



ECSCA

European Community Shipowners' Associations

An EU Maritime Growth Plan for
Sustainable Maritime Jobs, Growth and
Competitiveness

2019



The EU shipping industry: a success story

Did you know that 76% of the EU's external trade is shipped by sea and 40% of the world fleet is controlled by European shipowners?¹

In today's hyper-connected world, the seamless and sustainable transport of goods and passengers is a key enabler for growth and prosperity. 90% of everything we consume arrive by sea. Without any doubt, shipping is at the very heart of global trade.

The European shipping industry is a success story and a geostrategic asset to the EU in the face of global challenges. European shipowners operate one of the largest, youngest and most innovative fleets in the world. With its diverse fleet of container ships, tankers, passenger ships, bulk carriers and many other specialised ships, the EU shipping industry contributes a total of €147 billion to the EU's annual GDP². The fleet also boasts one of the best safety records in the world.

The industry is firmly anchored in the European economy, with a strong presence of shipping companies and a unique Short Sea Shipping sector serving the EU transport network. The shipping sector is a crucial part of the European maritime cluster consisting of amongst others shipbuilding companies, knowledge institutes, maritime suppliers and ports. Thanks to its extensive global outreach, the EU shipping industry is active in all markets around the world, facilitating trade to and from the EU, with a substantial engagement in cross-trading.

¹ European Commission, EU Transport in Figures - Statistical Pocketbook, (Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, 2018), 98.

² Oxford Economics, The Economic Value of the EU shipping industry, (London, Oxford Economics, 2017), 5.

European shipping also plays an important geopolitical role for the EU. Different segments of our industry serve the different needs of our continent. Ferries that transport goods and passengers are an integral component of the interconnected transport network of Europe, and together with the short sea shipping segment, facilitate the Single Market. Liners maintain Europe's trading capacity through a network of regular scheduled services that connect us to our trading partners. Bulk carriers ensure the security of our supplies in energy, raw material and staple goods. While shipping is not the sole channel by which Europe obtains its daily necessities, the industry plays a crucial role in safeguarding the EU's geopolitical independence through supply diversification.

The sector directly employs over 640,000 workers at sea and on shore. It supports over 1.4 million workers through indirect and induced employment. Through these professionals, the industry retains a wealth of maritime knowledge, skills and heritage unique in the world. This European know-how should be cherished and protected, not to be lost to other regions in the world.

Shipping is a sustainable mode of transport, and the sector is committed to working towards becoming carbon-neutral within this century. New means of propulsion, new fuels and collaboration with partners in the supply chain are necessary to ultimately reach full decarbonisation. European shipowners are working with the shipbuilding sector, ports, equipment manufacturers and the research community to find innovative solutions to drive the whole maritime industry together towards a greener future, including in key areas such as air emissions, waste management, and the protection of marine life. The European maritime industry embraces these challenges and is committed to take the global lead for clean shipping.

Shipping is a global industry with worldwide competition. Shipowners may register ships and transfer employment to whichever country that offers the best business climate. EU shipowners must compete with similar ships for the same charters against non-EU shipowners as well as with land-based modes of transport on certain routes ships. Shipping is also highly capital-intensive and volatile. In order to obtain business, EU shipping must be capable of offering a transport service or other service at sea against a price/quality ratio that meets the needs and expectations of customers, whilst also being economically sustainable for the shipowner and enabling compliance with an ever-increasing list of international regulations on ship safety, environmental protection, qualifications and labour standards.

The EU shipping sector benefits from a policy framework which is overall strong and consistent. The EU's *Guidelines on State Aid to Maritime Transport* and EU-approved measures in the form of national tonnage tax regimes and seafarers' taxation have been a precondition for the competitiveness of the European shipping industry, allowing our companies to grow their controlled fleet to 40% of the overall world tonnage. As other global shipping centres around the world gain ground with intensive support from their governments, preserving and improving the existing policy framework is essential to keep the EU shipping industry competitive.

The backbone of the EU maritime cluster are the shipping companies: the presence and development of European maritime industries and, by extension, of employment opportunities and retention of skills and expertise, is conditional upon the existence of a globally competitive EU shipping.



A strong shipping community is not only indispensable for the European maritime cluster, but for the European Union as a whole, as EU shipping is a solid contributor to the European agenda of jobs and growth and one of the very few strategic assets to the EU.

The maritime transport sector is vital to the lives of Europeans and of high strategic importance to the European economy.

The sustainability of this dynamic sector depends on the ability to continue to attract a sufficient number of quality new entrants and retain experienced seafarers, including women seafarers and other under-represented groups. Therefore we believe that a strategy is needed to attract greater numbers of Europeans into maritime employment and to equip them with the skills necessary to meet the changing needs of the sector and thus improve their employment prospects and competitiveness. This will ensure that they enjoy long and rewarding maritime careers, not only on board ships but also in the shore-side clusters that support the seagoing industry and are a significant source of jobs throughout Europe. This calls for a creative, strategic approach involving the European and national social partners and all other relevant stakeholders to achieve both meaningful and viable solutions, without compromising the competitiveness of the sector.

We therefore propose a maritime growth plan with an holistic approach to maintain and further develop attractive and smart, safe, social and sustainable quality shipping.

What is the plan about?

Objectives:

- Enhance the social sustainability of shipping –*'to maintain and further develop attractive and smart, safe, social and sustainable quality shipping'*³
- Promote the training, competitiveness and employment of EU seafarers
- Enhance the skill base of EU seafarers
- Enhance the growth and competitiveness of the EU fleet
- Deal with demographic developments
- Ensure a sufficient supply of competent staff for the European maritime clusters with the right mix of skills and competencies –*'World-class maritime cluster'*⁴

Problem definitions:

- in order for the maritime industries in Europe to recruit and retain the required quantities and qualities of people and stay competitive in changing times with technological and environmental developments, it will be imperative to find ways to attract more people to careers in the maritime sector, with a particular focus on under-represented groups, including women
- business-as-usual is not an option if the industry is going to reinforce its workforce and attract younger people of this generation
- employment prospects for EU nationals in the maritime industries are closely linked to the strength, competitiveness and prosperity of the EU maritime industry in its entirety

The work is to be undertaken on 2 levels:

1. **EU level** by ECSA and its members supported by EU funds/ EU institutions
2. **National, local and transnational level** by ECSA members, ideally in association with national trade unions, national authorities and Maritime Educational Training providers (METs).

ECSA intends to seek support from its European social partner for joint campaign initiatives wherever practicable. The work will be divided into the following 4 areas:

³ Council conclusions on the "Priorities for the EU's maritime transport policy until 2020: Competitiveness, Decarbonisation, Digitalisation to ensure global connectivity, an efficient internal market and a world-class maritime cluster" (Valletta declaration 2017): <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9976-2017-INIT/en/pdf>

⁴ id.

1. Raising the profile of the industry and the career opportunities it offers

Communication Campaign led by European and national shipowner associations.

ECSA will act as the 'multiplier' effect to the campaigns already being conducted by its member associations in the Member States in enhancing the awareness and attractiveness of the sector. The communication campaign will therefore build on and showcase campaigns being conducted around Member States and be the multiplier effect at EU level by raising the profile and creating the momentum. It will also serve to raise the profile of shipping, activities being undertaken by the sector and the exciting careers the industry offers in a coordinated way throughout EU and also in the EU spheres.

Focus on:

- *to increase awareness of shipping:*
 - *explain its essential role as a facilitator of trade, with 76% of the EU's visible trade being transported by ships and increasing dependence on renewable energy harnessed offshore;*
 - *explain how the world would be like without shipping;*
 - *Explain its importance to the EU economy.*
- *to improve the image of the sector:*
 - *increase knowledge of the industry and dispel outdated and inaccurate perceptions.*
- *to increase awareness of the attractive career opportunities in shipping both at sea and ashore⁵:*
 - *explain that shipping is an important source of jobs, both on board ships and onshore (directly and indirectly) and many openings exist for persons with seagoing qualifications and experience.*

⁵ *"Suitably qualified seafarers are essential to achieving safe, secure, environmentally sound and efficient shipping. The sustainability of this dynamic sector depends on the ability to continue to attract a sufficient number of quality new entrants and retain experienced seafarers, including women seafarers and other under-represented groups. This calls for a creative approach involving the social partners and all other relevant stakeholders to achieve both meaningful and viable solutions"*

Conclusions of the ILO sectoral meeting on the Recruitment and Retention of Seafarers and the Promotion of Opportunities for Women Seafarers, held in Geneva, from 25 February – 1 March 2019:

https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---sector/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_674553.pdf

Measures include:

- i. *attracting younger generations to consider a job in the shipping industry*⁶
 - ❖ Shipping to be mainstreamed in schools through educational material/books/games from young age:
 - Bring shipping into school curricula, particularly in subjects such as geography and economics and/or ad hoc projects;
 - Measures to increase knowledge of shipping in primary schools and colleges, visits to ships and maritime colleges;
 - Map good practices in Member States and encourage their adaptation for use at EU level/European wide/in all Member States by proposing the creation of a tool box to promote them;
 - Measures with DGs Education and Culture (DG EAC), DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL) and DG Mobility and transport (DG TRAN) and via National Associations engaging with Educational and Transport Ministries to ensure shipping careers are included in job fairs;
 - Encourage use of Social media and innovative ideas to attract young people.
 - ❖ *Positive Labelling:*
 - Labelling of products as “brought by ships”.
 - ❖ *Promoting gender diversity and equality of opportunity to attract and retain new talent in the shipping industry for strong, prosperous and socially sustainable maritime clusters in Europe*
 - Follow up and implement actions outlined in declaration of intention regarding measures to attract women into the industry and to retain them in the sector (covered by implementation of ECSA-ETF declaration on women in shipping⁷).
 - ❖ *Promoting the diversity of skills needed to make seafarers more proficient – the qualifications requirements for seafarers are changing significantly. A seafarer needs to also have digital and technological skills and commercial thinking.*
- ii. *How do we encourage students to opt for the seafaring profession and not go for a job ashore straight away after completing studies? (linked to measures in work area 3) Making*

⁶ “EMPHASISE the need to make the EU maritime transport sector attractive to future generations to avoid the European maritime cluster encountering a shortage of competent staff with the right mix of skills and competencies” Council conclusions on “Priorities for the EU’s maritime transport policy until 2020: Competitiveness, Decarbonisation, Digitalisation to ensure global connectivity, an efficient internal market and a world-class maritime cluster ([Valletta Declaration 2017](http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9976-2017-INIT/en/pdf)): <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9976-2017-INIT/en/pdf>

⁷ Joint ECSA-ETF Declaration of Intention to address the enhanced participation of women in European Shipping: <https://www.ecsa.eu/news/joint-etf-ecsa-declaration-intention-address-enhanced-participation-women-european-shipping>

efforts to retain seafarers in the maritime industry rather than losing their skill sets to other non-maritime onshore positions.

- ❖ Encourage shipping companies to participate in events in universities with students of maritime courses and “sell” careers at sea, drawing attention to the added value of seagoing experience to maritime employers ashore;
- ❖ EU should provide appropriate incentives to encourage lifelong career prospects in the maritime industry and maritime clusters and facilitate career progression as well as labour mobility in the maritime industries throughout Europe.



2. Increasing the attractiveness of EU Seafarers:

Focus on skills enhancement – knowledge, education and innovation

There is a genuine EU interest not only in increasing the attractiveness of a seafaring career but also in securing a critical mass of experienced personnel whilst sustaining the competitive position of the European maritime industries.

Broadening the skills base of EU seafarers to increase their attractiveness and competitiveness:

The attractiveness of EU seafarers to the employers and their competitiveness in the global labour market are enhanced by the skills they acquire.

Focus on:

- i. Developing a *skills strategy* to ensure that EU seafarers acquire new skills as necessary as digitalisation and autonomy increase in importance (covered by SkillSea);
- ii. Developing voluntary 'additional competencies and training'⁸, which may include a broader set of skills, including soft skills (eg shipboard management), digital skills and green skills. These could help transferability of skills and additionally prepare seafarers for management roles ashore. This would help to prepare for careers in wider maritime cluster on shore (covered by SkillSea);
- iii. Promoting cooperation between European maritime education and training institutions (METs) – through the creation of a network both nationally and EU wide – to promote exchanges of good practices to improve the quality of education and for upgrading seafarers' competences and adapting requirements to the current and future requirements of the shipping industry and maritime clusters (covered by SkillSea);
- iv. Encouraging rating-to-officer conversion training using EU financial support;

⁸ "RECALL that higher quality and broader set of skills are increasingly required in the Blue economy"
Council conclusions on "Priorities for the EU's maritime transport policy until 2020: Competitiveness, Decarbonisation, Digitalisation to ensure global connectivity, an efficient internal market and a world-class maritime cluster (Valletta Declaration 2017): <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9976-2017-INIT/en/pdf>

- v. Measures to optimize the availability of sufficient berth capacity for the numbers of trainee seafarers desired by shipowners;
- vi. Encouraging partnerships between business and education, to ensure that employers' skills needs are being delivered in the optimum manner (covered by SkillSea⁹);
- vii. Creating 'Awards' to persons/organisations dedicated to providing training to their employees or improving training standards across the industry.



⁹ "REAFFIRM the need to bring education and industry closer in ensuring relevant training and job opportunities, in promoting labour mobility and transferability of skills in the blue economy." Declaration of the European Ministers responsible for the Integrated Maritime Policy on Blue Growth (Valletta Declaration): <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-8037-2017-INIT/en/pdf>

3.

Measures to improve the future employment prospects of EU seafarers:

to be considered by national social partners for implementation at national level

Measures to boost jobs and growth and enhance the employment prospects of EU seafarers requires a strong, competitive and prosperous EU maritime industry in all its entirety, healthy national maritime clusters, increased use of mobility and assurance of quality shipping.

Labour market actions require a diversified approach in order to take account of national circumstances while starting from a common framework.

Focus on:

Boosting the Maritime Clusters:

If the whole sector joins forces to address the common challenge of recruitment and retention, this results in a strong platform for further action.

- i. ECSA to work on explaining the importance of enhancing the EU shipping industry so as to also strengthen the European maritime cluster, with support from other stakeholders as appropriate;
- ii. National associations and affiliates to work to explain the benefits of stimulating and boosting national maritime clusters to government authorities and other players in their national maritime environment;

Increasing mobility of EU students/apprenticeships:

- iii. EU-wide exchanges at apprenticeship level: ECSA and its national associations to promote Erasmus-type exchanges of students between Member States' maritime academies across the EU. To encourage EU institutions to also promote such exchanges in this sector;
- iv. ECSA to request EU institutions for funding, including if necessary to change interpretation/legal act of Erasmus+ to allow for shipboard placements on vessels registered in Member State of residence of trainee officer, seeking support from other industry stakeholders as appropriate;
- v. ECSA and national shipowner associations to campaign for EU-wide acceptance of certificates of proficiency issued by Member

States, to enhance the mobility of seafarers within the European Union;

- vi. Explore the possibilities of using EU wide portals like EURES and Drop'in to exchange information on the availability of traineeships, apprenticeships, cadet places and jobs.

Quality Shipping

- vii. Ensure the effective application of the ILO Maritime Labour Convention and its relevant agreement by social partners to ensure decent living and working conditions for seafarers;¹⁰
- viii. Meeting seafarers' expectations e.g. by facilitating the use of modern communication means, including Internet access onboard;¹¹
- ix. Consider better EU wide coordination and enhanced information about measures to eliminate bullying and harassment;
- x. Implement measures focused on the recruitment and retention of women in the industry, such as ensuring the provision of female-friendly facilities on ships, fostering shipboard cultures that promote the dignity of all crew members, encouraging policies on work-life balance and communicating about long-term career opportunities at sea and ashore (implementing the ECSA-ETF declaration on enhanced participation of women in European shipping¹²).

¹⁰ "REAFFIRM the need to strengthen the establishment of a social level playing field in shipping and ensure fair treatment of seafarers by effectively applying the ILO Maritime Labour Convention 2006 and relevant agreements between social partners, SUPPORT initiatives and actions in order to attract and train a sufficient number of EU seafarers and, therefore, UNDERLINE the need to promote and enforce international standards ensuring good working and living conditions" Council conclusions on "Priorities for the EU's maritime transport policy until 2020: Competitiveness, Decarbonisation, Digitalisation to ensure global connectivity, an efficient internal market and a world-class maritime cluster" (Valletta declaration 2017): : <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9976-2017-INIT/en/pdf>

¹¹ "URGE the social partners to identify and develop common initiatives and attractive social conditions to promote European seafarer employment and enhance the attractiveness of the sector, e.g. by facilitating the use of modern communication means, including Internet access onboard": id.

¹² Joint ECSA-ETF Declaration of Intention to address the enhanced participation of women in European Shipping: <https://www.ecsa.eu/news/joint-etf-ecsa-declaration-intention-address-enhanced-participation-women-european-shipping>

4.

Improving the availability of statistics:

ECSA and ETF work on MapMar project to have a better picture of the industry and guide discussions

The 2011 report of the Task Force on Maritime Employment and Competitiveness stated that it had proven difficult to find accurate, complete and reliable figures on seafarers. The paucity of data on seafarers is a significant obstacle to the development of policies on increasing and improving maritime employment in Europe. The Task Force called for more to be done both at the national and EU level to provide a more complete and accurate picture.

In this connection the Commission has accepted a project proposal from ECSA and its social partner ETF to study differences in data collection methodologies for maritime professionals in different Member States.

Entitled Map Mar, the 18-month project will identify, via a combination of desk-top research and study visits, different EU Member States' methodologies for ascertaining:

- the numbers of seafarers who are nationals of EEA Member States, or available without legal restrictions to the European Union/EEA (depending on what data is available from official sources in each Member State) by numbers of officers, ratings and cadets/trainees;
- the numbers of former seafarers working as shore-side maritime professionals;
- the age profiles of the seagoing workforce;
- the gender dimension;
- other potential gaps and tracking of trends that may help getting a better understanding of the maritime labour workforce employed by European shipping companies.

It is expected that this first step will lead to more complete and accurate data collection on seafarers, which will in turn enable better-informed planning and decision-making in respect of maritime employment.

- End -

All photos copyright of ECSA's member organisations.