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AIMPE opposes new deregulation move

→ The Australian Institute of Marine and Power Engineers will be opposing the latest Bill introduced by the Federal Government on 13th September. "The Coastal Trading (Revitalising Australian Shipping) Bill 2017 is another attempt to further deregulate maritime operations in Australia and would only benefit foreign shipping interests" according to AIMPE Federal Secretary, Mr Martin Byrne.

The Bill, if implemented, would have a major negative impact on

the remaining maritime employment base in Australia by making it far easier for foreign shipping operators to gain an even greater share of the Australian coastal shipping market.

Under the Coastal Trading (Revitalising Australian Shipping) Act 2012 there has been a raft of ships which have ceased employing Australian seafarers including:

- Pioneer
- Alexander Spirit
- Lindsey Clark

- Hugli Spirit
- British Loyalty
- Tandara Spirit
- Portland
- British Fidelity
- CSL Melbourne
- CSL Thevenard

Some of these vessels have come back on the coast with foreign crews under the "Temporary Licence" scheme. The "Temporary Licence" scheme has been exploited by foreign shipping interests to an extraordinary

extent. Some ships have had over 300 voyages "Temporary Licences". "This not a temporary arrangement this is a long term business model designed to avoid taxes and reduce crewing costs" said Mr Byrne. "This latest Bill would continue the trend and could see more of the few remaining vessels replaced by this operating model."

Offshore vessels under threat

In addition, the Bill could open the way for the Offshore Oil and Gas industry to gain access to the "Temporary Licence" system for functions such as supply boat operations. "This new Bill has provisions in it which could be used by Platform Supply Vessels to seek "Temporary Licences" and copy the Coastal Shipping sector in avoiding taxes and reducing

crewing coasts by employing foreign crews" Mr Byrne stated.

"One of the other insidious features of the latest Bill is that it would remove the obligation for applicants for Temporary Licences to consult with industry stakeholders when applying for the Temporary Licence. This particular move would draw a veil of secrecy over the whole process of the granting of Temporary Licences and remove the transparency which currently exists. This would be a major backwards step. AIMPE has called on the Government to do the opposite – to increase the transparency of the current system by uploading each and every application onto the Government website so that any interested party can monitor every application for a Temporary Licence."

AIMPE will be lobbying all Members of Parliament and espe-

cially all Senators to vote against this Bill.

"The alternative which AIMPE has put to the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport is that the Shipping Registration Act should be amended to require that all commercial vessels regularly operating in Australia's EEZ should be required to be registered in Australia [excluding international trading vessels]. This is the approach of Australian aviation laws and it ensures that all Australian laws apply to the Australian aviation industry. By contrast the current Shipping Registration Act only requires ships owned by Australians to be registered in Australia. This has the paradoxical effect of encouraging multinational operators to arrange their affairs so that the ownership of any vessels is held by a non-Australian entity."

Constructive dialogue

International employer-and-union partnership toasted its success at LISW and invited others to join...

→ The International Transport Workers' Federation and the International Maritime Employers' Council (IMEC) held a London International Shipping Week event to celebrate 14 years of partnership working.

IMEC — whose 230 members include ship owners and ship and crew managers — negotiates with the ITF on the pay and conditions of some 294,000 seafarers of 68 different nationalities serving on around 11,000 ships.

Together with the International Maritime Managers' Association of Japan, the Korean Ship Owners' Association and Evergreen, IMEC holds collective bargaining negotiations with the ITF on a three-yearly basis. The current round of talks — which began earlier this year — are presently unresolved, but ITF maritime coordinator Jacqueline Smith and IMEC CEO Francesco Gargiulo said both sides are determined to secure an agreement by the end of the year.

Mr Gargiulo said the relationship provides 'an impressive example of how unions and ship operators can work together to improve the quality of personnel for vessels' — with a joint funding mechanism used to support seafarer employment and training projects around the world.

Support has included a cadet training programme at the Maritime Academy of Asia & the Pacific which has produced more than 1,150 officers, and runs projects to improve training facilities in Ukraine, Italy, the Philippines and the United States.

The ITF and IMEC also donated €50,000 to help the CIRM telemedicine service in Italy after the government cut support to the charity.

'As social partners, we believe you need happy seafarers who benefit from collective agreements and joint discussions,' Ms Smith said. 'Next year is our 15th anniversary, and we are looking for more to join us to improve the whole shipping industry.'



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SPAIN FINED: the European Court of Justice has fined Spain €3m for failing to meet a deadline to 'liberalise' its dock labour system in line with EU policy. The fine is much less than the €24m penalty originally tabled by Brussels, and dock workers' unions have suspended industrial action and have struck a framework agreement with the employers' association to enable the changes to be phased in over the next three years.

YARD NATIONALISED: the French government has moved to nationalise the country's biggest shipbuilder, STX France, to prevent rival Italian firm Fincantieri from taking a majority stake in the company. Ministers said the sale to Fincantieri was being temporarily blocked in order to 'defend the strategic interests of France' and to enable time for a better agreement to be reached.

RUSSIAN WARNING: Russia's largest shipping company, Sovcomflot, has urged the country's government to continue with its plan to improve navigational safety measures on the Northern Sea Route and ban substandard ships from the environmentally sensitive region. It stressed the need for additional measures in response to the significant growth of freight traffic in the Arctic area.

BOX LEAK: a major clean-up operation was mounted in the US port of Long Beach last month after a chemical spill during loading operations on the Panama-flagged containership Harbour Bridge. Twelve dockers and a firefighter suffered minor injuries after dealing with the leak of the solvent propyl acetate when a tank was punctured during loading operations.

SINGAPORE SAR: Singapore's Maritime & Port Authority of Singapore and Civil Aviation Authority have announced a US\$6.2m plan to develop a new satellite-based system to enhance search and rescue capabilities in the region. Due to come into service in 2018, the MEOSAR system should help to speed up maritime search and rescue operations.

TUISALE: the German conglomerate TUI has sold its majority shareholding in Hapag-Lloyd, the world's fifth-ranking container shipping firm, to increase its investment in cruise shipping. TUI says it is also planning to transfer two of its ships — Mein Schiff 1 and Mein Schiff 2 — from TUI Cruises into its British fleet over the next two years.

EVERGREEN RESCUE: the Evergreen containership Ever Diadem and the Marshall Islands-flagged bulk carrier SBI Antares rescued 30 crew members who were forced to abandon a Taiwanese fishing vessel which caught fire in the Indian Ocean off the coast of Madagascar last month.

SAUDI GROWTH: Bahri, the National Shipping Company of Saudi Arabia, has further expanded its fleet with delivery from the Hyundai Heavy Industries yard in South Korea of the 298,778dwt VLCC Aslaf. The new ship takes the company's total fleet size to 86 vessels, including 39 VLCCs.

Danish alarm at training decline

Union says intake at some maritime colleges has fallen by as much as 25%

by Andrew Draper

→ A Danish seafarers' union has voiced alarm at new figures revealing a sharp decline in the number of applications for maritime studies courses in the country.

The downturn — as much as 25% in one college — has prompted a call from Danish shipowners for an urgent review of the national maritime education package as part of a programme to expand the marine sector.

Danish government figures show that a total of 685 students have been admitted to maritime education courses this year — a decline of almost 12% from 2016.

Bjarne Jensen, chairman of the

officers' union Søfartens Ledere, said the figures continued a trend that threatens to result in the loss of a whole generation of Danish seafarers as ships are increasing operated by low-cost crews.

He called for an in-depth study of what young people are looking for in the maritime world, pointing out that young people want more influence over their work today and need high levels of internet connectivity at sea.

The union pointed out that the nautical training institute Marstal Navigationsskole had experienced a 25% drop in numbers starting its navigation course this year. The head of the school, Jeppe Carstensen, also questioned whether the industry

needs to do more to make seafaring life more attractive.

'Being away from your friends for up to three months at a time isn't something that typically appeals to the millennial generation,' he said. 'They expect to be able to access the internet 24 hours a day and so it's a big job for the owners to make good internet connections available on the ships if following an education at sea is still to be attractive for young people.'

Anne Windfeldt Trolle, director of the owners' association, said the figures showed that while seafaring remains a good career choice — with decent pay and lots of opportunities — there is increasing competition for young

people, who have more options than ever before.

The owners have urged the government to come up with a package to make Danish maritime education more attractive and more flexible, with free admission and a guaranteed internship from the shipping companies.

'We must launch a systematic review of the content of maritime education so that we ensure they are at the top global level, meeting the needs of the industry and student expectations,' Ms Trolle added. 'We will lack skilled labour in the coming years, and therefore have to act now. We look forward to getting started with this work together with educational institutions and other collaborators.'



Samskip takes over Nor Lines

The Netherlands-based logistics and shipping firm Samskip is set for further expansion after an agreement to take over the operation of five of the seven multipurpose ships in the Nor Lines fleet, including the LNG-powered Kvitbjørn, pictured left.

Under the deal with the Norwegian firm DSD, Samskip — which is Europe's largest multimodal and shortsea container operator — will take over the running of Nor Lines' shore-based activities, haulage, and five ships under a time charter agreement.

The Samskip deal comes only a few months after a takeover bid for Nor Lines by the Icelandic shipping firm Eimskip was rejected by the Norwegian Competition Authority.

Samskip said it was 'extremely pleased' to add two LNG-powered vessels to its fleet, which are 65% more energy-efficient than vessels running on conventional marine fuel.

US unions warn against renewed bid to undermine Jones Act rules

US maritime unions have expressed concerns over new attempts to attack the Jones Act regulations which protect seafaring employment in the country's cabotage trades.

A group of more than 150 Republicans in Congress have called for budget measures to 'return

shipping policy to the free market' — claiming that the Jones Act rules stifle competition and drive up prices.

Their budget proposal was revealed shortly after former presidential candidate Senator John McCain introduced legislation that would repeal the 1920 Jones Act provisions requiring coastwise cargoes

to be carried by US-built vessels.

Unions warn that the loss of the law — which also requires qualifying ships to have 75% American crew — would 'decimate the US-flag fleet and sound the death knell for hundreds of thousands of American jobs in shipbuilding and supporting industries'.

French owners call for action to support fleet

French shipowners have met the country's new transport minister, Elisabeth Borne, to call for urgent government support for the maritime sector.

Jean-Marc Roué, head of the owners' association AdF, presented the minister with an eight-year, six-point plan that includes continuing to build a French strategic fleet, ideas for updating the French fleet, 'modernising' labour relations, boosting investment and encouraging public-private partnerships.

AdF is also calling for tax and social security concessions to support

the employment of French and EU nationals employed under the French and European flags.

French merchant navy officers' union Fomm-CGT and the Ugict-CGT technicians' union have written to new French prime minister Edouard Philippe expressing concern that the country's Merchant Navy Academy is failing to train French officers at a sufficiently high level.

Fomm-CGT general secretary Jean-Philippe Chateil said there was a danger that maritime education in France could fall behind countries who are investing in officer training.



The 3,536dwt tanker Cap Mejean, above, is one of the ships which are set to benefit from new French rules requiring an increased proportion of the country's domestic crude oil and refined products to be carried by French-flagged vessels. Four operators — including Cap Mejean's owner CFT, Socatra, Euronav and Sea tankers have been selected for the work. Picture: Eric Hourl

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Australian seafaring unions have warned over the flagging-out of the coastal trading vessel CSL Thevenard, above. Picture: AIMPE

FoCs 'a national security threat'

Australian inquiry warns of damaging impact of reliance on foreign ships

➔ Seafaring unions have welcomed an Australian Senate inquiry report on flag of convenience shipping warning of serious social, economic, environmental and security risks as a result of the country's growing reliance on foreign tonnage.

The inquiry was launched in response to concerns over a series of incidents — including cases of abandonment, mysterious deaths and disappearances, and the marked decline in the domestic-flagged fleet, which has left just four deepsea ships and 20 coastal trading vessels on the Australian register.

The report highlights Australia's reliance upon shipping for its imports, exports and significant coastal freight trades — but notes that the presence of foreign-flagged shipping in domestic services has been rising at more than 17% a year.

It details the devastating effect on the employment of Australian seafarers — warning that they are often replaced with foreign crews who have been paid

wages far below Australian legal requirements.

It also warns that there are features of FoC registration, regulation and practice that organised crime syndicates or terrorist groups may seek to exploit — including a lack of transparency of the identity of shipowners and inadequate flag state regulatory enforcement and adherence to standards.

Committee members said they were 'very disturbed by the many examples of job losses, poor working conditions, inadequate wages, and deaths and disappearances at sea' and they highlighted the 'significant practical impediments' to effective jurisdiction and investigation of incidents onboard FoC vessels.

The report urges the Australian government to 'address the serious security, economic, human rights and environmental vulnerabilities in the sector' and to take action to safeguard and expand the national shipping industry, with a crackdown on fair pay in the sector.

Martin Byrne, federal secre-

tary of the Australian Institute of Marine & Power Engineers (AIMPE) said the report's recommendations boiled down to better regulation of FoC shipping.

'The Fair Work Ombudsman is the body that is meant to enforce Australia's employment laws; however, the record shows that it is very slow in taking action on behalf of workers,' he pointed out.

'The Australian Maritime Safety Authority is a more effective agency and has the power to detain ships which are non-compliant with the IMO conventions. That is the type of power required to enforce employment laws.'

The AIMPE's submission to the inquiry called for a change in Australia's cabotage laws to require that all vessel operating on the country's coast should be required to register in Australia.

Mr Byrne said this call had been ignored and since 2012, when a new licensing system was set up, more than 10,000 voyages have taken place by mainly FoC ships using temporary licences. 'This is of course in addition to the 25,000-plus visits from ves-

sels in international trades — the majority of which are also FoC,' he pointed out.

Mr Byrne said AIMPE is also concerned by a dissenting report, written by government members of the committee, which proposes 'reform' that will make it even easier for foreign shipping interests to gain temporary licences in coastal trades with FoC ships.

And he highlighted another case in which an Australian-flagged ship has been withdrawn from cabotage trading. The 31,028gt general cargo ship CSL Thevenard is being re-flagged to the Bahamas flag and will be re-named Acacia.

'AIMPE expects that the Acacia will come back on to the Australian coast with a full foreign crew and carry coastal cargoes using temporary licences,' Mr Byrne said.

'There are no limits to the amount of cargo that can be carried by FoC ships using temporary licences and no limit to the number of times a ship operator can apply for a temporary licence,' he added.

CABOTAGE CLAMPDOWN: Nigerian authorities are clamping down on compliance with the country's cabotage laws, with the country's Maritime Administration & Safety Agency (NIMASA) warning that it will no longer consider exemptions for key junior officer and rating posts on vessels operating in coastal trades. Special applications to employ foreign nationals as captains, chief engineers, and chief officers will be considered 'on merit' — and on condition that companies will ensure that a Nigerian seafarer takes over the job within one year.

CROATIA SIGNS: Croatia has become the 37th country to sign up to the Nairobi International Convention on the Removal of Wrecks. The convention, which was adopted in 2007, came into force in 2015 and contracting states now account for just over 70% of the world's merchant tonnage. Under its provisions, coastal states may legally remove wrecks that threaten the safety of lives, goods, property and the environment, with ship owners and insurers financially liable to cover the costs of removal.

BRITTANY GUARDS: French operator Brittany Ferries has hired 30 security officers to 'invest in a secure environment for passengers'. The guards, hired directly by the operator, are present on all its cross-Channel ferries and on its routes to Spain. The company said the move had been made to 'take the risk of terrorism seriously, not a response to a specific threat' and the security officers could be called on to inspect luggage and respond to incidents.

TANKER ALARM: Belgian-based shipping firm Euronav has urged tanker operators to hold off on new orders and to consider scrapping older vessels amid concern over the threat of a growing gap between supply and demand for tonnage. The company reported reduced profits last month and said the big challenge was the delivery of 28 new VLCCs and 23 Suezmaxes in the next 18 months.

COMMS COURSE: Italian operator GNV and Genoa's Merchant Navy Academy are launching a new six-month training course for the post of officer communications assistant. The course is open to qualified seafarers and successful candidates will be responsible for helping ship masters with various aspects of the vessel's management, including GMDSS.

FORGERS BUSTED: police in India claim to have busted a forgery gang which was selling fake certificates to help seafarers get work. Four men in the city of Thane were arrested and charged with cheating and forgery of continuous discharge certificates. Detectives said as many as 400 fake papers may have been issued over the past six years.

CADET KILLED: an investigation has been launched after a 22-year-old cadet died in a mooring rope accident onboard a ferry in Fiji last month. Local reports said Viliame Uluinaceva had died in hospital after his legs became entangled in the rope while the 2,305gt ferry was berthing in the port of Vanua Levu.

Magna Carta for Filipino crew

Politicians in the Philippines have agreed plans to introduce a 'Magna Carta' to protect the country's seafarers.

The House of Representatives voted unanimously in favour of proposed legislation which seeks to safeguard working conditions and improve welfare provision for the country's 360,000 seafarers.

The Bill sets out the rights to safe and secure workplaces, decent shipboard living and working conditions, medical care, welfare

measures and other forms of health and social protection.

It also reinforces the rights to engage in collective bargaining, fair terms and conditions of employment, work and rest periods consistent with national or international regulations, and access to educational advancement and training at reasonable and affordable costs. It protects them against discrimination based on race, sex, religion and political opinion and provides for free legal representation for victims of

violations who cannot afford a lawyer.

The Bill also says that seafarers should have the right to expect access to communication such as ship-to-shore telephones, and email and internet facilities, where available. It will require that crewing agencies should be licensed and banned from collecting any placement fee, and mandates the government to establish an integrated document processing centre.

The measures will apply to all Filipino seafarers engaged, employed,

or working in any capacity onboard Philippine-registered ships operating domestically or internationally, as well as those onboard foreign-flagged ships.

The Bill is designed to reflect the requirements of the international Maritime Labour Convention and to encourage the recruitment, retention and career progression of Filipino seafarers.

It also contains a range of fines and penalties for breaches of key sections of the regulations.

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CREW REPATRIATED: 12 crew members from the Panama-flagged cargoship *Yas* have been repatriated after their vessel was seized in April this year after berthing in the port of Aden. The crew of six Indians, five Ukrainians and one Syrian contacted the International Transport Workers' Federation for assistance after being abandoned by the vessel's owners with owed wages and no provisions or fuel. The ITF worked with its Yemen affiliate, the Labour Committee of Aden Container Terminal, to secure the seafarers' safe return home from the war zone.

ORDERS UP: VLCC orders have risen to the highest level since the start of the global economic downturn in 2008, a new report has revealed. The owners' organisation BIMCO said there had been a 20% increase in contracts for new tankers and dry bulk carriers over the past year, with a total of 8.5m gt now on order. However, it warned, there is a need for more older tonnage to be demolished to prevent a damaging gap between supply and demand.

COSCO DEAL: China Cosco Shipping has announced a US\$6.3bn deal to take over Hong Kong-based Orient Overseas International (OOIL), which Orient Overseas Container Line (OOCL). If approved by competition authorities, the combined containership fleet will be the world's third largest, totalling more than 400 vessels and with capacity of more than 2.9m TEU.

STORAGE ROLE: more than 50 VLCCs are presently being used for storing crude oil — with many of them anchored off Singapore and in the Malacca Straits, Affinity Research reports. The market analysts said the slump in oil prices has meant some operators and traders have chosen not to unload their cargoes from owned or chartered vessels.

SAIL RECORD: the Croatian shipyard Brodosplit had launched what is claimed to be the world's largest sailing ship. The 162m loa *Flying Clipper* has been built for the Monaco-based cruise company Star Clippers. Due to come into service next year, the vessel has five masts and five decks, and will carry up to 300 passengers and 150 crew.

JOBS THREAT: French maritime unions have expressed concern that Le Havre-based operator Biomar is seeking to reflag its coastal tanker *Florence B*, with the possible loss of more than 14 French seafarers' jobs. The vessel has lain idle in Port-de-Bouc after losing its charter contract with Saipol in April.

FRENCH FEARS: French unions have expressed concern about a threat to seafarers' jobs after the survey ship operator CGG filed for bankruptcy protection in France and the US. The firm has cut its fleet to five ships and jobs have been almost halved over the past year.

JAPANESE BOOM: Japanese shipowners account for the biggest share of the world's orderbook for new tonnage. Japanese companies have 488 ships totalling 28.2m gt on order, compared with 14.7m gt on order for Greek operators.



Norway tax aid increase

Net salary scheme extended to protect seafarers' jobs

by Andrew Draper

→ Norwegian unions have welcomed a long-awaited government decision to extend a net salary scheme to seafarers serving on deep-sea vessels operating under the Norwegian international register (NIS).

Announcing the move, trade and industry minister Monica Mæland said the maritime industry is an important driving force in the Norwegian economy and the government recognised the importance of maritime expertise. 'It is important to provide competitive conditions to ensure that Norwegian seafarers retain their competence in the future,' she added.

Norwegian MPs have also agreed to establish an inquiry to consider the possibility of new rules to protect seafaring jobs by regulating pay and conditions in the country's territorial waters.

Officers' union NSOF said the net salary scheme decision, which came into effect last month, should help to reverse the decline in numbers of Norwegian

seafarers on NIS ships.

'Nothing of any consequence has been done since 1993 to strengthen the conditions for Norwegian seafarers on NIS deep-sea vessels,' said NSOF director Hans Sande. 'It was the missing piece of the jigsaw in the political work to ensure Norwegian seafarers' competitiveness internationally, and to secure Norway's leading position in important international shipping markets.'

The NSOF secured the full backing of both the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions and the Norwegian Shipowners' Association in its campaign to extend the scope of the tax relief scheme, which makes it cheaper to employ Norwegian seafarers.

When he gave evidence to the parliamentary finance committee in May, Mr Sande said the international fleet would be 'incredibly important' for seafarers at a time when the offshore sector was adapting to reduced levels of activity and profitability.

He argued that while the Norwegian offshore fleet is the most advanced in the world, and Nor-

way is a world leader in the operation of specialist vessels such as LNG, chemical and oil tankers, 'the number of Norwegians on these vessels is falling because of the lack of framework conditions that are on a par with our European colleagues'.

The union told ministers that a continuing Norwegian presence on hi-tech vessels is key to innovation in the national maritime cluster and its position in the market.

The NSOF estimates that fewer than 10% of all seafarers on NIS ships are Norwegians — a figure that continues to fall. 'Strengthening of the refund scheme for this sector will actively and directly contribute to halting this trend,' Mr Sande said. He also called for the scheme to be extended to the offshore service sector.

The moves have also been welcomed by shipowners, and the tanker operator Odfjell has announced that it will be taking on 15 Norwegian cadets in response, as well as putting a newly-acquired ship under the NIS flag.

Australian union in visa win

The Australian Maritime Officers Union has welcomed a government decision to make it harder for foreign nationals to get jobs as ship masters and officers in the country.

The union said the federal government has agreed to remove both positions from its medium and long-term 'strategic skills list', meaning that foreign seafarers can no longer get

'fast track' visas to temporarily work in Australia.

AMOU president Tim Higgs welcomed the move, which follows a long-running campaign for change. 'We should be proud of our efforts and proud of this outcome,' he added. 'However, we cannot sit back. We need to maintain our vigilance.'

Mr Higgs said some employers

are managing to evade the rules by bringing in overseas workers on visas which are available for highly skilled jobs for short (three-month) periods — and the union is taking this up with the government. 'We also need to keep up the pressure on changing the coastal trading laws to grow the Australian fleet and get more jobs for Aussies on the coast,' he added.

'Greenest' ferry for Brittany

French operator Brittany Ferries has confirmed a £175m order for what it claims will be the greenest ferry in the Channel, pictured left, to operate its service between Portsmouth and Caen.

To be named *Honfleur*, the 1,680-passenger capacity LNG-powered vessel is to be built by the Flensburger Schiffbau-Gesellschaft shipyard in Germany and is expected to come into service in June 2019.

Honfleur's four main engines will feed electric generators and two electric shaft propulsion motors with two fixed-pitch efficient propellers. To address the lack of in-port LNG storage facilities, the vessel will have onboard cranes that enable 40ft ISO standard LNG containers to be lifted into a fixed position at the rear of the superstructure.

Company CEO Christophe Mathieu said *Honfleur* 'will set a new standard for ferries operating on the Channel' — leaving no smoke and producing sulphur-free emissions with very low NOx and particulate matter content.

Brittany Ferries has informed the joint union works council of its plan to bareboat charter a ferry from Stena Line to operate on its 'no-frills' services between Portsmouth and France and Spain. The vessel would replace the 22,382gt ro-pax *Baie de Seine*, which is presently on charter from DFDS.

Appeal over master in Greek jail



A Swiss shipping company has appealed to the Greek authorities to release a master who has been held in prison since 23 May, when his vessel was detained after explosives and ammunition were found onboard.

Ukrainian national Captain Sergii Nevecheria, above, was held in a prison in Athens after Greek authorities alleged that his vessel, the Maltese-flagged containership *Mekong Spirit*, was carrying material from Turkey to Sudan in breach of international sanctions.

Geneva-based Lumar Shipping said the decision to arrest the master and detain the ship and its 16 crew was 'a serious infringement of international maritime law'.

The company said it had 'provided all relevant cargo manifests to show that the vessel's cargo of mining explosives and hunting rifle cartridges was for civil use and complied fully with all relevant UN and EU regulations and sanctions'.

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Mega-ships put strain on ports

Study examines whether cruise shipping industry expansion is sustainable

→ A new report has questioned whether the cruise shipping industry is at risk from a 'rash dash for growth' as a result of its unprecedented US\$47.6bn orderbook for 75 new ocean-going vessels.

The *Future of Cruise Ships* analysis, published by Seatrade Cruise last month, notes that the current orderbook will increase the fleet's capacity by 40%, adding another 250,000 berths over the next decade.

In reality, it adds, further orders and options are likely to mean that capacity will grow by at least 50% over this period — pushing total global passenger numbers up from 24m last year to around 35m by 2026 and as much as 40m by 2030.

The study says that while this growth looks dramatic, it could be considered 'relatively modest' by comparison with the industry's recent performance. Hitting the 35m passenger target within the next decade would require average annual market growth of around 4% — half the rate of growth between the 1980s and the mid-2000s, it points out.

The report notes that the three largest cruise firms — Carnival, Royal Caribbean and Norwegian Cruise Line — all reported record profits last year. It argues that much of this is the result of the growing use of 'mega-ships' and the efficiencies of scale gained by operating a single vessel that carries 5,000 passengers compared with one that accommodates half the number.

More than two-thirds of the 75 ships on order will be more than



✦ The 83,308gt Disney Wonder is pictured above as it became the first passenger vessel to pass through the new locks in the expanded Panama Canal in April. Canal authorities said last month that the waterway has dramatically

exceeded its traffic forecasts in the first year since it was opened.

Tonnage through the canal has increased by more than 22% and an average of 5.9 ships are transiting each day, compared with an anticipated two to three daily

transits during the first year.

The US\$5.5bn upgrade to the 102-year-old canal included state-of-the-art locks on both the Atlantic and Pacific sides, a new 3.8-mile access channel and widening and deepening at various locations.

100,000gt, the report adds, and six of them will top 200,000gt — with Royal Caribbean's new 230,000gt Symphony of the Seas having room for 6,870 passengers.

Although there is no sign that the trend for such tonnage is abating, the Seatrade study cautions about the 'growing problem for ports where the width and design of the new mega-ships is caus-

ing issues during the re-storing process on turnarounds and also with the embarkation/disembarkation of passengers'.

The report also highlights increasing signs of interest in building and operating small and luxury ships 'on more adventurous itineraries'.

The Seatrade researchers said cruise companies are continuing to 'hedge their options' on

fuel — with 11 of the 75 ships on order having LNG engines. 'The total will increase with confirmation of the options for more MSC World-Class ships, but all the companies are also ordering other ship classes without LNG engines so that, if there do prove to be problems with supply, delivery or operation of LNG ships, they are not over-committed,' the report concludes.

Warm tributes to Indonesian seafarers' union president

✦ Tributes have been paid to Indonesian seafarers' union leader Hanafi Rustandi, pictured right, who died suddenly last month in Tokyo, where he was part of the International Transport Workers' Federation delegation at the International Bargaining Forum talks.

Born in 1945, Mr Rustandi, who was chair of the ITF Asia-Pacific region, had served as general secretary of the KPI union since 1987 and was a member of the Indonesian Maritime Council.

ITF general secretary Steve Cotton commented: 'It feels unbelievable that such a vibrant and ever-fighting personality is no longer with us. We grieve for him, and for his family, friends and union members.'

'Hanafi has died as he lived, a



strong and outspoken advocate for trade unionists, and a defender to the last of seafarers' rights. The world has lost a tireless and irreplaceable

campaigner. We mourn his loss and remember his example.'

Nautilus general secretary Mark Dickinson added: 'I was part of the ITF delegation at the IBF Forum meeting and the death of such a lovely man as Hanafi was therefore even more of a shock. We will miss his smiling face and positivity, as much as his tenacity in defence of Indonesian seafarers.'

Deputy general secretary Marcel van den Broek added: 'Hanafi — with his seafaring roots with the Holland America Line — will be remembered as a very sympathetic man who under often challenging circumstances managed to keep maritime trade union work very much alive in Indonesia. He died in the harness and will be sorely missed.'

Anchor 'cut Somalia's internet'

✦ Somalia detained a containership last month, accusing it of causing a three-week internet blackout by severing undersea fibre-optic cables with its anchor.

Authorities said the 1,730TEU MSC Alice was being held while compensation was sought for losses caused by the internet outage, which affected government, media, medical, educational and banking operations.

The government said the blackout had cost around US\$10m a day and had affected more than 6.5m people in the south and central regions of the country.

MSC said it was investigating the incident, but claimed the ship had been at an approved anchorage outside the port of Mogadishu.

shortreports

TURKISH PROTEST: Turkey lodged protests with Greece last month after coastguards fired on the Turkish-flagged general cargoship after the master refused an order to divert to the island of Rhodes for an inspection. The ship's master, Captain Sami Kalkavan, said his vessel had been hit by 16 bullets, but the Greek coastguard said it had information the ship may have been involved in drug smuggling. No injuries were reported, but Turkey's foreign ministry said there was 'no justification for firing on an unarmed commercial vessel ferrying cargo between two Turkish ports'.

SPANISH WARNING: shipowners in Spain are seeking less-strict rules on crew nationality as part of a package to rejuvenate the country's national-flag fleet. Alejandro Aznar, president of the owners' organisation ANAVE, said the Spanish-controlled fleet is set to rise to its highest level in 32 years, but few of the 18 ships due to be delivered over the next two years are likely to be placed under the Spanish flag because of competition from other ship registers.

SEAFARERS ARRESTED: the master, second officer and an able seaman from the Panama-flagged bulk carrier Amber L were arrested in India last month after their ship was involved in a fatal collision with a fishing boat 14nm off the Kochi coast. Indian authorities remanded the three men in custody while investigations into the cause of the accident — in which two fishers died and one was reported missing — continued.

CHILE CALL: maritime unions in Chile have welcomed an agreement which aims to protect the employment of Chilean seafarers onboard ships flying the country's flag. During talks with the national shipowners' association and the country's Maritime Authority, it was agreed to support cabotage laws protecting domestic shipping and to challenge attempts to open up national services to foreign owners.

MAERSK MOVE: Maersk Supply Service has agreed to pump out potential pollutants from two offshore support vessels which sank off the French coast last year while being towed to Turkey for scrapping. The company said last month that it had completed operations to survey the wrecks of the Maersk Searcher and Maersk Shipper and to remove any hydrocarbons from the tanks of the two ships.

MASTER DIES: South African rescue services went to the aid of the Italian-flagged tanker Freight Margie after the master collapsed while the ship was anchored 7nm off Durban last month. Paramedics declared the captain to have died from a suspected heart attack. He had just completed his contract period and was close to sign off after five months onboard.

COSTA COLLEGE: Italian operator Costa Cruises has teamed up with the country's Merchant Marine Academy to open a new facility in the port of Genoa to train cooks, pastry-makers, bakers, customer service representatives, and other onboard passenger service staff. Costa has agreed to sign up some of the students on completion of their studies.

To advertise in Global Seafarer please contact Jason Grant for information — Jason.Grant@redactive.co.uk

SEAFARER HEALTH

How life and work at sea affects our bodies and minds

Less booze, fewer ciggies and more veggie food — new research shows seafarers seem to be adopting healthier lifestyles. But the SIRC study also reveals a rise in fatigue and an increase in mental health problems, and it urges the industry to tackle the underlying causes...



→ Seafarers might be getting healthier — but they also seem to be suffering from more fatigue and mental health problems, a new study has revealed.

Experts from the Seafarers International Research Centre (SIRC) at Cardiff University have carried out work to compare crew health and wellbeing between 2011 and 2016 — discovering a number of ‘significant’ differences over this timescale.

Nautilus has expressed concern about the findings, which are based on a survey of just over 1,000 seafarers in 2011 and an expanded sample of more than 1,500 seafarers last year.

Researchers said that one of the biggest differences concerned the quality of sleep at sea — with an increase in the proportion of seafarers reporting more difficulty in getting to sleep and staying asleep.

They found more seafarers complaining of waking up during sleep hours and more reporting a perception of inadequate sleep.

Using these results to calculate a ‘fatigue score’, the SIRC team estimate that the experience of severe fatigue increased from 24% of seafarers

in 2011 to 36% last year. ‘This is a matter of some concern for both the long-term health of the seafarer population and for operational safety,’ the report comments.

Asked why they were not getting enough sleep, the percentage of seafarers putting it down to their working hours rose from 28% in 2011 to 32% last year. There was also a marked increase in those who blamed it upon motion — up from 18% to 23%.

The researchers said they found that fewer seafarers now share cabins (6% last year, against 10% in 2011) and this should have helped to improve sleep quality. However, against this, they also found an increase in the number of crew members who complain of being unable

“There has been a notable increase in seafarers reporting difficulty sleeping”

to screen out daylight in their cabins.

The study suggests that seafarers are seeking to live healthier lifestyles. Some 80% now report that they drink alcohol less than once a week when they are at sea, compared with 75% in 2011. The numbers stating that the drink alcohol more than twice a week while on leave fell from 25% to 14% over the same period.

Cigarette smoking has also fallen from 35% of the seafarer population to 31% between 2011 and 2016, and the average number of cigarettes smoked also fell, from more than 11 a day to fewer than 10 a day.

The SIRC team said they were surprised to find a marked increase in the number of vegetarian seafarers — up from 11% to 16%. Crew members also reported eating more vegetables overall, and less fried food at sea and ashore.

The surveys also showed an increase in the proportion of seafarers who rate their health as ‘very good’ — up from 30% to 36% — although they also revealed a marked rise in the numbers who reported visiting a doctor very often or quite often during their leave. They also found that fewer seafarers now consider themselves to be as healthy as anyone they know,

and more feel that they get ill more often than other people.

Seafarers did, however, report fewer conditions that have been diagnosed by doctors, and seem to suffer from fewer self-diagnosed problems. ‘This is presumably one reason why seafarers’ use of both prescribed painkillers and self-prescribed medications appears to have fallen,’ the study observes.

→ The report also notes a deterioration in mental health between the 2011 and 2016 surveys — with evidence to show that the proportion of seafarers indicating a presence of a psychiatric disorder rose from 28% to 37% over this period.

These figures compare ‘rather unfavourably with most studies of the general population and the increase over time is a particular cause for concern,’ the report states.

The figures are based on an assessment of recent onset anxiety and depression, rather than a screening tool for long-standing conditions such as bi-polar and schizophrenia. ‘I think the term “psychiatric disorder” sounds rather alarming and for me “psychological distress” rather better captures the “flavour” of the conditions that are screened

for,’ said SIRC director Professor Helen Sampson. ‘A useful way to understand the interpretation of the scores is to appreciate that they are considered to indicate the cases — people — which would receive further attention if they presented to a medical professional such as a GP.’

→ Prof Sampson pointed out that sleep is a crucial element for good mental health and wellbeing, and she suggested that the deterioration in sleep quality found by the study could well be one of the factors contributing to increased anxiety and depression. ‘I think there are likely to be other factors as well, however. Our recent research on ship-shore interaction demonstrated that seafarers regularly face high-stress situations when dealing with both port-personnel and shore-based managers. Seafarers have also lost faith in some of the lifesaving equipment onboard ship, which could well produce higher levels of anxiety.’

Prof Sampson said operators ought to consider whether or not sufficient priority is currently given to seafarers’ sleep. ‘In separate studies we have found evidence of seafarers being unable to sleep

on relatively new (but cheap and badly made) mattresses onboard because they were too thin and because they contained large springs which sleepers were not sufficiently protected against,’ she added.

‘I have personal experience of this on a vessel where I couldn’t sleep and the springs covered me in bruises until such time as I was given two extra duvets to sleep on top of. This wasn’t me being “soft” — the seafarers had complained to the company many times since the vessel was launched, but to no avail,’ she said.

‘There is also a question in my mind about commercial pressures,’ Prof Sampson told the Telegraph. ‘Given that environmental factors seem to be contributing to poor sleep, I wonder if vessels have less flexibility in terms of minimising the effects of bad weather as a result of commercial pressures. This could be contributing to poor sleep onboard and requires further investigation.’

The research reveals some interesting insights into the ways in which seafarers use their off-duty time. The majority — 42% — said they go to their cabins to rest, 21% go to their cabins to watch TV and 13% use the internet.

Very few indicated that they



Fresh vegetables are improving seafarers' physiques, but more attention needs to be paid to their mental health. Picture: Danny Cornelissen



Malcolm McMaster, Globecomm Maritime president

An industry embracing a new world

Maritime technology is now so important that tech events filled several days of London International Shipping Week, starting with a summit on crew connectivity. **ANDREW LININGTON** and **STEVEN KENNEDY** report...

spend their time taking part in communal activities such as watching TV or DVDs together (5%), chatting with colleagues (3%), singing with others (2%), group sports (2%), using the gym with others (1%) and using the ship's internet room (0.5%). The report sets out a series of recommendations which seek to address some of the core findings in the report calling for ship operators to:

- ensure that effective means of screening out daylight are provided in all seafarer cabins
- encourage further provision of tasty and satisfying alternatives to fried food onboard
- ensure that vegetarian meal options are made available to seafarers onboard
- encourage seafarers to eat breakfast by providing access to breakfast cereals and similar food 'out of hours'
- minimise seafarer exposure to environmental factors which disturb sleep (poor weather, for example) even when this requires that they prioritise crew welfare over commercial concerns
- place sufficient numbers of seafarers onboard to produce a reduction in the work-related factors which are resulting in seafarers' fatigue (such as working hours)

“Seafarers are trying to improve their own health, but their efforts are being undermined by factors outside their control”

- pay more attention to the protection of seafarers' mental health

In addition to taking steps to reduce fatigue, the report urges operators to find ways to provide seafarers with better access to onboard services and facilities to help them relax and to achieve a degree of mental restoration. “These are likely to include: games; sports facilities provided in properly designed, designated spaces; spacious, comfortable, communal areas where collective entertainment for the whole crew can be enjoyed; wi-fi access in cabins, views of

the natural environment from cabins; access to regular shore-leave; clean and well-maintained living spaces; flexible lighting; and heating/air conditioning that can be regulated within cabins,” the report concludes.

→ Nautilus general secretary Mark Dickinson commented: “It is deeply disturbing to see such a marked increase in fatigue and mental health issues amongst seafarers.

“The findings of the SIRC report suggest that seafarers are taking a lot of self-help measures to look after themselves — smoking and drinking less, and eating more healthily — but this is being undermined by factors outside of their control, such as excessive working hours, poor cabin design, and significant shortcomings in technology, as shown in our recent crew connectivity survey.

“It seems that seafarers are sleeping less and feeling more overworked than ever, which has obvious safety implications,” he added. “Physical and mental fatigue can not only have a huge impact on an individual, but also on their vessel and the wider industry a whole. It's a very serious issue which must be addressed and measures taken to alleviate the problems.”

Ship owners and managers have been urged by the head of a major maritime communications company to act on the findings of Nautilus International's crew connectivity survey.

Speaking at the International Shipowning and Shipmanagement Summit on the opening day of London International Shipping Week, Globecomm Maritime president Malcolm McMaster questioned whether the shipping industry is ready for the ‘big data revolution’ when more than 70% of the world fleet is still using L-Band.

Households in the UK and the US download about 200GB of data every month, he said, while up to 15% of ships use 1GB a

month or less.

Strong competition and technological advances mean that the cost of good shipboard connectivity is falling dramatically, he added. ‘Is 1% to 2% of operating expenditure too big a price to pay?’

Mr McMaster said companies should pay heed to Nautilus International's research into the problems faced by seafarers in getting good internet access. “The crew are going to be the real drivers of big data,” he pointed out. “They are all wired up to social media and things like fitness apps and are going to demand the same sort of access at sea as they get ashore. They want a constant and reliable service and are prepared to pay for it in a number of cases.”

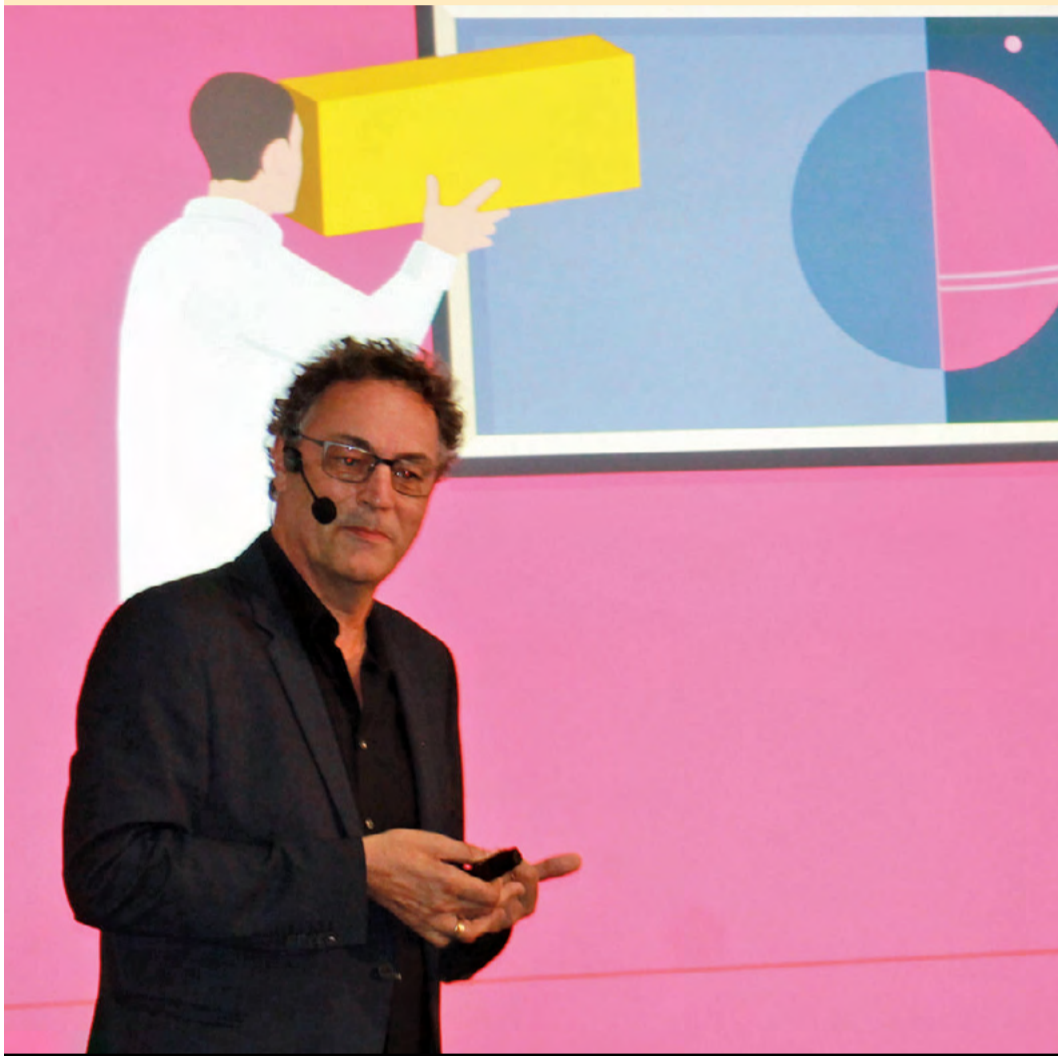
It is difficult to provide evidence to show the return on investment from improved crew connectivity, he admitted, but the Union's survey had shown that around one-third of seafarers would change to employers who offered better shipboard communications, and ‘it is only when employers and managers start to feel the pain of losing crew that they will begin to see the return on investment case’.

Mark Woodhead, senior vice-president with KVH Industries, said there was evidence to show the benefits of providing good onboard communications. “One company had half of its fleet with VSAT and seafarers were far more willing to sign up to serve longer contracts on these ships, he added.

LISW 2017

Changes on the horizon

What skills do people have that robots don't?



Tech futurist Gerd Leonhart

Futurist Gerd Leonhart believes that advances in ship automation will not spell the end of seafarers' jobs.

Making the claim in a talk at Inmarsat's headquarters, during London International Shipping Week (LISW), Mr Leonhart said he believed that whilst advances in technology will cause considerable disruption to the way shipping companies currently work, it would not mean that humans were made redundant from the process.

'A lot of research shows that we are creating new jobs that don't need people,' he said. 'So if there is a ship that is automated, will there be other jobs that are not?'

'Ultimately we are going to find

new ways to employ these people,' he added, 'and I think the government will have to retrain them. The government has to change our schools and the skills we learn, so we need a social system that captures the changes.'

'What we can do is look to the new ways of working, look at skills that a human can do that a robot cannot. In that sense robots will not make humans redundant. Who knows, maybe in 20 years we will work for half the time for the same money.'

His comments were backed up by Inmarsat president Roland Spithout, who added during a panel discussion that he did not believe that totally unmanned vessels would

be a reality.

'The question we have to ask is will there still be a need for people on vessels,' Mr Spithout said. 'I strongly believe that there will be autonomy and remote control, but I absolutely do not believe in total autonomy or unmanned vessels. I strongly believe that there will still be people on vessels in the future.'

Lloyds Register vice president for commercialisation, David Ryder, said that advances in technology are enabling smaller companies to compete with larger ones, and that change must be embraced. 'It's about not doing things the same way. We need the companies and the people to look at what is out there and really embrace it.'

Amid calls to attract more women into the shipping industry, the WISTA conference at LISW explored the likely impact of automation on female seafarers...

The maritime industry needs to do more to encourage women into the sector for the benefit of all, a seminar run by the Women's International Shipping & Trading Association (WISTA) heard.

During his address to the WISTA London International Shipping Week (LISW) conference titled Autonomy, Robotics and the Internet of Things, shipping minister John Hayes said the industry must take advantage of the untapped talent that women represent.

Women make up around 3% of the 14,000 certified officers in the UK and Mr Hayes said that this meant that talented women were missing out on careers that best utilise their skills.

'It's in all our interests to allow people to fulfil their potential, allowing them to gain skills and build careers that leave them with fulfilled lives, whilst also equipping our maritime industries and economies with the skilled workforce which it needs to prosper,' he said.

'We already have a skilled maritime workforce but that doesn't mean the workforce doesn't need to grow and alter.'

Mr Hayes added that he was challenging maritime organisations in the UK to go further and faster to change. 'I'm writing to the heads of maritime organisations calling for proposals for addressing the gender imbalance,' he explained. 'We have the perfect opportunity for these plans to come together next year as the government and industry are joining forces for the 2018 year of engineering.'

'It's a chance to give young people direct experiences of the engineering profession, especially young women. They make many choices in school which impact their future opportunities, so we need to get the message out loud and clear, and persuade young people that maritime industries are the place of choice.'

Mr Hayes called on organisations in the maritime industry to 'redouble their efforts' to encourage young women to take up opportunities.

Moving on to address the future of the maritime industry and the possible impact of autonomy, Mr Hayes warned against complacency and being too pre-occupied by the past — missing out on the opportunities of the future.

'Anticipating change in a highly dynamic industry is critically important,' he said. 'All through this week, as well as showcasing where we currently are and cementing relationships, we must think collaboratively about what we can do as an international community to place the maritime industry in the best position to excel in the future.'

Mr Hayes said that new technology and automation would alter the shape of the maritime industry and the nature of the skills required to work in them. He added that it could deliver a number of benefits for safety, the environment, and opportunities for women.

'Let's make 2018 the year the scales tip in favour of women in shipping,' he concluded. 'Let's make a difference that all of us can be proud of.'

Chris Welsh, from the Global Shippers' Forum, added that other transport sectors had proven that the technology, and the capability, for increased automation are already here.

'The question is how to harness it, whether the industry is ready to do so, and in what way can it be used to maximise efficiency and reduce costs,' he said.

'The maritime supply chain has so many different stakeholders who do not sufficiently talk to each other so decisions are not made for the benefit of all.'

He said that unless the industry could find a way to work together, the potential for automation and new technology might not be realised.

In a discussion panel which focused on exploring the potential human impact of automation David Patraiko, director of projects at The Nautical Institute, said the existence of autonomous vessels is already a reality for those working in the industry today and that consideration must be given to the ways in which manned and unmanned vessels will interact.

'[Seafarers] are already dealing with many autonomous systems onboard, including machinery, cargo, communications and navigation,' he told the conference. 'Understanding and refining the interaction between the human and these systems is a priority as



WISTA president Sue Terpilowski opening the conference

we move into the future.'

The final session of the conference focussed on what automation and new technology could mean for maritime careers, and whether they might help the industry redress the gender imbalance.

Debbie Cavaldoro, Nautilus head of strategic campaigning, said that it was important to think about the effect technology has on the individuals using it.

'Technology is only useful if it's economically and socially viable,' she said. 'It must make life cheaper and easier, and all too often we lose sight of that, when rushing to see if we can automate something.'

'There are clearly aspects of automation which will enhance the safety and wellbeing of those onboard and make a career at sea more accessible for women.'

'Ships' communications abilities will inevitably increase as more operations are controlled from the shore, and if this connectivity is extended to the crew then many of today's isolation and mental health issues could be assuaged.'

'Many of the specific barriers to women could also be removed as automation will mean there are fewer requirements for physical strength onboard.'

However, Mrs Cavaldoro said that further computerisation should not be seen through rose-tinted glasses.

'How many of us can say that the computers we use every day never break down, randomly freeze or decide to run updates at the most inappropriate times?' she asked. 'And if a computer error is responsible for an accident then people will be very unforgiving.'

'There are also potential negative consequences if there are further reductions in crew numbers,' she added. 'If increased automation means that ships sail with only a few seafarers onboard who are waiting for things to go wrong, then loneliness and boredom may become incredibly acute which could lead to the industry entirely unattractive to newcomers.'

Mrs Cavaldoro also speculated that if seafaring jobs began to require a higher level of computer skills then this might benefit seafarers from developed countries like those in Europe, which are home to many innovative technology companies and also have more women applying to work at sea.

'Further down the line, as more at-sea jobs move ashore, the industry will open up even more for women,' she concluded. 'Bridge management could be an office job, opening it up to legislation covering maternity leave, discrimination, and working hours.'

In the debate that followed, many audience members agreed that there could be more opportunities for women in the future, but that men needed take a lead to 'normalise' changes in working practices.

Referring to flexible working, Mrs Cavaldoro said that it could not be left to women to introduce changes.

'Women in the industry already often say that they have to be better and work harder than male counterparts in order to be seen as equal; they may be unwilling to want to stand up and ask for a changes to traditional working practices.'

Karen Waltham, from HR Consulting, added that men benefit from flexible practices as much as women and need to come forward and champion these types of changes.

The debate ended with the panel and the audience agreeing that the future was positive for women in the maritime industry.

Text chat tool introduced for use in emergencies

A new WhatsApp-style chat system aiming to aid communication between distressed vessels and rescue coordinators is being launched as part of the next wave of Global Maritime Distress and Safety Systems (GMDSS).

The Distress Chat system allows group communications between stricken vessels and onshore services. It also means that rescue coordinating centres (RCCs) will be able to add other nearby vessels to the discussions in order to get suitable aid to the casualty as quickly as possible.

Inmarsat director of safety John Dodd said that the system — which will be available to all of the 40,000

vessels on its FleetBroadband system — will allow real-time discussions to take place during safety-critical events.

'Distress Chat is something I'm very proud of,' he said. 'It's similar to WhatsApp and Skype, which we all have access to on our phones. Everyone we have spoken to has said why hasn't this been done before?'

However, International Maritime Rescue Federation (IMRF) project manager David Jardine-Smith warned that many seafarers in developing areas are unable to use satellite services. 'They cannot afford FleetBroadband and the global rescue system needs to be able to rescue those people too,' he added.

Nautilus International assistant general secretary Olu Tunde is pictured as he joined more than 30 maritime industry figures and shipping minister John Hayes to take part in the market opening ceremony at the London Stock Exchange which would officially launch the third London International Shipping Week (LISW).

Mr Tunde — who also signed the official register, which records every person who has officially opened the UK markets — said it had been a privilege to be at the official opening of the Stock Exchange and celebrate the start of LISW.

This year's event proved to be a real record-breaker, attracting more than

15,000 global maritime decision-makers from over 50 countries to the 160-plus official LISW events held during the week — culminating in a high-level conference attended by more than 500 people. Such was the international interest in the week that LISW hashtags trended on Twitter twice during the week, with an estimated 11.2m user reach.

With other meetings held at venues including Downing Street and the House of Commons, the programme aimed to 'showcase Britain's maritime offer to the world'. Nautilus took part in many of the events to highlight the vital contribution made by merchant seafarers and maritime professionals.



Looking to the future

→ 'Tomorrow's maritime world' was one of the core themes of this year's London International Shipping Week (LISW) and Nautilus International general secretary Mark Dickinson was part of a top-level conference panel discussing the impact of technology on the industry.

He told the meeting he would be proud to be called a Luddite — on the grounds that the Luddites were not opposed to technology but wanted it to be used in a way that enhanced work and improved society.

Surely, he suggested, it would be best to ensure that 'smart' shipping improves the working lives of seafarers — reducing working hours, cutting fatigue and easing the burden of paperwork and administration.

'The debate over autonomous shipping is being driven by those who sell the technology, and it is being presented in a marketing blitz as if it could happen tomorrow,' he argued.

Rather than rushing headlong into this brave new world, the industry should have a 'holistic' discussion to assess automation's impact on society, safety and the environment — and seafarers and their representatives should be right at the heart of this.

'Enhancing work should be what drives this, rather than the fact that people have invented a ship that can be driven by three people in a shore-based centre in a remote part of Finland,' Mr Dickinson said.

He told the meeting that economics



Nautilus general secretary Mark Dickinson argued that new technology should be used to improve the working lives of seafarers

will be a crucial factor in the embrace of autonomous shipping and at present the figures may not stack up — as the industry is being asked to replace 'what is the cheapest part in the equation'.

Mr Dickinson said he thought it may be a forlorn hope that there will be a smooth transition to smart shipping — but the serious concerns over how autonomous ships will run alongside conventional vessels need to be properly assessed. And he suggested there could be cases where some coastal states would refuse to allow crewless vessels

to operate in their waters — in much the same way as the United States prevented 'one-man bridge operations' around its coast in the 1990s.

Technology doesn't necessarily make ships safer, he stressed. There are many cases showing how issues such as poor ergonomics have contributed to accidents.

Joshua Rozenberg, the BBC's legal commentator, highlighted the scale of the regulatory challenge facing the industry — with radical reworking of important conventions, like SOLAS and

STCW, being required.

There are also big questions about liability, he added. 'Traditionally, the shipmaster has been held legally accountable — but who will be held accountable if an unmanned ship runs into trouble?'

Similarly, he asked, could equipment designers and manufacturers be held liable for problems, and how would flag state and coastal state powers be affected by the development of shore-based control centres in different parts of the world?

BMT CEO Sarah Kenny argued that autonomous ships would be good for business and good for society. Technology provides 'pivotal moment' for the shipping industry, she added, paving the way for huge changes in the way it operates.

However, she cautioned, the way in which new technology is adopted is critical and there needs to be more collaboration and cooperation within shipping if it is to bring not just cost savings but also new skills.

Lloyd's Register CEO Inga Beale said autonomous ships would not mean the end of seafaring. 'There will still be lots of jobs, but they will just be different jobs,' she argued. 'We should be embracing and working with the technology to make sure that humans are still in control of it.'

DNV GL CEO Knut Orbeck-Nilssen told the conference that cutting crew costs would deliver 'huge benefits' for shipping companies — and reducing the number of officers in particular 'would

make a good value proposition for operators and owners'.

However, International Chamber of Shipping chairman Esben Poulsen suggested that the many legal and regulatory issues surrounding the operation of autonomous ships mean that it will be many years before they are commonplace in deepsea trades.

→ Inmarsat Marine president Ronald Spithout said shipping is a few years behind the 'digital society' — but as it moves towards

'always-on' connectivity, the industry will change significantly as it becomes more integrated within the wider world.

And Rolls-Royce Marine president Mikael Makinen agreed that it will be some time before drone vessels are dominating the sealanes. The changes will come over time, and companies like his are taking an 'airline philosophy' in dealing with safety issues — with the prospect of a sort of convoy system, in which one crewed ships runs alongside a couple of unmanned vessels.

Seafarers involved in trials of remote-controlled ships found the experience much easier than they had expected, he told the conference. Big data analytics and hi-tech equipment can help crews to perform better, he argued, and new seafarer skillsets will be required, with a focus on digital, electrical and mechanical expertise. Seafarer training could become more like that of airline pilots, who do the vast majority of their learning on simulators.

Galatea puts the ship into London shipping week

Nautilus members were involved in many of the LISW events — and few were busier than the crew of the Trinity House vessel Galatea, which hosted a series of meetings and VIP visits.

The multi-function tender arrived in the Pool of London at 0615 on the first day of the week and was the venue for a meeting of the Department for Transport executive committee and external stakeholders, as well as the launch of a Merchant Navy Training Board film about careers at sea.

The ship also hosted visits by London Nautical School sixth formers and the HMS

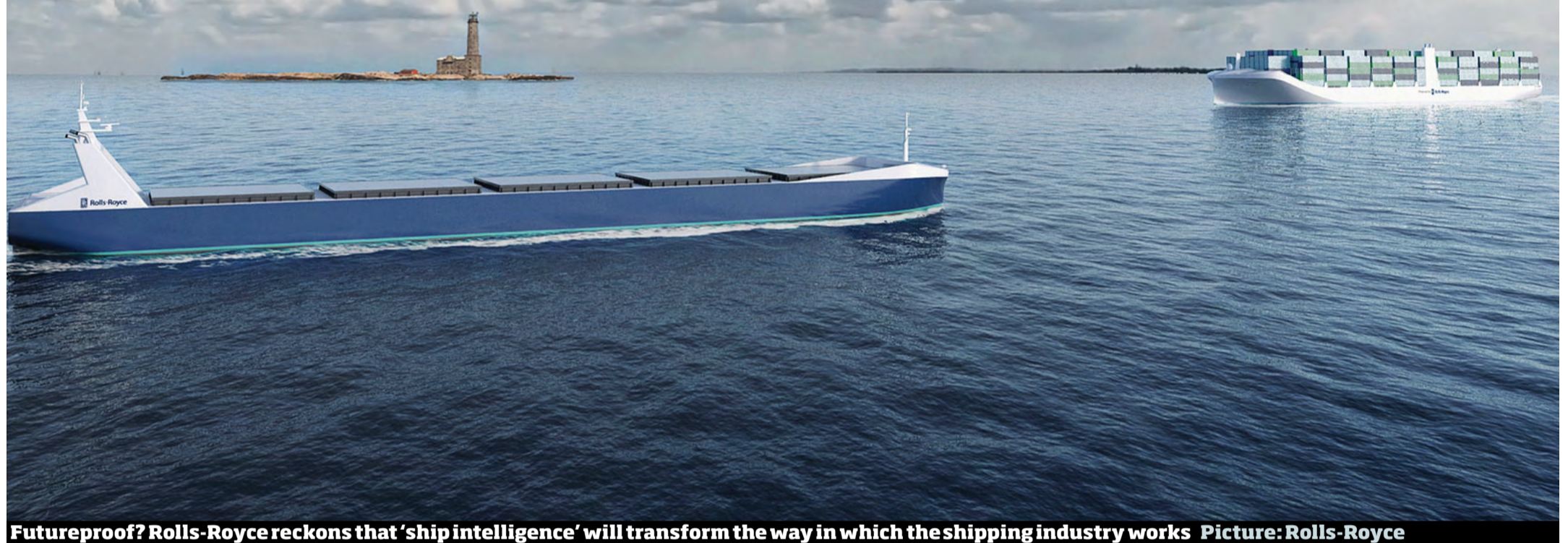
Belfast Sea Cadet unit, as well as staging presentations with other maritime partners covering subjects such as navigation, engineering, charitable works, research and development, commercial services and marine operations.

Galatea's master, Captain Wayne Durrans (pictured right), said it had been a very busy week — and at the end of it the ship was off to Harwich to load buoys for deployment at the Hornsea windfarm in the North Sea, followed by work to support maintenance of the Sark lighthouse in the Channel Islands.



NAUTILUS AT WORK

On course for the smart ship future?



Futureproof? Rolls-Royce reckons that 'ship intelligence' will transform the way in which the shipping industry works Picture: Rolls-Royce

→ 'Disruption' was the buzzword on everybody's lips at the Autonomous Ship Technology Symposium held in Amsterdam recently. However, opinions on exactly how disruptive it will be, and in what timescale, varied widely amongst the 40 experts that spoke during the three-day event.

Whilst technological development is on the verge of making autonomous shipping a reality, there are a number of hurdles — such as regulatory frameworks, liability issues and the feasibility of the business model — that must be overcome before the technology is widely adopted.

Keynote speaker Ringo Lakeman — a senior policy officer for the Dutch government and their permanent representative at the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) — told the conference that to make autonomous shipping a success, key questions must be addressed: 'Why do we want it and who is it for? How do we successfully introduce it into the existing environment? And how do we make it a long-lasting success?'

The 'decreased appeal of seafaring' as a career due to reduced manning and social isolation would likely lead to a shortage of seafarers, he suggested. And the opportunities offered by increased automation — including enhanced safety, environmental protection, security and economic benefits — makes it a necessary goal to pursue, Mr Lakeman argued.

However, he cautioned: 'I do not envisage a future with solely unmanned ships. They will always have to interact with conventional ships. Therefore, the legal framework will have to be amended with autonomous ships in mind, but recognising that conventional shipping will continue.'

Mr Lakeman detailed the proposal for an IMO review of the legal and regulatory framework governing the operation of autonomous ships and how conventions — such as SOLAS and STCW — may have to change to ensure their safe, secure and environmentally sound operation.

'I don't foresee having a tangible

regulatory framework in place for autonomous ships before 2028,' Mr Lakeman stated when questioned on the likely timescale for talks to be resolved at the IMO. 'This is optimistic but achievable if collaboration between stakeholders is effective,' he added.

'To harmonise the rules is essential to ensure the success of autonomous shipping on a global scale' he stressed. Definitions need to be agreed, responsibilities need to be clear and operational issues must be addressed and, 'last but not least', the human element — 'it is essential that humans remain at the forefront of our considerations'.

Ship intelligence

The maritime industry is facing 'a big change, a disruptive change, a dramatic change', the vice-president of innovation at Rolls-Royce told the conference.

Oskar Levander said that this change would not be incremental and would be driven by the phenomenon of digitalisation — or, to use Rolls-Royce's preferred term, 'ship intelligence'.

Ship intelligence will bring about a lot of benefits but it will change the industry, he continued. 'The hardware will change and business models will change. Management will change and finance will change.'

Mr Levander predicted that ship operations will move away from individual ships treated as individual ships and more towards ships managed as a total fleet, integrated into the end customers' process. 'Rather than optimise the sea voyage, we need to optimise the logistics chain,' he stressed.

He said there is a need to get away from bigger ships that are dedicated to one cargo owner in favour of smaller, more versatile, digitally integrated ships with lower emissions, leaner operations and reduced crew — or fully autonomous operation.

'This is about redefining the industry and making it more profitable, more efficient and safer,' Mr Levander said. 'Let's save the skilled seafarers for doing the real

complex tasks, because we are going to see manned vessels for a long time.'

Electric future

The move to 'intelligent shipping' is underway but will be a gradual process rather than happening overnight, the global programme manager at ABB Marine believes. 'Integration is beginning in shipping, but if you compare it to other industries it is not very far along,' said Kalevi Tervo.

'There are at least three parallel technological areas advancing simultaneously — digitalisation, decarbonisation and automation/robotification — which will enable new things and also challenge the way things are done, including the way ships are being built,' he added.

Mr Tervo argued that there is one key technological area that needs to be embraced by the industry before intelligent shipping can become a reality. 'Autonomous cars are not built on a diesel engine platform,' he pointed out.

'The reliability of an asset is equal to the reliability of the least reliable component,' he added. 'Functionality of mechanical systems are limited by mechanical components, and redundancy is more expensive because you have to replicate the whole system, not parts of the system.'

'Electrical systems are modular, more reliable, take less space, allow for remote maintenance and are emissions free,' Mr Tervo contended. 'The autonomous ship is the electric ship.'

Legal issues

The conference heard from legal experts who discussed not only the more easily identifiable aspects of the existing legal regime that will be difficult to apply to autonomous ships — such as collision regulations and safe manning provisions — but also the concerns at how the issue of liability would be dealt with in the event of a collision involving an autonomous vessel.

Erik Rosaeg, professor at the Scandinavian Institute of Maritime Law, explained that under the 1910 Brussels Collision Convention, a collision does not generate automatic liability — as it is necessary to establish fault.

'I don't think any of us would disagree that a shipowner should be held responsible if his ship has caused a collision through human error,' he added. However, he argued, the point of the provision is that it excludes liability for accidents not caused by faults — such as force majeure, 'events beyond the control of any human being'.

'The problem would be if the person that caused the accident — the programmer, for example — may not be onboard and may not be part of the persons for which the shipowner is liable' Prof Rosaeg continued.

'Whilst the ship's crew are under the supervision and liability of the shipowner, in many cases the errors that will have been committed in relation to autonomous ships will have been committed by independent contractors,' he pointed out.

In these type of cases — especially where the programming error was not the only cause of the accident — there would be a burden of proof issue, Prof Rosaeg argued. 'It is very easy to say that the master should have slowed down, but it is quite difficult to say that a programme should have been made differently,' he said.

'Perhaps the best way is to say that the shipowner is strictly liable and he can find the correct balance between himself paying for risk reduction measures and potential liability,' Prof Rosaeg suggested. By doing so, an owner 'can minimise his own cost and the cost to society by employing the correct amount of preventative measures'.

Jonathan Goulding, an associate at the law firm Holman Fenwick Willan, suggested that 'before we see large global shipowners embracing autonomous technology, there will need to be some real changes to the existing regulatory

framework in what has traditionally been a very conservative industry'.

Drawing comparisons with the airline industry, he predicted that there would be a shift away from operator liability to product liability. 'This will have major implications for manufacturers and suppliers of parts alike.'

The human element

Much attention was focused on the role of technology and regulation in the era of the autonomous ship, but what about the seafarers who are required to work on these more technologically advanced vessels?

Gordon Meadow, from Southampton Solent University, does not believe that technology will improve safety unless those required to use it are given adequate training.

'It is all too easy to point the finger at the seafarer — but they are a commodity that has been retrofitted from time immemorial and, for many years they have been expected to do more with less,' he told the conference. 'Less people, less useful technology, less useful training and less time.'

'The impact of technology and the way we have been applying it bolt by bolt doesn't appear to be doing the job,' he continued.

Mr Meadow said research by the Swedish P&I Club showed that between 2004 and 2013 navigation claims have not fallen — even though 'safety regulation has strengthened and technology aboard has evolved significantly'.

'It seems that we keep throwing technology at the problem in the same way, but ships still have catastrophic accidents,' he added.

Mr Meadow asserted that this is because the 'the introduction of fit for purpose training standards addressing new technology is taking too long'.

'We need a succession plan and we need to act now to ensure a sustainable skillset for the future,' he warned the meeting.



Pictured above is Rolls-Royce's vision of an automated offshore supply vessel. The company says the sector could be one of the first to regularly use 'smart' ships. Picture: Rolls-Royce

What planet are they on?

Before starting, I'd like to preempt those who would decry this on the basis of the old seadog who wants a return to sail. Nearly 40 years ago I advocated a flight deck approach to bridge ergonomics, 30 years ago I called for dedicated FRCs for rescue, and I've argued in favour of square and chart style radar screens. I've given support for many other innovative changes, few of which have happened at the time — which is to be expected in our industry.

So, no return to sail, just a return to common sense from those who now are jumping on the bandwagon of the autonomous ship and claiming the inevitability of it replacing manned ships in the near future.

Don't count on it. Let us look at this logically — which is more than some of those who should know better are doing.

There can be no dispute about the ability to design and make such a vessel. After all, we can send unmanned machines as far as Jupiter. That is the theory, at least. There is a small blip on the horizon and that is that there is no weather in space, but we will deal with that later.

So while we may agree on the technical ability to have a working autonomous ship, my question is why?

The marine industry

In general, the shipping industry has never responded well to technological advancement, or even assisting in the improvement of existing technology. Radar was on warships in the 1930s yet we were still sailing on many ships in the 50s without it. Where are the nuclear-powered ships that came and went just as fast? How about the wind-assisted ships? Sunk without trace — not because the industry did not want them, but because these were simply not seen as economically viable. Shipping companies are not there to fund development. They exist to make money.

Even if the costs are minimal, the industry is still reluctant to change. Just look at the state of safety equipment that could be described in some instances as stone age. Surely if we cannot lower our lifeboats without killing sailors, have dangerous lifejackets and fight any form of legislation to train crews and equip ships for enclosed space entry, what chance is there of taking such a step into the unknown — unless, of course, you use the argument that taking everyone off the ship is a great leap forward in crew safety.

The practical argument

The ultimate idea is that the autonomous ship will sail from a port and arrive at

It's starting to seem highly likely that the shipping industry will be using autonomous vessels within the next few years. But it's not inevitable, argues Nautilus Council member **Captain MICHAEL LLOYD**, as he reflects on the drive towards drone ships...

another without any human presence onboard, being driven by someone in the head office. Just what they have always wanted, some would say. So no pilots, no tugs, no mooring gangs, just ships moving along serenely on their allotted tracks.

Rolls-Royce recently announced that they have sailed their first autonomous ship. It was a tug driven round the harbour by the master from a control centre on the jetty with a full crew onboard just in case it broke down. At least someone there had some sense.

As there was no mention of any mooring lines being made fast, this could hardly be called commercial.

Those who regularly sail their remote-controlled craft on a large boating lake near me would also be very surprised by the excited claims of this being a historic moment for the marine industry, as they have been doing exactly this for many years now.

One gentleman concerned with this test said that the captain on the jetty had more awareness of what was around him. I have always felt that by standing on the bridge I had better awareness than by standing on the shore.

Another excited gentleman from Lloyd's Register described the event as 'a landmark moment' and added: 'With autonomous ships likely to enter service soon, we have already set out the "how" of marine autonomous operations in our ShipRight procedure guidance, as it is vital these technologies are implemented in a safe way and there is a route for compliance.'

One must wonder what planet he is living on when he says that these ships are going to enter service soon. What ship-owner has signed up to build them? What ports have adjusted all their procedures to receive and sail them? What are we going to do with all the tugs, pilot boats, and the associated companies and personnel which, in some large ports, will be numbered in their thousands?

What about the unions — are they going to tell their members to quietly pack their bags and go home?

Then there is all the legislation to change and, bearing in mind that International Maritime Organisation delegates

do not even know how to spell the word 'soon', that will take quite a while.

Who is going to deal with pollution, ballast water control, security and — most important — assisting in search and rescue? Failure to observe much of the existing legislation could result in criminal charges, and I have a pleasant picture in my mind of police from some South American state turning up in these companies' offices ashore and frogmarching the managers off to rot in some prison for a few years to share in our criminalisation.



Captain Michael Lloyd

Reliability

Quality control has never been a standard consideration in the world's shipbuilding yards, although I do admit you get what you pay for — which, in most cases, is fairly basic. Considering that ships are generally built to last a maximum of 25 years with a lengthy time between dry-docking, it is not surprising that they break down. If the autonomous ship is to have a chance of being feasible, the cost of build will escalate considerably as the yards have to recruit the technical expertise for such a change in attitude to building. No crew to blame now.

Even then, there is no guarantee, as most of the newbuild cruiseships have found out. Duplication is always the easy answer that is given when these problems are brought out, but how much duplication are these ships going to have? Two engines perhaps, dual fire prevention systems, every valve duplicated? The list could be endless. Then there is the control

technology. Just as an aside, most garages now report that their work is moving away from engine repair to electronic repair, so why should this not be the same on these ships? I have never sailed from a port with everything working at the same time on my ship, regardless of type. Is this going to change?

Economics

This is the hinge for the whole concept. No owner is going to invest in such ships unless there is a profit — and it has to be proven profit.

Which is cheaper, a handful of Filipino crew with the ship registered in a marine-blind island republic or one of these autonomous ships to which, inevitably at some time, a repair crew will have to be flown out, provided the ship is within reach of a helicopter? If not, then imagine the salvage costs. That's the crew cost gone for the next five years. The ships will still have to have accommodation and life support for the repair crews that will inevitably have to attend.

What about if New York requires an American mooring gang to be placed onboard on arrival? There goes six months' wages for the crew. How about a hydraulic leak? That's expensive as well, especially if criminal prosecutions result. Any thought that port costs will reduce should be discarded, as the ports will have to continue all their normal services for manned ships, as well as providing all the facilities for autonomous ships. Up go the costs again.

The weather

Weather is sadly so neglected these days with the idea that ships are bigger and therefore not so affected, and that weather reporting is now state of the art. I once did a survey of the reliability of weather reporting in the Pacific with both the US and Japanese reports received together with ocean routing. Ocean routing was poor, with 40% accuracy, and the shore reports from the weather stations around 65%. Is that enough to base our autonomous reliability on?

It could be said that the operator of the ship in the office has the same information and can change the course of the ship according to the reports, but what about

commercial pressure? It is far easier to exert this on someone sitting at a desk a few feet away instead of the bridge of a ship. You think this would not be done? Tell that to the passengers on the Anthem of the Seas, which sailed out of a US port directly into a hurricane. Hardly any ship in the world has more technical equipment on the bridge than this ship, yet look what happened. Passengers injured, equipment and ship damaged, and we are still awaiting the promised investigation by the Bahamas flag state. As it involves one of their important customers, I have a feeling we will never see that report, or if we do, it will blame the hurricane for getting in the way.

In severe weather, the only place to judge the feel of the ship and how she is responding is the bridge, not staring into some screen thousands of miles away. It also helps to have a seafarer on the bridge as well.

Conclusion

Once again, we are seeing the vast gulf between those at sea and those ashore — especially those who have never served on a ship.

One has the impression that we are being bullied into a situation in which we will be considered as out of date or obstructionist if we oppose such ships. Anyway, what do ignorant seafarers know about such things?

No one wants to consider all the ancillary points I have raised, but without this, these ships cannot be contemplated. There may well be some form of shuttle service operating, with certain precautions put in place by the ports willing to accept autonomous ships — and there are several applications where such controlled shipping can be of use, especially in the military sense. But I feel sure that we can continue to offer those wishing to make a career at sea a secure place for many years to come. Certainly there seems to be no halt to conventional ships being built.

In the meantime, I suggest to Rolls-Royce and Lloyd's Register that they put their money where their mouth is. Form a company, build and pay for a proper deepsea autonomous ship, get all the protocols in place and then run it for a year. Then we will see. Strangely, I have a feeling that they will want someone else to take the risk while they take their profits.

In other words, hopefully, a few people will return to planet earth and realise the limitations of such ships. For those at sea, don't pack your bags yet. Or if these ships do come to fruition, then go into the salvage business. Stay safe.

INTERNATIONAL

shortreports

FEES SCRAPPED: the Danish government plans to scrap registration fees for merchant ships as part of a plan to increase its fleet. Ministers are also aiming to abolish the special fee on secondhand ships using the Danish International Ship Register. Danish owners have welcomed the move, claiming that it can be three to four times more expensive to register a ship in Denmark than under flags such as Singapore.

LIVESTOCK REVIEW: the Australian Maritime Safety Authority is reviewing rules governing the age of ships being used for livestock exports and the welfare conditions for animals being carried following a recent exposé which revealed that 3,000 cattle died onboard the 1980-built Kuwait-flagged vessel *Al Messilah* during a voyage from Australia to Doha.

SECURITY CORRIDOR: a new security corridor for merchant shipping has been established in the Gulf of Aden and Bab Al Mandeb. The Combined Maritime Forces urged vessels to make use of the new corridor to benefit from military presence and surveillance following recent attacks in the region.

TICKETS 'RINGFENCED': more than 7,200 New Zealand seafarers have registered with the country's maritime authority to 'ringfence' their 'legacy' certificates before the 1 September deadline following a year-long campaign to raise awareness about new certification rules.

STENA ADDITION: Stena Line has deployed a fourth ship, the 3,652gt *Gute*, on its route between Gdynia, Poland, and Karlskrona, Sweden following a significant increase in its Baltic Sea South freight operations in the first eight months of the year.

MEGA ORDERS: the French shipping group CMA CGM has revealed plans to build nine of the world's largest containerships at two Chinese shipyards. Due to come into service in 2019, the vessels will be of 22,000TEU capacity.

SINGAPORE SMASH: five seafarers were feared dead last month after the Indonesian-registered tanker *Kartika Segara* collided with the Dominican-registered dredger *JBB De Rong 19* in the Singapore Strait last month.

CREW RESCUED: 11 crew members were rescued last month when the 42-year-old Mongolia-flagged general cargoship *Leonardo* split in two in the Black Sea off Turkey's NW coast while en route to Tuzla dockyard for repairs.

GROUNDING PROBE: an investigation was launched last month after the Panama-flagged bulk carrier *Star of Sawara* grounded off Gedser, Denmark, and had to be towed free by four tugs.

CRUISE BOOM: cruiseship capacity in Asia increased 38% last year to a new total of 4.24m passengers, the Cruise Lines International Association reported last month.



The 14,400TEU capacity CMA CGM Theodore Roosevelt is pictured above last month as it became the largest containership to ever call at the port of New York and New Jersey after sailing underneath the raised Bayonne Bridge.

The arrival of the UK-flagged vessel at the APM Terminals Elizabeth container terminal

followed a US\$1.6m project to increase clearance under the bridge — which is the fifth longest arch bridge in the world — to enable ultra-large containerships (ULCVs) to call at terminals on the New Jersey side of the port's inner harbour.

Earlier on the Chinese-built CMA CGM Theodore Roosevelt's maiden voyage on the

Ocean Alliance South Atlantic Express service linking Shanghai, Ningbo, Yantian and Hong Kong to Savannah, Charleston and Norfolk on the US east coast, the 140,872gt ship also set the record as the largest vessel to pass through the expanded Panama Canal.

Picture: US Coast Guard

Greece urged to act on training

Report says Athens should introduce its version of Maritime UK organisation

→ Greece has been urged to overhaul its maritime education and training facilities as part of a programme to ensure that the country continues as a global shipping centre.

A report published by the multinational professional services firm EY last month warns that the competitiveness of the Greek maritime cluster is being undermined by a reduction in the number of young people in the country training as seafarers — despite persistently high levels of unemployment.

It also highlights 'widespread concern that marine education is being overlooked' — with training centres 'grossly underfunded' and

training programmes becoming rapidly outdated.

'There is a need for the formulation of a national strategy on marine and maritime education, an increase of funding for marine academies, and closer involvement of the shipping community in the formulation of curricula in order to strengthen the supply of human capital in terms of both numbers and quality,' it argues.

EY said the Greek fleet remains the largest in the world — totalling more than 5,270 ships and worth almost US\$86bn — and income from shipping activities accounts for some 6.5% of the country's GDP.

The report points to research

showing that an increase in ship management activities in Greece could create an 'added value' of €25.9bn and create up to 550,000 jobs.

But it warns that the Greek maritime cluster is suffering as a result of poor infrastructure, economic and political uncertainties, and tax issues — with a survey showing that 56% of major shipping companies would consider shifting their ship management functions to other countries. Singapore, London and Dubai were ranked as the most popular alternative destinations, and the report notes that Cyprus is emerging as a competitive maritime cluster.

The EY study says the Greek government needs to take a series of strategic and policy interventions to improve the country's ability to compete as a global maritime centre.

As well as improvements to the maritime training system, the report also recommends a more stable and 'business-friendly' regulatory, tax and legal framework and improved coordination within the country's maritime cluster. It suggests that Maritime UK — the organisation which brings together British shipping, ports, marine and business services sectors — could serve as a useful model for a similar Greek body.

ITF opens new Singapore base

Maritime unions in Singapore have welcomed the official opening of a new local office for the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), pictured right.

The new office — the ITF's fourth in the Asia-Pacific region — is based in the Seacare building in Singapore, owned by ratings' union the Singapore Organisation of Seamen (SOS), and will run with a staff of three.

'The opening of the Centre of Excellence in Singapore will further strengthen the ITF affiliates in Southeast Asia, a booming region with rapidly growing air, sea and land transport sectors. With Singapore as a major air and sea hub, this ITF office is well positioned to support and reinforce ITF work programmes in the Asia-Pacific,' said SOS general secretary Kam Soon Huat.

Speaking at the opening ceremony ITF secretary-general Stephen Cotton said: 'We're excited about this new opportunity — every new resource to support workers on the ground is a step forward. This office is not just a maritime office, it's the ITF in all the modes of transport. This office isn't about influencing



Singapore, it's about using a base to grow ITF influence in Southeast Asia.'

ITF president Paddy Crumlin, who is based in Sydney, said: 'As a trade union organisation we've identified Asia-Pacific as a major area of growth. We want to see more unions in the region affiliating to the ITF family. We'll be working in countries where we believe we can help build stronger unions and make solid improvements to labour

standards.

'The location and stability of Singapore make it the ideal hub for this work and we know the new office is going to play a vital role in coordinating and managing our activities across Asia-Pacific together with the other ITF centres of organising excellence in the region.'

Mary Liew, general secretary of the Singapore Maritime Officers' Union, added: 'We believe

that we will have many further collaborations in the future to benefit the workers in this region. We also look forward to the ITF's continued support for our unique culture of tripartite social dialogue which have been a cornerstone of our harmonious industrial relationship and an important framework for the Singapore labour movement to help working people navigate the challenges.'

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