016, 144 mandatory audits under IMSAS have been conducted, with up to 25 Member States being audited annually.

With the first audit cycle due to be completed at the end of 2025, participants were briefed on the latest developments related to the Scheme.

Broad participation

Countries that participated in the workshop included: Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates.

[1] https://tinyurl.com/4bawe4kj
[2] https://tinyurl.com/4w6as89c

Africa: Enhancing flag State implementation

A regional workshop led by IMO in Mombasa has helped maritime professionals in Eastern and Southern Africa enhance their understanding of flag States' obligations under IMO conventions, and how to authorize Recognized Organizations to ensure these obligations are met.

The Regional Workshop on Flag State Implementation (FSI) and the Authorization of Recognized Organizations from 7-11 April brought together thirty-nine participants from seventeen countries to promote effective implementation of IMO regulations, and support safe, secure and more environmentally sustainable shipping.

Kenyan host

Hosted by the Kenya Maritime Authority and organized in collaboration with IMO under its Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme (ITCP)[1], the training focused on flag States' responsibilities, survey and certification under IMO instruments and how to effectively authorize and oversee Recognized Organizations (ROs).

Vital role

Flag States play a vital role in ensuring that ships under their jurisdiction comply with international maritime safety, security and environmental standards. ROs working on behalf of flag States are assessed, recognized and authorized under the IMO's Code for Recognized Organizations (RO Code), which sets minimum criteria for ROs and provides guidelines for oversight by flag States.

Key themes covered during the training included flag State jurisdiction and enforcement, survey and certification, communication of information, and domestic ferry safety. Participants explored strategies for monitoring compliance, managing risks, while enhancing their national maritime frameworks in line with international best practices.

IMO's commitment

Half of the participants were women, reflecting IMO's commitment to promoting an inclusive maritime governance. Participants are expected to apply the knowledge gained during the workshop to strengthen flag State performance, particularly in the areas of compliance, survey and certification and applying the RO Code.

Broad participation

Participating States included: Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

[1] https://tinyurl.com/5n8acu9w

New Zealand ferries

Government promises new Cook Strait ferries

In a huge win for International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) affiliates, the Maritime Union of New Zealand (MUNZ) and the Rail and Maritime Transport Union (RMTU), the New Zealand Government has promised to deliver two new, publicly-owned and rail-enabled Interislander ferries. This was reported by the ITF on 4 April.

Concerted campaign

The Government's turnabout comes after a concerted campaign from MUNZ, under the banner *Our Ferries, Our Future*.

Rail and Maritime Transport Union comment

In the words of MUNZ National Secretary, Carl Findlay: '*This is a victory for common sense, and an outcome that we've been strongly arguing for. I want to congratulate the membership of our union, not least the crews of the Interislander ferries for their strong support of the 'Our Ferries, Our Future' campaign*."

The campaign launched in 2024 after the newly elected National Party Government cancelled the previous Labour Government's contract to replace the ferries. This sparked fears of an agenda to privatise and de-unionise the ferry service, while also splitting it from the essential rail service.

Howard Phillips, RMTU National Vice-President reflected: '*Confirmation that the new ferries will be rail-enabled is excellent news for New Zealand's transport infrastructure. It guarantees that rail freight will continue to be a significant part of the sustainable supply chain*.'

Depth of feeling

Throughout 2024, the campaign included political lobbying, a public petition signed by more than 10,000 people and protests on the streets of Wellington – joined by ITF affiliate unions from around the world.

The Rail and Maritime Transport Union Inc. (RMTU), New Zealand, the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA), the Norwegian Seafarers' Union (NSU), the Associated Philippine Seafarers' Union (APSU), the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU – USA, Canada), the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA – USA) and the All Japan Dockworkers' Union (ZenKowan) were among the ITF affiliates in Wellington showing solidarity with MUNZ.

ITF Ferry Taskforce Chair, Ronny Øksnes, emphasised: '*This victory for MUNZ shows that standing up and fighting back saves jobs and vital public transport services – and at the same time wins huge benefits for communities.*

'*I was proud to take to the streets of Wellington to protest alongside MUNZ and our fellow trade unionists from all around the world. It clearly shows that for trade unions an injury to one really is an injury to all: that no matter what, we will always come together to defend each other – and we will win.*

'*As the world lurches to the right – with the election of far-right governments, rising authoritarianism, and looming trade wars threatening working-class communities – this is the kind of international solidarity that needs to be heard by everyone, everywhere*.'

Critical lifeline service

Interislander ferries have provided a critical lifeline service, connecting New Zealand's North Island and South Island across the Cook Strait, since the 1960s.

The current, ageing fleet of three ferries is publicly run by Kiwi Rail and transports passengers while also performing a vital freight role, transporting trucks and rail wagons.

The new ferries will have a thirty-year service life, with the Government saying it is '*looking to the long-term*'. As ITF Maritime Policy Adviser, Sadie Saunders, said in November last year, while concerns about cost are understandable: '*transport infrastructure is a long-term investment that ensures good jobs and efficient supply chains*'.

Each new ferry will be able to take 1,500 passengers and have 2.4km of lanes for cars and trucks, with 40 rail wagons able to shunt onto specific rail decks.

Ministerial confirmation

New Zealand Rail Minister, Winston Peters MP, confirmed the Christmas 2029 timeline for delivery and said that although a new wharf would be built in Picton, plans to build new port terminal buildings and fully renew road and rail masting yards had been scrapped.

MUNZ National Secretary, Carl Findlay added: '*There should be no doubt that we will be closely watching developments around reduced expenditure on the new terminals and port infrastructure*.'

The view from KiwiRail

A few days earlier, on 31 March, KiwiRail announced that it welcomes the ferry announcement.

The NZ Government's decision to procure new rail-enabled Interislander ferries is great news for the public, international visitors and the entire freight market wanting to include rail in their supply chains, said KiwiRail Chief Executive Peter Reidy.

He continued: '*As New Zealand's only company moving freight by rail, KiwiRail is particularly happy to see that specifications are for rail-enabled ferries which will ensure the lowest operating cost for rail freight and increased capacity for road transport operators.*

'*KiwiRail also welcomes today's announcement that planning for the port infrastructure in Picton and Wellington is underway and that the ferries will enter service in 2029.*

'*With its decision to purchase brand new ships, the Government has opted to invest in long-term safety and reliability for New Zealand, meeting international obligations for safe return to port, and more rigorous environmental standards.*

'*In 2024, we did an international search for any suitable second-hand ships to buy or lease that would meet modern safety and environmental standards. None were available.*

'*These days, new ships and ferries are built to comply with international maritime regulations for 'safe return to port', requiring vessels to be able to maintain essential systems to safely return passengers and crew to port without evacuation*'.

New ferries will also meet requirements under the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, covering air pollution and emissions, which are becoming more stringent over time.

Two new, identical ships will improve Interislander's efficiency by reducing ongoing maintenance costs and, for the first time, allow KiwiRail to use a single standardised asset management, training and operational approach.

Reidy continued: '*The decision to go with rail-enabled ferries gives our freight customers the confidence to include rail in their investment decisions enabling them to release capital to higher earning alternatives.*

'*Until the new ships arrive, Interislander will continue providing a reliable and safe Cook Strait service with our current ferries. They are the workhorses of Cook Strait, together carrying more than 620,000 passengers, 230,000 cars and 73,000 commercial vehicles a year, along with rail freight.*

'*Across the busy summer peak from December 2024 to the end of February 2025 Interislander's reliability was 100 per cent, excluding weather events. So far in this financial year, Interislander's reliability has been around 98 per cent.*

'*We look forward to working with the Government and Ferry Holdings Ltd to support the procurement process and to ensure the smooth introduction of the new ferries to service on Cook Strait for our customers and for New Zealand*.'

Illustration per www.kiwirail.co.nz ©

Copernicus over Hamburg

Hamburg, Germany's second-largest city, is a major economic hub and home to one of Europe's busiest seaports. Wilhelmsburg, a quarter of Hamburg, is an island framed by the winding branches of the Elbe, known for its mix of industrial sites and green urban spaces.

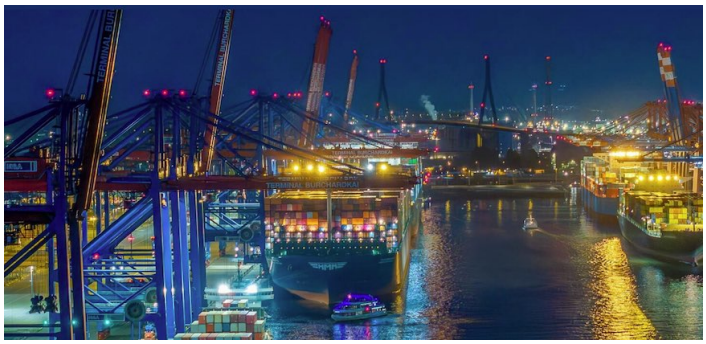
Wilhelmsburg is also part of Hamburg's flood management system—an increasingly important feature in light of the growing risk of severe flooding due to increased rainfall and storm surges.

Credit: *European Union, Copernicus Sentinel-2 imagery EU ©.*

This Copernicus Sentinel-2 image, acquired on 25 October 2024, shows the Port of Hamburg, including container terminals and docks, and the surrounding urban and industrial areas along the Elbe River in northern Germany.

Copernicus open data supports urban planning, land use monitoring, and environmental management by

providing vital insights for coastal cities adapting to the impacts of climate change and growing infrastructural demands.



The Port of Hamburg's website is to be found here: https://www.hafen-hamburg.de/en/

A webcam pan is available here: https://tinyurl.com/26mkehx7

NATO Exercise Dynamic Mariner 25 concluded

On 7 April NATO Allied Maritime Command (MARCOM) Public Affairs reported from Rota in Spain that after two weeks of intense joint operations, Exercise Dynamic Mariner 25 had reached a successful conclusion, reinforcing NATO's maritime strength, interoperability, and rapid response capabilities.

Dynamic Mariner 25 took place from 24 March to 4 April across the Western Mediterranean and the Atlantic Ocean, closely followed by Spanish exercise FLOTEX-25.

Critical test

Hosted by Spain and led by MARCOM Dynamic Mariner 25 was a non-Article 5 crisis response exercise. It served as a critical test of NATO's ability to operate across land, sea and air, with a focus on Anti-Submarine Warfare, Surface Warfare, Maritime Interdiction, Amphibious Operations, and Cyber Defence.

Elements of the Turkish Amphibious Task Force come ashore. Photo: NATO MARCOM ©.

Throughout the exercise, participating forces demonstrated the agility, coordination, and tactical proficiency required to respond effectively to emerging maritime security challenges.

Spanish Navy command

As a direct result of this exercise, the Spanish Navy will now take over as the NATO Allied Reaction Force Maritime element (ARF/M) from 1 July 2025. The ARF is an entirely new concept, which provides multi-domain forces from across the Alliance to produce effects at shorter notice than has previously been possible. Designed to enhance NATO's flexibility and readiness, the ARF is a highly deployable and adaptable force capable of addressing a wide range of security challenges, including conventional, hybrid, and cyber threats.

At the same time, the Turkish Amphibious Task Force will assume the role of ARF Commander Amphibious Task Force (CATF) and Commander Landing Force (CLF) from 1 July this year. Experience gained in Dynamic Mariner reinforces its role in providing rapid and adaptable maritime power when called upon.

Cyber readiness

Cyber readiness featured in Dynamic Mariner for the first time, with cyber experts from NATO's Communications and Information Agency (NCIA) and NATO's Rapid Reaction Team (RRT) defending networks and responding to simulated cyber threats in real-time. Support was provided by NCIA experts based in the CIS Support Unit (CSU) in Northwood, (NW London), and CSU Torrejon, Spain.

The NCIA's NATO Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) deployed five cyber security experts to practice logistical deployment and provide cyber defence during the simulated cyber-attack. Cyber experts offered their expertise and capabilities to respond to cyber security incidents and crises.

Unmanned Surface Vehicles deployed

With a focus on innovation, Allied Command Transformation and MARCOM used the vast array of ships and other assets available to advance Unmanned Surface Vehicle (USV) capabilities.

In coordination with industry, teams remotely controlled USVs, shared data with key NATO Partners, and explored future fleet integration. These tests are a crucial step towards deploying large fleets of unmanned systems, strengthening NATO's maritime power and operational edge.

Nine Allied navies engaged

In total, this large naval exercise brought together more than 4,000 personnel, thirty warships, two submarines, amphibious units, and aircraft from nine Allied nations: Croatia, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Türkiye and the United States.

The Spanish Navy's newest submarine, S-81 *Isaac Peral*, participated in a NATO exercise for the first time.

Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 (SNMG2) and Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group 2 (SNMCMG2) also took part in the exercise – demonstrating seamless cooperation between Allies.

Ability to rapidly join forces

NATO's maritime power lies in the ability of these Standing Naval Forces and NATO Allied Reaction Force elements to rapidly join with national forces and task groups to deliver strategic effect. Regular training between these groups provides a collectively trained and interoperable capability that NATO can confidently deploy.

Enhancing capabilities

Turkish Navy Rear Admiral (LH) H Ilker Avci is the Commander of SNMG2. He

Commented: 'During DYMR/FLOTEX-25, we had valuable opportunities to train and enhance our capabilities in a multi-threat environment.

With a focus on innovation MARCOM used the vast array of ships to advance Unmanned Surface Vehicle (USV) capabilities.

Photo: NATO MARCOM ©.

'*In particular, our units provided escort and protection to Amphibious Task Forces, in which we demonstrated a high level of interoperability among different instruments of sea power. I see this exercise as a success story, a demonstration of the substantial mass of Naval Forces which Allies are able to bring together to deliver effects across the Area of Responsibility*.'

Commander of SNMCMG2, Turkish Navy Captain Kürsat Kurnaz, said the exercise marked a significant milestone for the task group. '*It not only advanced our mine countermeasures capabilities but also strengthened the bonds among our crews and Allies*.

'*In a demanding and complex environment, the Group has demonstrated exceptional professionalism, resilience, and dedication to the mission.*

'*The successful execution of MCM operations during this exercise proves that we are ready, capable, and fully committed to ensuring the safety and security of our maritime environment, while making a vital contribution to NATO's collective defence*.'

Enhancing interoperability

A key objective of Dynamic Mariner 25 was to enhance interoperability between Allied navies, ensuring that forces can operate together seamlessly in real-world missions. Collaboration with air and land components further strengthened NATO's multi-domain operational approach.

In a rapidly evolving security environment, NATO remains committed to deterring threats and maintaining stability at sea. The lessons learned during Dynamic Mariner 25 will contribute to future training, ensuring that Allied maritime forces remain ready to respond to any crisis.

With its successful completion, Exercise Dynamic Mariner 25 stands as a testament to NATO's strength, unity, and unwavering commitment to maritime security

World Beacon Day

Galileo continues to help save lives

World Beacon Day or #406 day is a day to honour the search and rescue teams that are helping save thousands of lives every year.

406 Day marks the 6 April as a reference to the 406 MHz frequency of the beacons used by the SAR teams in their missions.

These beacons are integrated into the COSPAS-SARSAT system and are helping to save 2,000 lives per year.

What is COSPAS-SARSAT?

Galileo SAR system is integrated into the COSPAS-SARSAT programme – a satellite-based SAR distress alert detection and information distribution system.

Launched on December 2016, Galileo SAR service contributes live-saving efforts by swiftly relaying radio beacon distress signals to the relevant SAR crews.

The system finds distress signals from radio beacons that comply with COSPAS-SARSAT specifications and standards and provides the information to search and rescue teams.

How does Galileo play a role?

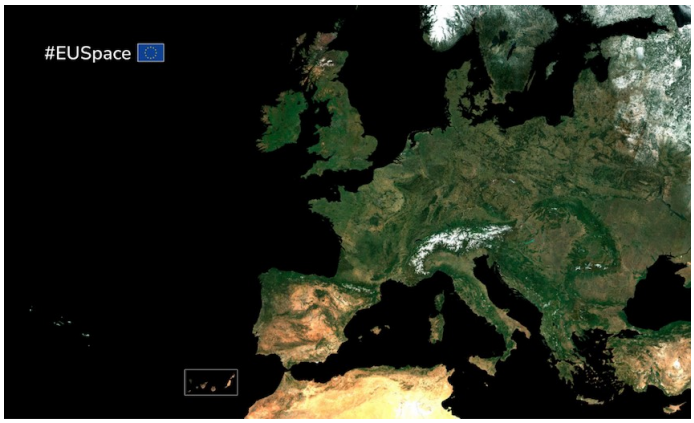
Galileo has proven a valuable resource when it comes to these rescue missions.

Thanks to the SAR transponder which seamlessly integrates into the satellite constellation, Galileo has revolutionised the detection and location process of distress beacons, significantly reducing response times and enhancing survival probabilities.

By locating the 406 MHz signals transmitted from the beacons, the System pinpoints the distress position and timely expedites the location data to relevant authorities significantly augmenting the likelihood of survival for those in perilous situations.

Central to Galileo's innovation is the Return Link Service (RLS), a ground-breaking feature that provides 406 users with a vital confirmation and reassurance that its distress transmission has been received within a remarkable 10-to-20-minute timeframe.

Galileo's SAR technology has not only revolutionized SAR operations but has also become a beacon of hope for individuals facing emergencies in remote or hazardous environments.



With each successful mission, Galileo reaffirms its status as an indispensable asset, transcending boundaries and saving lives with unparalleled efficiency.

Galileo SAR Fully Operational Capability (FOC)

Galileo's Search and Rescue Service is set for a remarkable leap forward with the imminent declaration of its Full Operational Capability (FOC). This milestone promises to elevate safety and support in SAR operations, reaffirming Galileo's dedication to worldwide SAR endeavours.

USCG and EPIRBs

For the USCG webpage on Emergency Position Indicating Radiobeacon**s**

(EPIRBs) readers are invited to see here: https://tinyurl.com/4ycbs48m

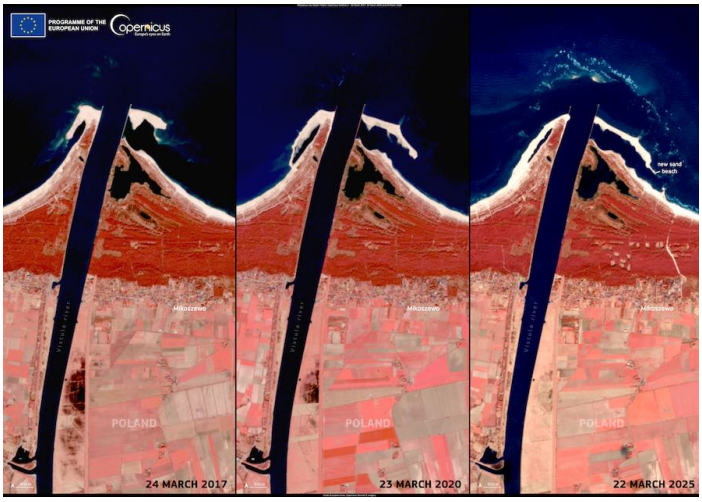
Editorial note:

This text is based on material kindly provided by the European Union Agency for the Space Programme (EUSPA).

A new beach in Mikoszewo, Poland

In recent years, sea currents have gradually deposited sand along the coastline near Mikoszewo, Poland, where the Vistula River flows into the Gulf of Gdańsk in the Baltic Sea.

In early February 2025, an additional surge of sediment extended the shoreline by approximately 100 metres, forming a new expanse of white sand. With its scenic sea views, this newly formed beach has rapidly become a popular attraction and has even been assigned its own postcode by the Polish Post Office.



Credit: European Union, Copernicus Sentinel-2 imagery

EU Copernicus ©

These Copernicus Sentinel-2 images, acquired on 24 March 2017, 23 March 2020, and 22 March 2025, show the progressive reshaping of this coastal landscape. In the most recent image, the newly formed strip of white sand is visible.

The Copernicus Coastal Hub* provides free and open value-added information on European coastal zones. It delivers insights which are key to supporting the sustainable management of these important areas.

* With climate change, the sea level has risen 10 cm since 1993 endangering coastal communities. Human activity also threatens these regions. Since late 2023, the Copernicus Coastal Hub has provided free access to comprehensive data that can be used to monitor floods and support sustainable fisheries and tourism.

For more information on Copernicus Coastal Hub readers are invited to see here:
https://www.coastal.hub.copernicus.eu/

Passenger vessel *Fiordland Navigator*

Grounding in Doubtful Sound 24 January 2024

NZ TAIC report

The text below is a brief plain English summary of key points in the report by the New Zealand Transport Accident Investigation Commission (TAIC).

In brief

This report is relevant to safety-critical workers, sole-charge operators, medical certificate holders, safety managers, auditors, regulators, maritime educators, and all industry bodies that represent organisations whose staff may be in sole charge of safety-critical heavy machinery.

It was found that the cruise vessel ran aground after the fatigued master fell asleep at the helm.

Safety issues for consideration in this vessel's sector include fatigue management, monitoring of medical fitness and risk controls for sole-charge masters.

The NZ TAIC has recommended Maritime NZ improve awareness of ongoing medical fitness responsibilities for seafarers.

What happened

On 24 January 2024 *Fiordland Navigator* ran aground while making a turn in Doubtful Sound.

The vessel had nine crew and 57 passengers on board. Several people received minor injuries, and the vessel was moderately damaged.

The crew responded well to the emergency, safely evacuating passengers to Deep Cove, then to Te Anau that evening. The vessel returned to Deep Cove that night.

In the TAIC report, see link below, a marine chart superimposed on a Google Maps terrain shows the ship's course towards impact with the fiord mountainside.

Why it happened

The master almost certainly fell asleep at the controls due to workload-induced fatigue. The master was very likely fatigued from long work hours, which weren't monitored or effectively managed. The operator's safety system didn't track actual rest hours or properly identify or mitigate fatigue risks for sole-charge masters.

While the master had a valid medical certificate it has been emphasised that medical fitness isn't just a one-time check. There was no system to assure ongoing medical fitness during the two-year certification period. The vessel's Senior Launch Master, responsible for safety procedures, had too much work to effectively oversee fatigue management.

Safety issues and recommendations

The Commission identified four key safety issues:

Medical fitness standards

Seafarers may not fully understand their responsibilities to report medical conditions affecting their fitness for duty. TAIC recommends that Maritime NZ improve awareness and enforcement of medical fitness standards.

There was found to be no need for TAIC recommendations on three further issues because the vessel's operator RealNZ had mitigated the risks:

Fatigue management

The operator's fatigue-management system didn't prevent fatigue. Operator has updated its fatigue policy, introduced new training and monitoring measures, and improved work-hour tracking.

Sole-charge master risk

RealNZ hadn't properly identified or mitigated the risks of having a sole-charge master. Operator has added a second person to the wheelhouse during navigation and reinstated the Master's Assistant role.

Safety management oversight

The person responsible for day-to-day safety oversight was overburdened, making risk management less effective. Operator has created a Maritime Resource Planner role and adjusted management responsibilities to improve oversight.

What can be learnt from the investigation?

- Medical fitness should be continuously monitored, not just at certification.
- Workload and actual rest hours must be properly tracked and managed.
- Sole-charge masters pose a safety risk if fatigue is not addressed.
- Safety systems need enough staff and resources to function effectively.

The TAIC report

The Commission's report speaks for itself. The Final Report with the title *Maritime inquiry MO-2024-201 Passenger vessel, Fiordland Navigator Grounding Doubtful Sound 24 January 2024* is available by way of the link here: https://tinyurl.com/u8np6vsr

TAIC's mantra: No repeat accidents – ever!

The principal purpose of the Transport Accident Investigation Commission is to determine the circumstances and causes of aviation, marine, and rail accidents and incidents with a view to avoiding similar occurrences in the future, rather than to ascribe blame to any person.

TAIC opens an inquiry when it believes the reported circumstances of an accident or incident have – or are likely to have – significant implications for transport safety, or when the inquiry may allow the Commission to make findings or recommendations to improve transport safety.

One Ocean Expedition research voyage

Kongsberg Discovery preparations

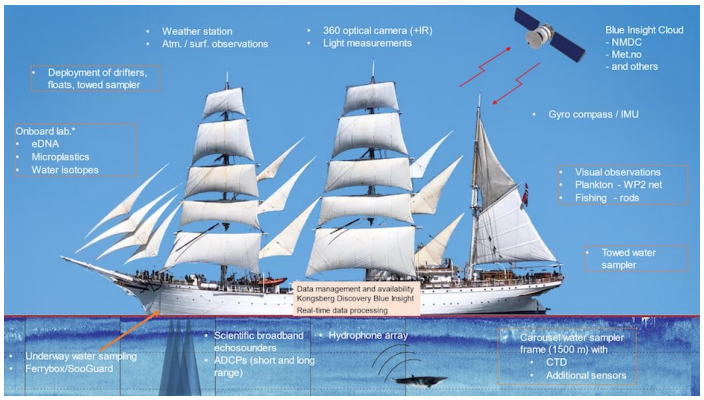
In early April Kongsberg Discovery reported that it had helped transform the 111-year-old, three-masted sailing ship *Statsraad Lehmkuhl* into a sophisticated research vessel for the One Ocean Expedition that was about to depart from Bergen.

The almost 100-metre loa vessel, Norway's largest sailing ship, has been fitted with an array of Kongsberg Discovery technology to help scientists monitor and understand unique ocean environments, including the waters of the legendary Northwest Passage.

Onboard systems now include 75 and 300 kHz ADCPs*, EK80 Echo Sounders, an advanced hydrophone cluster, and the Seapath GNSS-aided inertial navigation system, while Blue Insight, an advanced ocean data management and analytics platform, will process and share captured data with land-based teams daily. In addition, a wide range of equipment, such as weather stations, water samplers, situational awareness, and motion reference units, has also been integrated.

A world of opportunity

The One Ocean Expedition 2025-2026 is a twelve-month voyage encompassing twenty-six ports across three continents. It will see a crew featuring seasoned scientists, eager students and key stakeholders crossing the Atlantic, the Mediterranean, the Arctic, the Pacific, and the Caribbean.



Kongsberg Discovery technology is installed throughout Statsraad Lehmkuhl, transforming the 111 year old ship into an innovative research vessel.

En route, the team will collect a wealth of data to help ascertain ocean health, monitor marine ecosystems, and assess the impact of climate change, building both knowledge and awareness of pressing issues.

Proven performance

To quote Martin Wien Fjell, President of Kongsberg Discovery in advance of departure: '*It is a great honour to be supporting this crucial expedition with our cutting-edge solutions. The ship will work as a unique data acquisition platform, empowering insights in often remote and little-understood environments, such as the Northwest Passage, while gathering invaluable information about the broader state of ocean health.*

'*Our systems are perfectly suited to the tasks ahead, performing with proven reliability, optimal precision and high-quality results in even the most demanding conditions. We're looking forward to setting sail, while also helping the students set sail on their careers as the next generation of ocean scientists and explorers. We believe major discoveries await*.'

Global benefits

Kongsberg Discovery's innovations will be put to work on a number of key assignments, including measurement of ocean currents, with the ADCP, to help understand how marine life is affected by ocean movements, and recording underwater noise, using hydrophones, to 'listen' for pollution and monitor marine mammals, such as whales.

Haakon Vatle, CEO and expedition leader, The One Ocean Expedition, added: '*Statsraad Lehmkuhl is an incredible vessel, but to meet the ambitious expedition goals, it needed a major technology upgrade.*

Statsraad Lehmkuhl: Kongsberg Discovery is on board for the year-long One Ocean Expedition.

'*We're immensely grateful to Kongsberg Discovery and the Kongsberg Group for their commitment to tailor a technology package that will allow us to shine light on the depths and unlock a level of understanding that, we hope, can benefit the entire world*.'

The One Ocean Expedition set sail during One Ocean Week in Bergen, calling at ports including Reykjavik, Nuuk (Greenland), Cambridge Bay (Canada), Seattle, La Paz (Mexico), Cartagena (Columbia), Cadiz, and Dublin.

During its stop in Nice team members will participate in the 2025 UN Ocean Conference. *Statsraad Lehmkuhl* will return to Bergen in April 2026, in time for that year's One Ocean Week.

For further details of the route and the expedition readers are invited to see use the link here: https://www.oneoceanexpedition.com/

About Kongsberg Discovery

Kongsberg Discovery has technology for the ocean space, from the seabed to space. It develops technology to ensure sustainable management of marine resources, monitor climate change and critical infrastructure, and safeguard national security.

The company has markets in fisheries, research, underwater safety and maritime operations with technology in positioning and a range of communication solutions. Other important sectors are offshore wind, offshore operations and defence actors.

*Acoustic doppler current profiler.

Voyager planning

NAVSTOR's NavStation

Launched in 2014 as the maritime industry's first digital chart table NAVSTOR's NavStation has spent the last decade cementing a position described as the ultimate planning tool.

Update after update has seen the software adding an increasing number of business- and operation-critical data layers and modules seamlessly over ENCs, putting everything a navigator needs at their fingertips.

Detailed information provided

Today the platform offers everything from weather routeing, to detailed port information, environmental regulations, AMVER reporting, a manoeuvring assistant, NAVAREA warnings, and much more, while automating tasks and auto-populating reports to reduce administration, eradicate errors and enhance vessel and fleet efficiency.

NavStation's popular Passage Planning module is a case in point, reducing time on each task from an average of 3.5 hours to 30 minutes, or less, it is reported.

To quote Timo Essers, e-Navigation Director at NAVTOR: '*We may work in maritime technology, but the majority of the team here have extensive vessel experience. So, this is a platform made for navigators by navigators. We know the pressure our users are under. Thankfully, as we've shown with Passage Planning, we also know how to make things easier for them*.'

Making life easy for the navigator

The Dutch-born e-Navigation chief at Norwegian-headquartered NAVTOR, Essers, says he and his global team are committed to making life easier for navigators and shipping businesses, but to do that one has to understand the current and future hazards encountered.

Essers added: '*It's not up to us to dictate to users, but rather to have them dictate to us – sharing their experience so we can use ours, both digital and navigational, to come up with optimal solutions*.

'*This industry is increasingly complex, with new regulations, guidelines, commercial considerations, reporting requirements, and risks emerging continually. By putting the customer at the absolute centre of everything we do, and understanding their challenges, we can help them navigate this complexity simply, efficiently and profitably.*

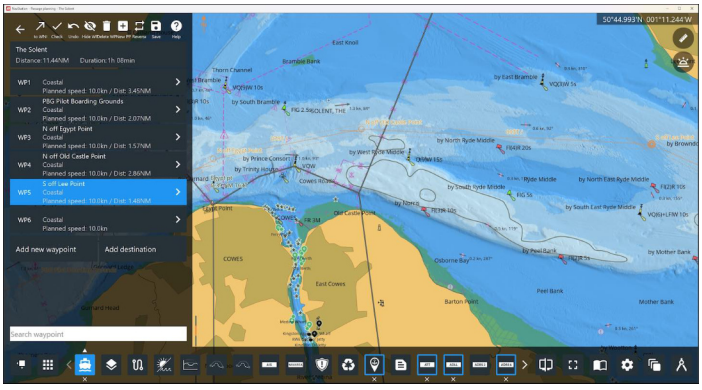
'It's a process that, like the industry it serves, never stops.'

Small steps, big advantage

Essers reveals that NavStation 6.4 sees a broad spectrum of enhancements, taking functionality and futureproofing to a new level.

In terms of functionality the installation has a vast range of small but powerful improvements, he notes, including better search capabilities, advances in auto-routeing (such as automatically blocking waterways for certain vessels based on the latest AIS tracking intelligence), integrating port and trade statistics into the extended ports database, the ability to combine company regulations with environmental regulations, and much more.

NAVTOR's ability to stay ahead of the curve and help customers navigate the future is shown in 6.4's new S-100 compatibility.



Screenshot of NavStation.

In conclusion Essers said: '*Much of the industry may not be aware of the scale of change ahead with the upcoming S-100 data standard. Transforming static charts into more dynamic, 3D, data-rich formats. By making NavStation compatible, and giving users the ability to access data such as S-102 (bathymetric surface data) now, we can help them get to grips with this new navigational reality - understanding the benefits, honing skills, and easing future adoption.*'

An introduction not NAVTOR's NavStation is to be found here: https://www.navtor.com/navstation

About NAVTOR

NAVTOR was formed in 2011 built on the cornerstones of in-depth maritime and technological understanding, the Norwegian headquartered business has developed an innovative portfolio of

advanced solutions and a truly integrated digital ecosystem, uniting ship and shore teams worldwide.

NAVTOR recently merged with Voyager Worldwide, creating a combined business serving over 18,000 vessels in the world fleet.

USCG and multi-agency security operation

Port of Honolulu

From Hawaii on 11 April the USCG reported that it had led a Multi-Agency Strike Force Operation (MASFO) at the Port of Honolulu's container terminal.

Participants conducted joint inspections of containerized cargo, focusing on security threats, hazardous materials violations, and illicit activities.

Inspection teams checked 155 Transportation Worker Identification Credentials, inspected 56 containers and issued seven deficiencies for missing placards, damaged placards and damaged containers.

Fostering cross-agency training

In addition to enhancing security within the Marine Transportation System and safeguarding the flow of containerized cargo, the exercise fostered cross-agency training.

This operation brought together federal, state, and local agencies including Coast Guard Sector Honolulu, Coast Guard Investigative Service, US Customs and Border Protection, Homeland Security Investigations, Transportation Security Administration, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, National Cargo Bureau, State of Hawaii Fireworks Task Force, and the Honolulu Fire Department.

Photo: USCG 11th District External Affairs. USCG ©.

It is understood that over 750,000 containers transit through Hawaii's ports annually, representing 91% of the state's imported goods.

The MASFO reinforces involved agencies' commitment to maintaining a robust security framework for containerized cargo. Regular MASFOs will continue to enhance security, facilitate interagency cooperation, and promote safe and efficient commerce through Hawaii's ports.

Comment

Lieutenant Commander Creighton Chong, chief of inspections, Sector Honolulu, said '*The Coast Guard is committed to strengthening interagency partnerships to bolster maritime domain awareness and security.*

'*Operations like this MASFO are vital, providing a crucial platform for interagency cooperation and the sharing of operational insights. Thorough container inspections are the first line of defence against a wide range of threats, protecting not only our ports but also the communities they serve*.'

VARD Electro's innovative bridge design

Vard Electro has delivered a new and innovative bridge design for *Mein Schiff Relax*, the first of two new dual-fuel powered InTUItion-class cruise ships, built and delivered by Fincantieri for TUI Cruises, a joint venture between TUI AG and Royal Caribbean Cruises.

It is understood that this is the first SeaQ Integrated Bridge delivered to the cruise industry and marks the entry into a new market segment for Vard Electro as a supplier of maritime electronics.

As part of Fincantieri's digitalization strategy, the subsidiary Vard Electro is making strides in the cruise market with its SeaQ technology. Being part of Fincantieri has been instrumental in the company's achievements within this segment.

Meeting challenges and needs

The renowned SeaQ Integrated Bridge has been further developed to meet the specific needs and challenges of cruise ships through a four-year process of collaboration with TUI Cruises. This represents a significant leap in terms of digital integration of shipboard systems to enhance operational efficiency.

The SeaQ bridge integrates all systems into a seamless operational loop – without the need for system modifications – to ensure optimal efficiency and control in a minimalistic yet highly functional bridge design with a focus on ergonomics and safety. This allows access to all seamlessly connected systems whether you are on the main bridge, safety command centre, bridge wing or in the Engine Control Room.

Comment

In the words of Gisle Anderssen, SVP Sales and Marketing at Vard Electro: *The SeaQ Integrated Bridge is an advanced solution that gives operators a*

new perspective and new way of viewing their systems.

'*By working directly with TUI Cruises from day one, we have been able to gain first-hand insight into their challenges, allowing us to create flexible solutions with tailored bridge equipment that can effectively meet their requirements*.'

Captain of *Mein Schiff Relax*, Tom Roth, added: '*It is the first time that I have been able to access every system from a single workstation. This represents a significant improvement on conventional bridge systems, with a tremendously enhanced and highly streamlined working environment that sets a new standard for the cruise sector*,'

As a long-established and recognized supplier of its SeaQ range of products to the maritime industry, Vard Electro has so far performed fifty deliveries of the future-oriented SeaQ Integrated Bridge solution across different vessel segments over many years.

Cruise ship Mein Schiff Relax.

Photo: Vard Group.

The SeaQ portfolio from Vard Electro includes a wide range of products and solutions that go beyond the delivery onboard *Mein Schiff Relax*. It is a portfolio of proven, future-oriented technologies with a strong focus on digitalization and smart integration across key areas such as power solutions, automation systems, bridge and navigation, communication, and autonomous technology.

About Vard Electro

Vard Electro offers full-scale electrical engineering design, marine procurement and system integration capabilities, based on its expertise developed as part of the Vard shipbuilding group.

Products and solutions are delivered through SeaQ, an in-house developed product brand, created in close collaboration with the customers. Recognized by shipowners worldwide, the SeaQ portfolio encompasses products and solutions covering everything from power solutions, automation systems, bridge and navigation, communication, and autonomous technology.

Vard Electro is a subsidiary of VARD, one of the major global designers and shipbuilders of specialized vessels. The majority shareholder of VARD is Fincantieri Oil & Gas SpA, a wholly-owned subsidiary of FINCANTIERI SpA. Headquartered in Trieste FINCANTIERI is one of the world's largest shipbuilding groups, and a global leader in cruise ship design. With over 230 years of history and more than 7,000 ships built, the Group today has a production network of 18 shipyards operating in four continents and over 20,000 employees.

SeaQ Integrated Bridge on the cruise ship Mein Schiff Relax.

Photo: Vard Group.

Video

Video footage at 2:12 of the SeaQ Integrated Bridge on *Mein Schiff Relax* is available here:
https://tinyurl.com/bdfwe2s5

Marine casualty investigation training

IRClass Academy involvement

News was received late in March that IRClass Academy had successfully concluded an intensive marine casualty investigation training programme aimed to enhance the investigative capabilities of maritime professionals, equipping them with the knowledge and skills required to conduct thorough and compliant marine casualty investigations.

In depth understanding

The programme provided an in-depth understanding of the purpose, scope, and principal definitions of marine casualty investigations, along with the mandatory responsibilities of safety investigation authorities, including notification protocols.

Participants were guided through the regulatory requirements for investigating very serious casualties and the necessary agreements with interested states. The course also covered the powers vested in investigative authorities, the dynamics of parallel investigations, and the importance of inter-agency cooperation.

Practices and principles

Training delved into recommended practices and core principles of marine casualty investigations, emphasising structured methodologies to ensure impartiality and accuracy. Additionally, the programme addressed the critical aspects of confidentiality and the process of compiling a draft report, including the necessary notifications to involved parties.

Through case studies, practical insights, and interactive discussions, the training strengthened participants' ability to navigate complex investigative scenarios while adhering to international best practices. Participants included officials of Directorate General of Shipping and The Shipping Corporation of India Ltd.

Mr Amit Bhatnagar, Head of the IRClass Academy said '*IRClass Academy continues to reinforce its commitment to capacity-building and maritime safety, ensuring that Indian maritime professionals remain at the forefront of global regulatory and investigative standards*'.

Footnote

The Government if India recognises that a proper analysis of marine casualties and incidents can lead to greater awareness of casualty causation and result in remedial measures, including better training, for the purpose of enhancing safety of life at sea and protection of the marine environment, the Directorate General of Shipping has developed an online repository for reporting and collecting

the incident data.

It is understood that the Directorate General of Shipping has developed an online repository for reporting and collecting the incident data.

This is collected at the DG Communication Centre (DG Comm Centre) established by the office of the Directorate General of Shipping, Mumbai. It maintains an online casualty reporting module for all types of reported marine casualties and other casualties on board Indian vessels worldwide, to Indian seafarers onboard Indian and non-Indian vessels, and to other non-Indian vessels sailing within Indian waters.

The 106-page Annual Report of incidents for the year 2023 is available here: https://tinyurl.com/5ac63uy5

The Indian Merchant Shipping Act, 1958

The Indian Maritime Administration conducts Investigations and Inquires into marine casualties in accordance with Part XII of the Indian Merchant Shipping Act, 1958 (as amended).

Amongst other objectives, one of the primary aims of a marine casualty investigation is to gather information that could be used to prevent future accidents. An investigation may also assist in determining what changes in the present regulations might be desirable.

The Directorate promulgates the 'lessons learnt' from such investigations through its website, in order to increase awareness of the stakeholders about marine casualties and to enhance prevention.

Vehicle Carrier Safety Forum

Guidance on fire response

On 5 April from London the Vehicle Carrier Safety Forum (VCSF) publishes its second industry good practice guidelines entitled *Fire Response – High Level Guidelines*.

The VCSF recognises that responding to vehicle fires onboard PCCs, PCTCs, RoRo and Ro-Pax vessels is both dangerous and challenging. These guidelines have been designed to reduce the risk to the safety of crews, passengers, the environment, the vessel and the cargo. The guidelines' sole aim is to assist vessel operators and crews to be better prepared to meet the challenges presented by vehicle fires.

It is understood that the Vehicle Carrier Safety Forum is a consortium of vessel operators, insurers and other industry experts, whose role is to promote safety on vessels designed to carry vehicles. The guidance is supported by industry bodies the International Group of P&I Clubs, the International Chamber of Shipping and the TT Club.

These guidelines are intended to be used by vessel operators when considering their own fire response policies and procedures with a particular emphasis on using existing fixed firefighting systems to control vehicle fires early in their development.

Geir Jorgensen, Chair of the IG P&I Ships' Technical Committee, is a strong supporter of the guidelines commented: '*These guidelines are the result of industry collaboration focused on safety. We all share a common goal of making life at sea safer, and these guidelines should be viewed as a valuable tool for operators to develop their own instructions as part of their safety management system*.'

Philip Bacon, Vice President Commercial Operations of Siem Shipping, who is part of the VCSF Steering Committee added: '*The guidance reflects a range of views and best practices which we are seeing develop in the sector and offer a framework within which operators can take steps to manage the risk within their own ecosystem. Vessel operators are concerned about fire response where a fire involves lithium-ion batteries and the guidelines are designed to incorporate response to fires involving lithium ion batteries*.'

Mike Yarwood, Managing Director Loss Prevention, at TT Club reflected: '*Our Members with port terminal operations have welcomed the opportunity, via the VCSF to contribute to guidelines that will provide the foundations for a safer response to fires in port. The guidance to carry out port drills involving port operators and fire fighters is of particular relevance to TT club members. Fire response is more complex during port operations and it is important that the ship and shore side develop a sharded plan for fire response in port*.'

Lional Sharon, Senior Marine Adviser at International Chamber of Shipping, concluded by saying: '*ICS appreciates the work done by VCSF and recognises this guidance has a significant role to play in improving fire safety of ships carrying vehicles.*

'*In February 2025, the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) Ship Systems and Equipment (SSE) Sub-Committee has established an action plan to enhance fire safety measures for ships carrying new energy vehicles, including Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs), through improved fire detection, prevention, and extinguishing systems. The contents of this guidance align with the proposals by the industry and can supplement the work flow at IMO*.'

To join the forum

Readers interested in becoming part of the Vehicle Carrier Safety Forum are invited to contact: colin.gillespie@north-standard.com

The Guidelines

For the new Vehicle Carrier Safety Forum Fire Response – High Level Guidelines please click here: https://tinyurl.com/bdfshpeb

About the Vehicle Carrier Safety Forum

The Vehicle Carrier Safety Forum's purpose is to promote safety on vehicle carrying vessels and at the ship/shore interface. The forum was initiated in 2020 and since then has grown to include numerous vessel operators, insurers and industry experts.

When confusion reigns

By Michael Grey, IFSMA Honorary Member

"She's not answering the helm!" It was a call to chill the heart of any watchkeeping officer, at least in the days when there was a man on the wheel to react with such alarm. It happened to me just once, but in the middle of the Straits of Gibraltar, with lots of traffic around. Panic stations – call the master – stop the engines – get the not under command signal hoisted – explain to the engine room that we really wanted to stop – it was an afternoon to remember. After the engineers had strewn the various bits of telemotor around the wheelhouse, the culprit was found in a plug of oily waste, left over from the ship's recent refit. The voyage was resumed, after a lot of bad language, with no near-misses and all of us just a little older, and perhaps wiser. In such events, the first reaction, and very human it is too, is one of confusion, before the proper reactions hopefully kick in.

If one has been a watchkeeper on any sort of ship, it is something of an education reading of accidents where confusion was not a momentary hiatus, but also can provoke a reaction of deep sympathy. There, but for the grace of God etc….. Problems with controls seem to have been a perennial contributor to confusion in the preliminaries to an accident. The failure to switch from one set of manoeuvring controls to another has been the cause of a great deal of bent steel, and worse, over the years. There is a case in the current edition of the excellent Marine Accident Investigation Branch Safety Digest, where a nice new trawler apparently went berserk when shifting ship in a fishing harbour, bouncing off a concrete wall and finally grounding. The skipper was vainly attempting to handle his ship with inert controls, as they had not been switched to where he was standing in the wheelhouse.

One might ask why, in a wheelhouse a few paces from one side to the other, it was necessary to have separate port, starboard and central controls, but I am told not to be old-fashioned, as convenience and labour-saving are the priorities these days. I recall a ferry master friend telling me that after confusion had reigned in his bridge, they fashioned an enormous wooden "tablet" that distinguished the active console from the currently dead ones. It was, he said, on the same principle as the huge tokens exchanged by the drivers of railway engines on single tracked lines. But these sort of "instrument enabled" accidents, which probably would not have happened before the multiplication of control stations, still occur on a fairly regular basis. And there is no denying that confusion is sometimes occasioned by poorly designed controls or switches, with vital functions insufficiently distinguished from others, sometimes badly lit. It seems to be often a function of digitisation, with touch-screens and pressure switches taking over from more "human-friendly" controls, where status was more immediately apparent.

Accidents involving autopilots also happen rather too often and can be a source of embarrassment and worse. A classic example which will be written into textbooks forever more is the stranding and

subsequent loss last year of the New Zealand Navy's dive and hydrographic ship HMNZS Manawanui, which met her end amid confusion on the reefs of Samoa. The final report into the circumstances, which attribute the stranding to those on the bridge not realising the vessel was on autopilot when they were trying to turn the ship away from the coast, makes sobering reading, with the (partially redacted) voice transcripts from the bridge recorder, of that career-ending evening. It will be little comfort to those involved to learn that their problems were pretty well identical to those on the bridge of the tanker Torrey Canyon, which, in 1967, ushered us into the age of the super-spill.

They too had wasted desperate final seconds trying to disengage the ship's autopilot, circumstances which have been repeated down through the intervening decades, aboard too many ships. Insufficient familiarity of the operating crew with their ship and her controls were suggested as one problem in the New Zealand report, which might seem surprising to commercial sector readers, as naval vessels invariably spend a long time "working up", where crews of merchant ships are expected to take their ships to sea without such a period of familiarisation. But the old saw "different ships – different long splices" still manage a certain resonance in an era of infinitely more complex vessels and their sophisticated equipment.

Michael Grey is former editor of Lloyd's List

This article first appeared in The Maritime Advocate Online Issue No 880 of 18 April 2025. It appears here by kind permission of the Editor and the Author ©

2025 Canadian fishery management measures

North Atlantic right whales

Cabot Strait is a key migratory pathway for the critically endangered North Atlantic Right Whale.

To help prevent a lethal collision with these whales, vessels transiting through Cabot Strait are requested to voluntarily slow down to 10 knots or less over the ground, when safe to do so, between April 16 – June 24 and September 3 – November 15.

Advice is published here:
https://tinyurl.com/bdhyx3rv

and here:
https://tinyurl.com/t86kt42r

The North Atlantic right whale is listed as Endangered under the Canadian federal Species at Risk Act (SARA). Canada has a suite of fisheries measures and initiatives in place in Atlantic Canada and Quebec to prevent entanglements.

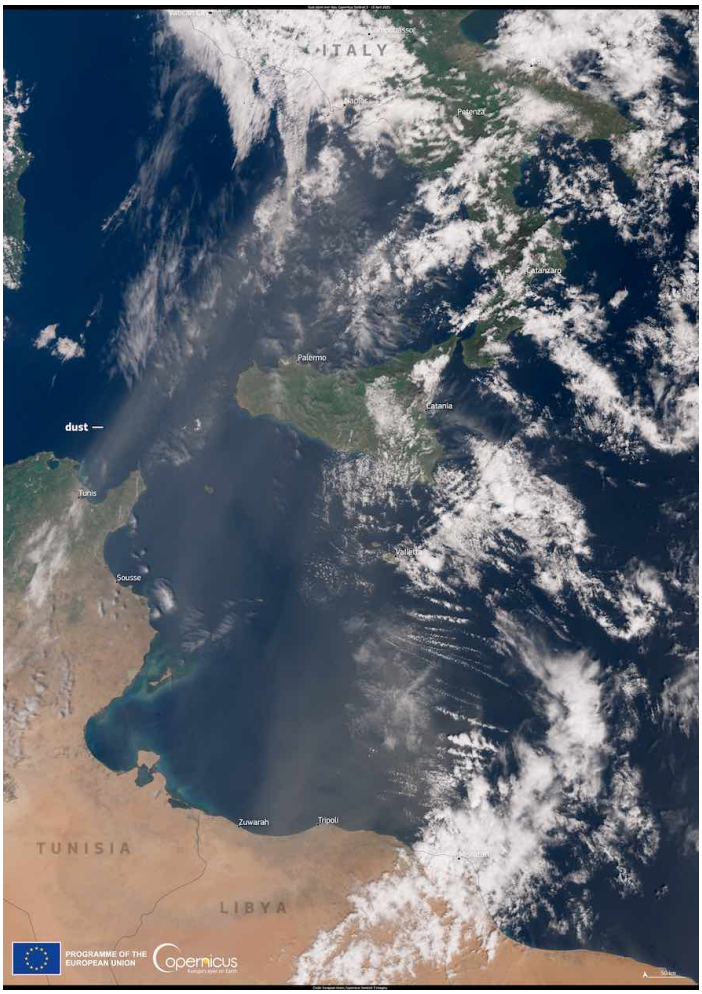
Saharan dust over Med & Italy

EU Copernicus's latest

In mid-April 2025, a combination of meteorological phenomena began to affect Italy, as Sirocco winds transported large quantities of Saharan dust across the Mediterranean.

This event led to hazy skies and a distinct yellowish tint over southern regions and the major islands, particularly Sicily.

Here the Copernicus Sentinel-3 image, acquired on 15 April 2025, shows Saharan dust suspended over the Mediterranean Sea and southern Italy.



Credit: European Union, Copernicus Sentinel-3 imagery. EU ©.

The Copernicus Atmosphere Monitoring Service (CAMS)* monitors and forecasts air quality on a global scale, assessing the concentration and dispersion of atmospheric pollutants and aerosols and informing actions to keep affected communities safer.

*https://atmosphere.copernicus.eu/

Hanwha Ocean advanced safety monitoring system

ABS SMART SHM Tier 3 approval

On 17 April it was announced from Busan, ROK, that Hanwha Ocean had received the ABS SMART (SHM) Tier 3 approval in principle (AIP) for its advanced hull monitoring system.

Hanwha Ocean's system is designed to estimate structural damage to ships and offshore assets during operation. This can support decision making for the optimal maintenance timing to maintain safety.

Hull sensors

ABS SMART(SHM) Tier 3 recognizes systems that employ hull sensors combined with additional algorithms to generate structural health insights at critical locations, even at locations where no sensors are present.

Lebrethah is the 200th LNG carrier delivered by Hanwha Ocean, thirty years after the delivery of its first LNG carrier in 1995. Hanwha Ocean delivered its 100th LNG carrier in 2016 and has since constructed and delivered another 100 LNG carriers in just nine years.

The AIP is one of the first fruits of the Offshore Technology Collaboration Agreement signed by ABS and Hanwha Ocean in 2024. The agreement promotes technology development in three areas: digitalization and artificial intelligence, cybersecurity operations, and sustainability.

Comment

Patrick Ryan, ABS Senior Vice President and Chief Technology Officer, commented: '*ABS celebrates this achievement with Hanwha Ocean, a milestone in our collective pursuit of safety at sea.*

'*As a leader in supporting the adoption of smart technologies in the maritime and offshore sectors, ABS recognizes the transformative capabilities of these systems – advancing health and condition awareness, operational optimization and, eventually, classification supported by condition-based programs*.'

Young Chang Shon, Chief Technology Officer of Hanwha Ocean, added: '*Recently, shipowners have been including digital technologies as part of their contractual requirements, and classification societies are also in the process of refining regulations related to digitalization. Based on this approval, we will proactively respond to the growing demand for smart and digital technologies in the shipping industry*.'

The Hanwha shipyard, Port of Okpo, South Gyeongsang Province, ROK.

The hull monitoring system from Hanwha Ocean is being developed in accordance with the *ABS Guide for Smart Functions for Marine Vessels and Offshore Units*, which can be found here:

https://tinyurl.com/bdcsk572

Greater Tortue Ahmeyim LNG project

bp completes loading of first cargo

It was reported on 17 April that bp had safely loaded the first cargo of liquefied natural gas (LNG) for export from its GTA Phase 1 project offshore Mauritania and Senegal. This follows flow of first gas from the project, announced earlier this year.

First cargo

This first cargo of LNG at Greater Tortue Ahmeyim (GTA) is the third upstream major project start-up of the year for bp. These are the first of ten expected by the end of 2027, in line with bp's strategy of growing its upstream oil and gas business.

The first shipment of LNG was transferred to a carrier from the project's floating liquefied natural gas (FLNG) vessel located ten kilometres offshore, where the natural gas had been cryogenically cooled, liquefied and stored.

GTA is one of the deepest offshore developments in Africa, with gas resources in water depths of up to 2,850 metres, and has been declared '*a project of strategic national importance*' by the governments of Mauritania and Senegal.

Production of 2.4million tonnes of LNG per annum

Once fully commissioned, GTA Phase 1 is expected to produce around 2.4 million tonnes of LNG per year to feed into global energy needs, with an allocation of gas volumes also to be made available to the domestic markets in both countries when they are ready to receive it.

Comment

In the words of Gordon Birrell, EVP production & operations: '*This is the culmination of years of work from the entire project and operations teams*.

'*This first cargo from Mauritania and Senegal marks a significant new supply for global energy markets. Starting exports from GTA Phase 1 is an important step for bp and our oil and gas business as we celebrate the creation of a new production hub within our global portfolio.*

'*This is the culmination of years of work from the entire project and operations teams – congratulations to all who were involved in safely reaching this landmark. I would also like to thank the governments of Mauritania and Senegal, and our partners – Kosmos Energy, PETROSEN and SMH – for their ongoing support and collaboration*.'

Illustration per bp.
bp©
bp has safely loaded the first cargo of liquefied natural gas (LNG) for export from its GTA Phase 1 project offshore Mauritania and Senegal. This follows flow of first gas from the project, announced earlier this year.

Dave Campbell, SVP Mauritania and Senegal added: '*This is a very proud day for Mauritania and Senegal. Throughout the development of this project, we have built strong relationships with the project's host governments, local communities and our partners, and we look forward to strengthening these in years to come as we continue ongoing operations*.'

bp entered Mauritania and Senegal in 2017. GTA construction activities have generated more than 3,000 local jobs, and the project has engaged with around 300 local companies across Mauritania and Senegal.

The gas resources of the GTA project are located approximately 120 kilometres offshore on the maritime border between Mauritania and Senegal.

Social investment programme

Since the establishment of bp's presence in Mauritania and Senegal, bp and partners have developed and launched a multi-million-dollar, wide ranging, social investment programme that enhances the quality of life in the communities they operate in and creates long-term opportunities for local development

A GTA apprentice training programme is committed to developing a pipeline of local talent and has forty-seven apprentice technicians on a bespoke programme, preparing them to be among the next generation of offshore operators.

bp is also supporting local economic development in Mauritania and Senegal by investing in areas such as fishing, women's cooperatives, health, micro-finance, education and business skills training.

Deep dive on seafarer sustainability

LR Foundation & WMU collaboration

A new report published by Lloyd's Register Foundation, highlights opportunities to make the number of seafarers more sustainable by investing in Africa's emerging talent and supporting women in maritime roles.

With the title: *Deep dive on seafarer sustainability* the report has the sub-title: *Supporting the opportunity for Africa and women to create a sustainable supply of seafarers for the future*. It was carried out by the World Maritime University (WMU)*. It highlights that investment in Africa and support for more women to play a significant part in maritime roles provides a viable option in a sustainable future for seafarers.

This is understood to be the first deep dive report in a series exploring the challenges faced by the global maritime sector as part of Lloyd's Register (LR) and Lloyd's Register Foundation's Global Maritime Trends research programme, which aims to address major maritime challenges in the coming years.

Global Maritime Trends 2050 Report series

Launched in 2023 with the Global Maritime Trends 2050 Report, the series includes 'deep dive' reports providing expert analysis on critical maritime issues.

The report examines entry barriers for careers in maritime, many of which intersect for both women and those living on the African continent.

In some countries, the report outlines, women were banned from enrolling in nautical courses, while false beliefs have persisted through the decades that they would be less effective at sea, both for physical and emotional reasons.

Yet, the report highlights that reaching 25% women seafarers by 2050 could be possible by following several steps, which the report breaks down, ranging from awareness campaigns to encourage more girls into STEM, to gender equality policies and targeted scholarships.

While the skills shortage in the industry is not a new issue, it has become an increasingly pressing one in recent years. Back in 2023, the Global Maritime

Two possible scenarios

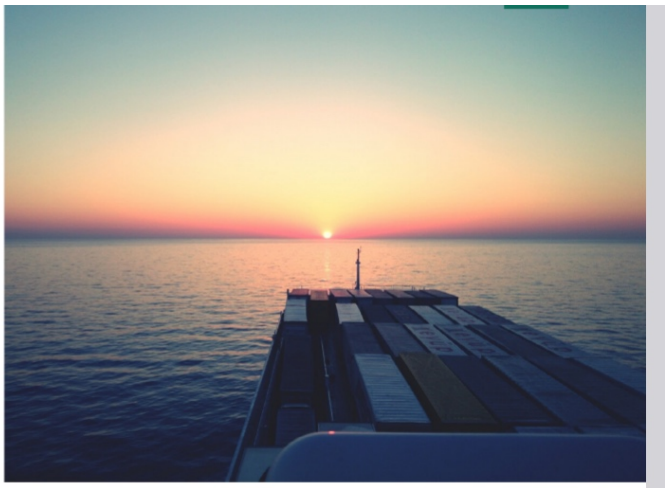
Trends 2050 report described two possible scenarios to tackle it by having Africa's young and talented

demographic play a pivotal role, or by increasing the number of women seafarers to 25% of the total workforce in shipping.

To understand how that could work, a baseline of what training and education as well as the number of seafarers, was required to assess what needs to change to make that happen. The deep dive report concludes that based on the evidence, both are possible, and outlines a clear road map and tangible steps towards each of the targets, including awareness campaigns to get more girls into STEM, gender equality policies and targeted scholarships.

Several recommendations

The report also dives into entry barriers into the industry for people living in Africa. It found a combination of enrolment disparities for maritime education and training institutions across the continent, combined with low graduation rates (22% at Durban University of Technology, for example) mostly down to limited sea time, prevented student or cadet seafarers from reaching their potential. To bridge the gap, several recommendations are included in the report – such as the funding and establishment of seafarer development programmes, as well as global partnerships.



Professor Momoko Kitada, Head of Maritime Education and Training at the World Maritime University, one of the report's authors, commented: '*Diversity has been a challenge across several skills shortage-ridden sectors, but few are experiencing it to the same extent as maritime.*

'*Given the growing demands on the sector and other challenges ahead, including the switch to greener energies and sustainability, we felt it was essential to provide governments and industry stakeholders with a clear roadmap to meet maritime's ambitious workforce targets by tapping onto one key overlooked demographic – the rich talent pool found in Africa and the skills of women.*

'*That's where our Deep Dive report comes in, along with the clear roadmaps developed by experts, breaking down the necessary steps to achieve a diverse, sustainable workforce*.'

Olivia Swift, Head of Maritime at Lloyd's Register Foundation, added: '*Clearly, there are vast and largely untapped numbers of female and African seafarers with much to offer the maritime economy.*

'*What has been less clear, is how the potential of women and African seafarers can be realised on a large scale, which is what this report focuses on answering. Researchers at the World Maritime University have obtained and collated data, unseen elsewhere, on African Maritime Education and Training enrolment and graduation, good practice, and on subsequent employment, as well as data and good practice relating to the employment of women seafarers, globally. Their analysis allows policy makers and other stakeholders to understand the current state of play, and where to focus efforts to improve it*.'

The report

To download the report issued on 17 April readers are invited to use the link here:
https://tinyurl.com/y9a8c92n

***https://www.wmu.se/about**

ABS latest

ABS training courses

ABS Training Solutions offers a catalogue of nearly one hundred courses to meet the needs of maritime industry professionals.

It is reported that ABS offers a premium curriculum of targeted training to meet the marine and offshore industries' technical, operational and management needs.

Curricula

Curriculum areas include:

- Emerging technologies, including alternative fuels, propulsion and additive manufacturing.
- Marine incident investigation and risk management.
- Regulatory requirements courses for International Ship Management Code (ISM), International Ship & Port Facility Security Code (ISPS), Maritime Labour Convention (MLC), Tanker Management and self-Assessment (TMSA) and more.
- Surveys and classification, including FLNG, FPSOs or submersibles.
- Safety management and performance.

Tailored training programmes are developed and delivered by industry specialists and available through instructor-led courses offered virtually, at applicants' location or one of ABS's dedicated global training centres, or as on-demand training courses.

For more information readers are invited to use the link here: https://tinyurl.com/mvz273ck

ABS Singapore new office

Increasing demand from shipowners for ABS services in Singapore has prompted the classification society to invest in an expanded regional head office housing industry-leading research and development capabilities.

The opening ceremony was prefaced by a traditional lion dance and reception, which saw ABS Chairman and CEO Christopher J Wiernicki cut the ribbon on a facility that is home to the ABS Singapore Innovation and Research Center, the ABS Global Electrification Center and one of five ABS Global Sustainability Centers.

The Science Park Drive facility will also include a new Operation Support Center to aid expanded remote survey capabilities in the Pacific region.

New ABS SG office
Left to right: Arnab Ghosh, ABS Vice President, Regional Business Development, South Pacific; Christopher J Wiernicki, ABS Chairman and CEO; Arinjit Roy, ABS Senior Vice President, Pacific and MEA Operations; and Johnny Garrett, ABS Vice President, Regional Operations, South Pacific.

Wiernicki commented: '*ABS has been investing in ensuring our capabilities in Singapore are cutting edge and able to support our clients' rapidly evolving needs. Now we have brought them all together under one roof in a truly world class facility designed to foster collaboration and turbo charge our innovation.*

'*Our clients in the region now have one stop access to a powerful resource of specialists focused on ensuring their fleets are at the forefront of safety and compliance performance*.

'*Singapore is at the center of global shipping, and we are committed to investing right here in the heart of Singapore*.'

The modern building brings together various ABS offices, allowing all departments to operate on one open floor plan and provides energy-efficient mechanics and collaborative spaces.

Annual Review 2024

With the title: *Leadership for a Smarter, Cleaner, Safer Future* the 84-page ASB Annual Review for 2024 issued in April this year is available here: https://tinyurl.com/avzj9yx6

Annual Members' Meeting

Reported on 23 April the 163rd ABS Annual Members' Meeting highlighted that ABS has never been stronger, with substantial growth and industry-leading safety performance reported.

ABS continued to perform strongly in 2024, with the fleet growing to 300 million gross tonnes. The company also maintained the number one position among class organizations in global new order share with 22%. Across the industry, ABS held leading positions with both shipbuilders and shipowners.

ABS has also maintained its leadership position in the global offshore market and expanded its support for governments while continuing to be in the forefront in digital and sustainability services.

Members also heard ABS Chairman and CEO Christopher J Wiernicki announce that he will step down as Chairman and CEO and retire at the end of 2025, after fourteen years at the helm of ABS.

After thanking the ABS Board of Directors, the employees and his family for their support, Wiernicki said: '*We have faced many challenges during my tenure, including the pandemic, the marine and offshore industry downturn and unprecedented, and disruptive technology and regulatory driven change. In spite of these events, we were able to move forward with a number of strategic investments that have allowed us to become an industry recognized technology and safety leader*.'

In the culmination of a well-planned succession process, the leadership of ABS, upon election by the Board of Directors, is expected to pass to the current ABS President and Chief Operating Officer John McDonald, who will become Chairman and CEO from 1 January 2026.

Members also heard Rear Admiral Wayne R Arguin, Jr., US Coast Guard Assistant Commandant for Prevention Policy, provide an update on the latest US Coast Guard safety initiatives and policies, commenting: '*Safety and security are paramount to a robust and resilient US maritime industry. ABS has been a steadfast partner over the years, supporting the development of technical safety standards and advancing technology and innovation in shipping*.'