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PROGRAM**

**Well-being of Filipino seafarers working under
Greek shipping companies**

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

GB - Governing Body

DMLC - Declaration of Maritime Labour Compliance

ILC - International Labour Conference

ILO - International Labour Organization

IMO - International Maritime Organization

ISWAN - International Seafarers Welfare and Assistance Network

MLC - Maritime Labour Conference

OFW - Overseas Filipino Workers

OWWA - Overseas Workers Welfare Administration

POEA - Philippine Overseas Employment Administration

PSPC - Philippines Seafarers' Promotion Council

PWB - Psychological Wellbeing

SMEs - Small and Medium Enterprises

SOLAS - Safety of Life at Sea

STCW - Standards of Training, Certification, and Watchkeeping

UGS - Union of Greek Shipowners

UN - United Nations

WHO - World Health Organisation

WMU - World Maritime University

ABSTRACT

Greece and the Philippines are two countries that have marked their presence in the shipping industry for different reasons. While the Philippines remain the world's leading provider of seafarers, Greece is still the world's leading maritime powerhouse, accounting for the 21% of global fleet. This thesis aims to present both countries' features and on a closer look, to focus on the well-being of Filipinos working under Greek shipping companies, as more and more Filipino seafarers occupy a large percentage of the crew of a Greek fleet.

In a simple yet comprehensive manner, we will present on the first part, various interpretations on what is well-being and the challenges of seafarers in the industry, addressing as well issues of stress on board and mental health. Furthermore, the reader will have a solid knowledge background on the role of ILO instruments, and the MLC 2006's provisions on safeguarding seafarers' welfare. The second part, chapter 3 and 4, explains reasons why foreign and Greek seafarers choose to work with Filipinos on board and why Filipinos on the other hand, are working at ships. Lastly we will concentrate our study on issues related to Filipinos' well-being and mental health, considering the impact of Covid-19.

Key words: well-being, Filipino seafarers, crew welfare, mental health

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Η Ελλάδα και οι Φιλιππίνες είναι δύο χώρες που έχουν επισημάνει την παρουσία τους στη ναυτιλιακή βιομηχανία για διαφορετικούς λόγους η καθεμία. Ενώ οι Φιλιππίνες παραμένουν ο κορυφαίος πάροχος ναυτικών στον κόσμο, η Ελλάδα εξακολουθεί να είναι η κορυφαία ναυτιλιακή δύναμη στον κόσμο, αντιπροσωπεύοντας το 21% του παγκόσμιου στόλου. Η παρούσα διπλωματική εργασία έχει ως στόχο να παρουσιάσει

τα χαρακτηριστικά των δύο χωρών και με μια πιο προσεκτική ματιά, να εστιάσει στην ευημερία των Φιλιπινέζων που εργάζονται σε ελληνικές ναυτιλιακές εταιρείες, καθώς ολοένα και περισσότεροι Φιλιπινέζοι ναυτικοί καταλαμβάνουν ένα μεγάλο ποσοστό του πληρώματος του ελληνικού στόλου.

Με απλό και ευανάγνωστο λόγο, θα παρουσιάσουμε στο πρώτο μέρος, διάφορες ερμηνείες σχετικά με το τι είναι ευεξία και τις προκλήσεις που αντιμετωπίζουν οι ναυτικοί στον κλάδο, εξετάζοντας επιπλέον θέματα στρες και ψυχικής υγείας στο πλοίο. Επιπροσθέτως, ο αναγνώστης θα έχει ένα στέρεο γνωστικό υπόβαθρο σχετικά με το ρόλο των μέσων της Διεθνούς Οργάνωσης Εργασίας (ILO) και της Ναυτικής Σύμβασης Εργασίας (MLC 2006), στη διασφάλιση της ευεξίας των πληρωμάτων. Στο δεύτερο μέρος, κεφάλαιο 3 και 4, εξηγούνται οι λόγοι για τους οποίους οι ξένοι και οι Έλληνες ναυτικοί επιλέγουν να συνεργαστούν με Φιλιπινέζικο πλήρωμα και από την άλλη, οι λόγοι που οι Φιλιπινέζοι επιλέγουν να εργάζονται στα πλοία. Τέλος, θα επικεντρώσουμε τη μελέτη μας σε θέματα που αφορούν την ευημερία και την ψυχική υγεία των Φιλιπινέζων, λαμβάνοντας υπόψη τις επιπτώσεις του Covid-19.

Λέξεις κλειδιά: ευεξία, Φιλιπινέζοι ναυτικοί, ευημερία πληρώματος, ψυχική υγεία

Introduction

Shipping is the lifeblood of the global economy, transporting roughly 90% of global trade. Seafarers, on the other hand, are an occupational group that faces unique hazards at sea and are among the most important members of the global economy because, without them, intercontinental trade, bulk transport of raw materials, and import/export of food and products would cease, making them invaluable.¹

The seafarer is often looked up to as one of today's heroes whose life can be far from idyllic as many complete international long-term voyages that leave them isolated from family and loved ones for up to nine months at a time.

The purpose of this dissertation is to shed some light on sensitive issues that seafarers are facing such as their wellbeing and their mental health on board having considered the challenges of this occupation and the outbreak of the pandemic. Moreover, the contribution of the Philippines and Greece in the shipping industry, by Philippines being the largest supplier of seafarers and Greece as the world's largest ship owning nation, brought my attention to study further the topic of welfare of Filipino seafarers working under Greek shipping companies.

Relevant literature was chosen as research methodology demonstrating up to date academic articles, published scientific studies and book extracts by authors specialized in the maritime sector. All are accessed via Scopus and the internet websites of official Conventions under discussion, in order to meet the objectives of this research and for the reader to acquire a broad perception of the subject matter.

The structure of the dissertation consists of 4 Chapters. In particular:

Chapter 1

Provides a general overview of well-being as a concept and interpretations of it, along with challenges involved in the sector. It also discusses issues like facing stress and fatigue on board and who can be benefited by well-being.

¹ <https://www.ics-shipping.org/shipping-fact/shipping-and-world-trade-global-supply-and-demand-for-seafarers/>

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 offers historical background of fundamental Organizations and Conventions. Those are the IMO which incorporates 4 pillars – SOLAS, STCW, MARPOL and MLC. The latter, along with the ILO will be further analyzed in a greater extent as both have contributed to the provision of welfare services to seafarers.

Chapter 3

This chapter provides a brief historical overview on both countries, Greece and the Philippines, with an emphasis on their connection with shipping. Then, we will present the importance of Filipino seafarers in the sector and we will discuss why they are preferred by foreign and Greek shipowners to work with them on board. Through researches and statistical figures this chapter ends with the theme Filipinos on board Greek - owned ships and Greek flagged ships.

Chapter 4

This chapter approaches the well-being of Filipino seafarers and their mental health via several surveys conducted by expert authors and by survey report of SAFETY4SEA in 2021, having also considered the outbreak of the corona-virus.

Discussion and Conclusion

A conclusion is addressed based on discussion of key points and highlights of the entire dissertation.

Chapter 1. Addressing well-being and the challenges of a seafarer

1.2 Definition of crew wellbeing or welfare

Although the maritime sector has made significant efforts in recent years to safeguard seafarers, the majority of international shipping regulations either does not include crew well-being entirely or do not address it effectively.

For that reason, the following paragraphs are an attempt to approach and understand what is wellbeing or welfare of a seafarer, providing various interpretations and definitions recommended by international organizations.

To begin with, wellbeing is defined as “*a state (a person or a community) of doing or being well in life in terms of having a good health, being happy or having prosperous condition, moral or physical welfare*”.²

In a general perspective, all humans have certain needs and desires which in no way differ from those of seafarers. Particularly, all seafarers have the same needs as any other worker does, in terms of being healthy and happy. Although, the Maritime Labor Convention - MLC 2006, points out at its preamble the necessity for “special protection” of them, given the international scope of the maritime industry.

From the shipping point of view, we can describe well-being on board as the summary of all requirements for the seafarer’s health and happiness as well as any regulatory practices that should be developed by the global shipping community to address this essential topic. (Exarchopoulos et al, 2018).

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), workplace well-being encompasses all aspects of working life, including the physical environment’s quality and safety as well as how employees feel about their jobs, their working environment, the company culture and work organization. Additionally, the ILO has recognized the “immense risk” that increased fatigue poses for the physical and mental health of

² <https://www.oed.com/viewdictionaryentry/Entry/227050>

seafarers, as well as for the safety of navigation, security and preservation of the marine environment.(GB.340/Resolution Rev.2)³

The Maritime Labour Convention 2006 (MLC 2006), does not provide a clear definition of crew welfare, although it is stated under Article IV of the Convention – Employment and Social Rights, that welfare provisions of MLC are guaranteed as a right of every seafarer to decent working and living conditions, as well as health care, medical attention, welfare benefits, and other types of social protection. To protect seafarers' health and wellbeing, Regulation 4.4 intends to ensure that they have access to shore-based facilities and services.

The Chapter V of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) (IMO, 2011), makes an indirect reference to welfare by highlighting a general duty on the part of masters to assist those in distress and for Contracting Government to secure that all ships shall be adequately and efficiently manned from a safety perspective.

The International Convention on Standards of Seafarers' Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) (IMO, 2010) Amendments emphasize how vital it is to minimise crew fatigue, therefore to improve the well-being of seafarers.

As we can see, it is clear that crew well-being has not received much attention from maritime legislations. The terms of seafarer's "well-being" and "welfare" have never been defined precisely by either the MLC 2006 or the Seafarers' Welfare Agreement 1987 (hereafter ILO C163) or any other convention globally. Additionally, there are conflicting statements made about crew welfare due to the fact that many scientists associate crew wellbeing with a wide range of various concepts. For example, many researchers relate it with the financial exploitation of seafarers and conditions at work, decent living conditions and improvement of their physical and mental health, as well as the promotion of their own prosperity but also their families. Hence, the context for different approaches to this problem becomes more complicated, and many authors vaguely link the welfare of seafarers and other aspects of modern shipping to labor

³ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_760649.pdf

rights, degree of job satisfaction, and corporate social responsibility. (Exarchopoulos et al 2018)

According to research by M Progolaki et. al (2013), welfare encompasses wide range of notions, which include (a) the welfare and health of the individual seafarer and his/her family, the degree of job satisfaction (b)welfare of the crew both onboard and ashore, their health and safety, and (c) sense of corporate social responsibility and the well-being of the societies affected by the shipping operation.

Furthermore, a special attention should be given to the link between crew wellbeing and mental health.

To begin with, World Health Organisation defines mental health as a state of well-being in which each person realises his or her own potential, is able to manage everyday stressors, can work creatively and productively and is able to contribute to society.

Tehrani et al. (2007) mentioned that well-being at workplace refers to the improvement of biopsychosocial level of each employee including physical, mental and social health.

The International Seafarers' Welfare and Assistance Network (ISWAN), an international maritime charity responsible for the improvement of the lives of seafarers and their families, states that Psychological well-being refers to being able to function normally, feeling generally positive about oneself and one's life, as well as having a sense of life satisfaction, purpose, and direction in life.⁴

The context of psychological well-being at workplace is a core feature of mental health, and it consists of two parts: the first part is (a) that of hedonic, which represents enjoyment, positive mood, emotion and pleasure, while the second part (b) is that of eudaimonic (meaning, fulfillment, resilience), based on the sense of purpose that is a requirement for long-term psychological wellbeing which is occurred by the positive mood and emotion.

⁴ SHIP Seafarers' Health Information Program: Psychological Wellbeing at Sea as part of ISWAN's series of Good Mental Health Guides for Seafarers.

Psychological Wellbeing (PWB) is related with 6 factors. Those are: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal development, personal relationships, a sense of purpose in life, and self-acceptance (Keyes et al., 2002).

Considering all above, we understand that welfare in the perspective of the shipping industry is linked with various interpretations including:

- the respect of seafarer's rights with regard to working and living conditions,
- the level of job satisfaction and the prosperity of his/her family,
- ensuring safety, quality and prosperity of crew while being onboard and at ports
- improving physical and mental health of individual seafarers
- avoidance of abuse and financial exploitation,
- access to medical care
- corporate and social responsibility of societies affected by maritime operations.

However, the term of welfare unquestionably has at least four dimensions and, consists of organisational, managerial, social, and physical workplace characteristics, despite the ambiguity of the aspects regarding this topic. (Exarchopoulos et al 2018)

1.3 The challenges of a seafarer

Seafaring has a different work pattern, compared to other land-based jobs. It can be difficult and demanding, requiring months of working and living in isolated confined spaces, as living and working conditions are combined, with the ship serving as both a working and living environment.

This situation can be problematic as it generates even more issues. Some examples are isolation, lack of socialization, seafarers away from their families, relatives and friends for an extended period of time, challenges to interpersonal relationships and exposure of seafarers with the same people often culturally diverse 24 hours per day.

Furthermore, there are restrictions to enter open spaces, limited private space and limited opportunities to go ashore whenever they want.

Other important challenges to crew welfare, according to Life at Sea report (2019)⁵ are:

- Hospitalisation and Death at sea: crew members are exposed to risks and dangers on a daily basis being in an industrial workplace as well as in a dangerous natural environment. Injuries can be serious and hospitalisation can be extremely lonely and mentally hard for a seafarer in a foreign land, left behind by the crew who must continue to the next port. Another concern is that death at sea is higher than ashore and suicide rates are an increasingly alarming.
- Piracy: In 2018, the IMB documented 201 instances of piracy. The threat of piracy and the frightening experience of it can have a long-lasting impact on the wellness and mental health of seafarers.
- Non-payment of wages: Back in 2015, ISWAN recorded almost 400 reports of non-payment of wages.
- Assault and bullying
- Abandonment: Cases of crew abandonment are increasing. In particular, based on ILO data, more than 1,300 seafarers were abandoned in the years 2012 - 2016, with an average of 19 crew abandonments each year. Given the uncertainty over wages and repatriation which can take years to resolve, there is need for financial support to live onboard.
- Stress and mental health problems: Seafarers can experience stress that leads to isolation and fatigue. Being away from home, having insufficient communication with their families while having no one familiar person to talk to on board are some of the reasons that can affect the psychological health of seafarers.

⁵ <https://safety4sea.com/life-at-sea-report-eight-challenges-to-crew-welfare/>

1.3.1 Seafaring stressors

It is impossible to compare working at sea to office occupations ashore because seafaring is connected with specific mental, psychological, and physical stressors. (A Carotenuto, 2012)

There are two categories of stressors as we can see as follows: (Oldenburg M. et al., 2009):

- (a) The first is the physical stress which includes heat in workplaces, noise, ship movement/sea sickness and hard physical work – lifting/carrying, lack of exercise and climatic changes during the voyage.
- (b) The second is the psychosocial stress which involves factors related to shift. Those are: long workdays, sleep deprivations and irregular work hours. Then there are social issues such as extended periods spent at sea, being away from family, conflicts between crew members, isolation and lack of a distinct separation between work and recreation area. In addition, psychosocial stress is linked with high work demands, such as time constraints, high volume of work, high responsibility of activities, tough decision making, routine-monotony and lack of independence. Lastly, there are high management responsibilities of superiors which include inadequate qualification of subordinate crew members and conflict between ship safety and economic needs.

1.3.2 The issue of fatigue

Fatigue can be defined in many ways. It is typically described as a persistent condition of physical and/or mental impairment, experiencing a sense of exhaustion, weariness, or sleepiness, that results from prolonged mental or physical job, long periods of anxiety, exposure to harsh environments, or sleeplessness.

The result of fatigue is impaired performance and diminished alertness, reducing the ability to safely operate a ship or perform safety-related duties. It influences and affect negatively the strength, speed, reaction time, decision making of a human being.

Fatigue is caused by a range of factors, but the list below are common causes of maritime accidents by far ⁶(Progoulaki, et al, 2013):

1. inadequate sleep, i.e. lack of restorative sleep
2. poor quality of sleep and rest,
3. work/sleep at inappropriate times of the body clock (circadian rhythm)
4. staying awake for long periods
5. stress
7. noise, volume and the constant movement of the sea
6. excessive workload (prolonged mental and/or physical exertion).

The fatigue issue have been addressed even more intensively the recent years due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. Findings of a study investigating the impact of the pandemic on seafarers' mental health and fatigue, based on an online survey among seafarers on international commercial vessels, suggested that COVID-19 increased seafarers' fatigue and mental health problems (Birgit P. et al. 2022) and for that reason special attention should be given to crew welfare and thus, the human element in the industry.

The IMO (2003) in its most recent resolution on the subject: A.947 (23) in 2003 describes the human element as a complicated, multifaceted subject that has an impact on maritime security, safety, and environmental preservation. In order to effectively solve human element difficulties, it involves the full range of human activities carried out by ship crews, shore-based management, regulatory agencies, recognized organizations, shipyards, legislators, and other interested stakeholders.

1.4 Who benefits from crew well being

From the given description, we can identify the reflection of the complexity and multi-dimensional nature of the subject, emphasizing on the urge of close co-operation not only of individuals working onboard and shore based staff, but also different organizations in the shipping industry (regulatory bodies, recognized

⁶IMO - MSC.1/Circ1598 Annex, page 4 – Guidelines on Fatigue

organizations, shipyards etc.), in order to achieve human elements issues effectively. The IMO has set a primary goal in addressing human element issues, the enhancement of maritime security, safety, as well as the marine environment's quality.

The human element is increasingly accepted as the greatest source of risk to safe and effective shipping. The welfare of seafarers is a topic that may have an indirect impact on the shipping business in addition to the individual seafarer or crew. The following table 1. describes precisely who can benefit from crew welfare. As we can see, those are not only the seafarers but also the company and the industry. The welfare of crew and the job satisfaction are factors that can affect seafarer's decision to stay in the shipping sector and thus, the availability and the retention of quality seafarers are up to now serious issues that should be given attention. (Progoulaki et al., 2013)

Figure 1. Who can benefit from crew well being

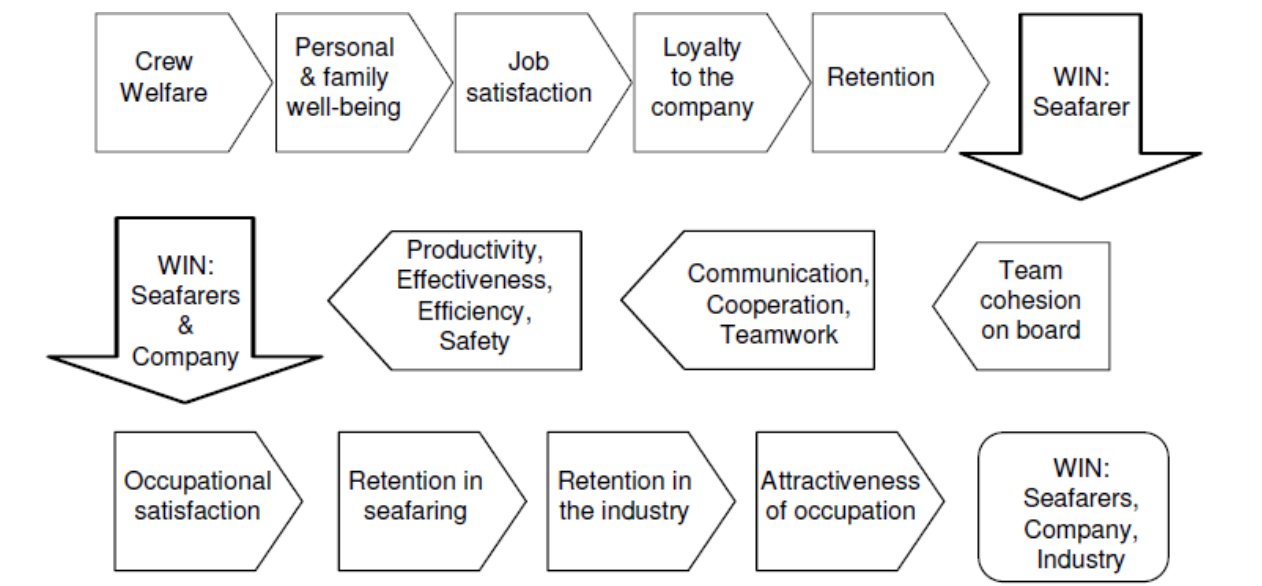


Figure 1 Who can benefit from crew well being Progoulaki, M., Katradi, A., & Theotokas, I. (2014). *Promoting and Developing Seafarers' Welfare under the Maritime Labour Convention: p. 5 (figure 1.)*

Chapter 2: International Organization and Conventions

At this chapter, we will refer to key Organizations and Conventions that marked the shipping industry as well as past Conventions that led to the formation of MLC 2006.

2.1 IMO – the International Maritime Organization

The International Maritime Organization is the United Nations specialized agency responsible for the safety and security of shipping and for the prevention of marine and atmospheric pollution by ships. It was established in Geneva in 1948 after the adoption of an international convention at a United Nations conference.

IMO came into force ten years later, meeting for the first time in 1959. Its original name was IMCO - Intergovernmental Maritime Consultative Organization – and it changed in 1982 to IMO.

The Organization has 175 Member States, 50 Conventions and Protocols and its headquarter is in London, United Kingdom. The main purposes of IMO is to provide an efficient cooperation among Governments relating to technical matters affecting shipping engaged in international trade including legal matters, maritime safety and prevention of marine pollution of ships.

By these key goals, four Conventions have been put in place related to safety in ships, seafarer training, practices for pollution prevention and laws for maritime labour.

These four pillars are the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW), International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) and Maritime Labour Convention (MLC). Below are details each of the four pillars:

2.1.1 SOLAS - International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea

SOLAS is regarded to be the most important of all international Conventions since its main concern is crew and personnel safety in ships.

It has witnessed various versions over the years with original action in 1914 in response to the sinking of Titanic, later in 1929, 1948 and 1960. The latest version

was introduced in 1974 including 'the tacit acceptance procedure' which meant that SOLAS amendments could now be implemented in a much shorter period than before. As a result, the Convention has been updated and amended on several occasions and the Convention in force today is referred as SOLAS 1974.

The main objective of the SOLAS Convention is to specify minimum safety standards for ships travelling in international waters. The current SOLAS Convention consists of 14 Chapters with general obligations which specify the minimum safety standards mentioned above. In particular, these chapters refer to general provisions, construction of ships, fire protection, life-saving appliances, radiocommunications, safety of navigation, carriage of cargoes and dangerous goods, nuclear ships, safety measures for high-speed craft, measures for maritime safety and security, safety measures for bulk carriers, verification of compliance and safety measures for ships operating in polar waters. Flag States should ensure that ships under their flag comply with its requirements and prove it through a number of certificates prescribed in the Convention.

The SOLAS Convention is regularly updated and amended following the changing needs, technologies, and risks of the maritime industry.

2.1.2 STCW - International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers

The STCW was adopted in 1978 at the IMO conference in London and entered into force in 1984. It was the first to establish basic requirements on training, certification and watchkeeping for seafarers on an international level. Through this convention it is certified that a person is able to recognise safety hazards at sea and know how to react in an emergency situation. Also, main purpose was to curb the large-scale patent fraud that had spreading particularly in the Far East countries.

The provisions of the STCW shall apply to seafarers, shipowners, shipowners' agents and educational institutions and national maritime administrations. All these members have a common goal, the smooth operation of the ship and thus the maintenance of a safe marine environment.

Subsequently, there have been changes to the above contract twice. The first was in 1995 when the IMO undertook a comprehensive revision of STCW (7 July 1995) to update the Convention and address many unclear phrases, which resulted in different interpretations.

There were major revisions to the STCW Convention at a conference in Manila in the Philippines in 2010. The amendments were intended to ensure that the standards remain relevant so that seafarers can continue to maintain their professional skills, but also to take into account new technologies and technical developments that require new responsibilities on board ship.

2.1.3 MARPOL - International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships

The International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) is the primary international convention covering prevention of pollution of the marine environment caused by vessels due to their shipping operations and accidents occurred at sea.

The MARPOL Convention was adopted on 2 November 1973 at the International Conference on Marine Pollution held in London, with the participation of 77 Member States. The 1978 Protocol was adopted in response to a series of tanker accidents in 1976-1977.

MARPOL has no geographical limitations and applies to all maritime areas, as it does not refer to maritime areas but to ships. The Convention includes some basic regulations aimed at preventing and minimizing pollution from ships. These are regulations to prevent: pollution from oil, pollution from sewage and waste from ships and the control of pollution from hazardous liquid substances in bulk. MARPOL was updated with amendments over the years.

2.1.4 MLC - Maritime Labour Convention

MLC is the fourth pillar of IMO's Conventions. It sets out minimum standards for seafarers to work on a ship, addresses conditions of employment, accommodation, recreational facilities, food and catering, medical cover, welfare, social security and provisions of complaint procedures and inspections of foreign ship which will be further analysed in the following chapter.

2.2 The ILO and How it works

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is a tripartite United Nations agency, founded in 1919 with headquarters at Geneva, Switzerland. It focuses on establishing labour standards, developing policies and promoting social justice as evidenced by its mission statement that social justice is essential to universal and lasting peace.

It is the first and oldest specialised agency of the UN, established in 1919 in accordance with part XIII "Labour" with the treaty of Versailles and other Part Treaties. It consist of 187 members in total, bringing together governments, employers and workers, giving the chance to express their views and reflect those in labour standards, policies and programmes.

Unlike the other UN organizations, the ILO is differentiated by having a tripartite governing structure, meaning that the government, along with employers and all men and women workers are equally entitled to share their views, fostering social dialogue in action. It makes sure that the ILO's labor regulations, policies, and programs closely reflect the opinions of the social partners.

The Conventions and Recommendations are instruments created by the ILO to meet the purpose of its Organisation – establishing international labour standards, while all Member States are invited to participate and attend. Conventions are international treaties or agreements intended to be binding on member States that ratify or accept the standards, while Recommendations are statements of good practice or provide additional guidance on specific provisions contained in a convention. They are not legally binding and its intention is to provide guidance and practices to turn them into

actions. In order to ensure that countries implement the Conventions they ratify, the ILO monitors and examines regularly the application of labour standards through supervisory procedures and when any problem occurs it seeks to promote social dialogue and technical assistance to come to a resolution. Other activities that the ILO is involved to, are undertaking seminars of particular topics covered and creating guidelines and codes of practice related to the labour industry.

The International Labor Conference (I.L.C.), is a legislative organ of the I.L.O., often called as international parliament of labour and it is held annually in Geneva, Switzerland. An important function of the I.L.C is ensuring that international labour standards, its procedures and policies are crafted and adopted in the form of Convention or a non – legally binding Recommendation. Furthermore, it is responsible for the supervision of the application of the Conventions and Recommendations through examination of the reports submitted by the governments of all member States. Those reports describe in details their compliance with obligations arising out of ratified Conventions, and their law and practice in respect of Conventions and Recommendation. It functions as well as an open forum for the discussion of social and labour issues of concern and approves the programs and budget of the Organization, financed by member States. Each member State nominates their own representatives to participate in the decision making of the Conference and they have equal rights to freely express their viewpoints and vote as they wish. The delegation consist of two government representatives, a worker representative and an employer representative and their respective advisers. Many of the government representatives serve as cabinet ministers accounting for labor issues in their respective nations. There are some cases where the diversity of the opinions can be contradictory, as workers and employers can vote against their government representative, although this has not enabled to form a decision to be made by large majorities or even unanimously.

The Governing Body (GB) is the executive body of the International Labour Organization. It is responsible for decisions related on I.L.O. policy, for setting the budget of the Organization (submitted to the Conference), for preparing the agenda of the I.L.C. and the election of the Director – General, the leader of the International

labour Office. It meets every three years at Geneva and it is composed of 56 members and 66 deputy members.

The International Labour Office is the permanent secretariat of the International Labour Organization. It is responsible for the overall activities of the Organization, under the guidance of the Governing Body and under the leadership of the Director – General, elected by the GB.

Special mention should be given at nowadays' ILO's Decent Work agenda, which aims to reduce poverty and achieve a fair globalization stressing out that decent work among with employment creation, social protection, rights at work, and social dialogue are key elements to achieve sustainable, inclusive economic growth, and eliminate poverty.

2.2 The involvement of ILO in crew wellbeing over the years

Seamen's Welfare in Ports Recommendation, 1936 (No. 48) and Seafarers' Welfare Recommendation, 1970 (No. 138).

The need to take responsibility and actions for the special needs of seafarers had been identified even since ILO's inception in 1919. The ILO founders noticed even back then the need to take responsibility for the welfare and wellbeing of all workers, and particularly those such as seafarers who often work outside of their home countries. Forty two ILO maritime Conventions and Recommendations were adopted and were complemented by numerous instruments, codes of practice and guidelines addressing maritime labour issues as the organization already understood the need for guidelines regarding seafarer's welfare. There are two recommendations by ILO that focuses on the wellbeing of seafarers, adopted at 1936 and 1970, which will be further discussed at this chapter.

2.2.1 Seamen's Welfare in Ports Recommendation, 1936 (No. 48)

The first Recommendation concerns the Promotion of Seamen's Welfare in Ports (No. 48), adopted in 1936 and it is the very first ILO involvement in seafarers' welfare.

According to the preamble, the emphasis has been given on special help and protection of seamen in ports as well as understanding cultural differences and adopting forms of action, in a manner which draws no distinction of race between seamen.

Furthermore, acknowledging the fact that, “*seamen are frequently deprived for long periods of the advantages of family life and may be exposed while in ports, particularly in foreign countries, to special dangers and difficulties*”, and considering that there is an absence of spare time to enhance the welfare and protect the health of seafarers, the Conference made several suggestions for the advancement of seafarers' welfare at ports, which each Member of ILO is required to be aware of.

Apart from the preamble, the said Recommendation has been divided into seven (7) parts:

1. General Organisation

The aim is on creating a recognized body, comprised by representatives of ship-owners, seafarers, national and local authorities in order to achieve the collection of valuable information and suggestions on the conditions for seamen in the port, in association with concerned organizations and the consular authorities of maritime States.

Competent departments, authorities and associations not only should be advised on adapting and coordinating measures of improving the conditions for seaman at ports but also should collaborate with other competent bodies to achieve such measures.

Moreover, it is advisable each Government of the maritime State to keep in touch with the International Labour Office and provide all the useful information on the promotion of seafarer's welfare in ports based on their experience, to enable the Office to assist and coordinate their actions.

2. Regulation

At this part, particular attention is concentrated on protecting seafarers from exploitation whilst ashore.

The exposure of seafarers to dangers in the docks and in certain establishments led to the need of regulations and laws to be followed in order to prioritize their safety.

Particular attention was given to:

- the regulation of the sale of intoxicating liquor and the strict supervision when necessary of establishments in the harbor area where there is sale of alcohol (coffee shops, hostels, lodging houses)
- preventing intoxicating liquor or narcotics being brought on board by the joint supervision of masters and public authorities, of persons visiting the ships
- the sale and use of narcotics which is limited by including it on international agreements
- the restriction of the entry into the docks and harbor area of unauthorized people and fencing off dock areas whilst adding barriers on dangerous areas of docks, the provision of sufficient lighting of signposts for docks and approaches.
- the presence of police forces, well trained and equipped to guard the harbor area
- protection of seafarers by effective co-operation between consuls and national authorities

3. Health

Applying suitable measures to make sure that all seafarers, irrespective of their nationality, are well informed about diseases which they are exposed to and preventing from exposure such as tuberculosis, tropical and venereal diseases.

Measures regarding the availability of treatment facilities for those who are suffering from diseases and providing free and continued treatment, admission to clinics and hospitals in ports with easy access, irrespective of nationality or religious belief.

4. Accommodation and Recreation

At this part, reference was made to providing recreational and sporting facilities. In particular, certain arrangements should be made for the material and general assistance of seamen while in port, including the provision of seafarers' hostel, satisfactory enough for their needs, on a reasonable price as well as the provision of recreation rooms including libraries, canteens and game rooms. Ship's sports club should also be organised when possible, excursions or healthy recreations and sports.

5. Savings and Remittance of wages

In order to protect seafarers on foreign countries from malicious transactions by depositing or remitting their wages, a simple and safe system should be applied with the guidance of reliable staff such as consuls, shipowner's agents and private institutions.

At the time of embarkation or during the voyage, a system of enabling seafarers to remit if they wish, a proportion of their wages at regular intervals to their families should be instituted or made of more general application.

6. Information for seamen

Appropriate information should be given among seafarers in order above recommendations to be successful. Furthermore, the importance of publicity depends on the public authorities, the bodies (part I), the competent associations assisted by the ship's officers and doctors and by ship's sports clubs.

The term “publicity” includes among others:

- The distribution of pamphlets on a suitable language in order such information to be clearly understood by everyone regarding the available facilities for seafarers in the ports of call or in the next forecoming calls which the ship is bound.
- The creation of information offices which could be shipping offices staffed by personnel capable of giving appropriate guidance and useful information to seafarers. Those offices are based mostly at large ports and should be easily accessible and available for each and every seafarer in need.
- The publication of articles periodically of general and educational topic to be read by the seafarers as well as the importance of including useful information for the physical well-being and general protection of seafarer in noticeable place or in documents carried by seamen such as seamen’s books and discharge books.
- Giving adequate information regarding the prices of visiting places of interest and entertainment and the tariffs of local transportation.

7. Equality of treatment

In the spirit of international solidarity, organisations, governments and authorities, responsible for handling the funds for the welfare of seafarers, should not discriminate any nationality and should act with care and generously towards them.

2.2.2 Seafarers' Welfare Recommendation, 1970 (No. 138)

Another ILO Recommendation (No. 138) was adopted in 1970 concerning Seafarers’ Welfare at Sea and in Port. The ILO points out at its preamble that the shipping industry is not a static field, on the contrary, it evolves and it changes continuously whereas it also pays close attention on the need for continuing development for the provision of welfare facilities both in port and on board ship. The ILO understands the importance of expertise in the shipping industry as well the role of statutory welfare bodies and voluntary organisations.

It is broader in scope and it covers the following provisions (in the form of Recommendation) to be considered by the members with regard to seafarer's welfare at sea and port:

1. Organization and Financing of Welfare Activities

The changes in the needs of seafarers resulting from operational and technical developments in the shipping industry have led to the Recommendation that welfare schemes should be well organized, evaluated frequently and supported by proper funding on a regular basis.

The national, regional and port welfare boards should be responsible for surveying the needs of seafarers and the proper assistance and co-ordination of welfare activities. Such boards should be represented by delegates of shipowners, seafarers, competent authorities, voluntary organisations and concerned social bodies. Consuls and local representatives of foreign welfare organisations should be linked with the work of regional and port welfare boards.

Furthermore, there should be training courses on board for officers and ratings to improve the provision of welfare services and materials and instructions in the organization of welfare activities. Voluntary workers as well as skilled employees with technical knowledge should be present full time in the operations's welfare facilities.

With a view to the accumulation of economic and other resources and avoid duplication and where a large number of seafarers of different ethnicities require facilities in a particular port, there should be close cooperation between the competent authorities/bodies of the countries of origin of the seafarers and of the flag States with the respective bodies of the country in which the port is located.

2. Accommodation in Ports

The accommodations of seafarers such as hostels and hotels in ports of interest should be charged in a reasonable price and should be well maintained, equivalent to those found in a good-class hotel located away from the docks and on a decent

environment. Special provision should also be made for hosting the family members of the seafarer when deemed necessary.

These accommodation facilities should be accessible to all seafarers, irrespective their cultural background, their beliefs and race, while in certain circumstances, special adjustments should be done on provided facilities for those who belong in different groups with different customs.

3. General Welfare Measures in Port and on Board Ship

General provisions to seafarers are recommended such as the granting of shore leave to officers and ratings after vessel's arrival in port when possible as well as providing adequate means of transportation in a reasonable price for seafarers in order to be able to commute from the port area to the city center.

Furthermore, extra effort should be made on maintaining seafarer's family bond. For that reason, provisions such as encouraging their leave at home of origin at reasonable intervals, permitting whenever possible the visit of the family, relatives and friends on board and even having the possibility of permitting seafarers' wives to accompany their husbands on an occasional voyage, should be taken into consideration.

Governments should also play their part on overcoming restrictions and to manage the free circulation among ships and welfare establishments of welfare materials such as books, newspapers, films and sport equipment. The projection of films, handicrafts and reading are other welfare activities that should be considered where possible on board ship.

4. Recreation Facilities in Port and on Board Ship

Special reference should be made on the healthy recreational activities of the seafarers in port and on board ship such as adopting hobbies, playing games, sports and exercising. Recreation rooms on centres should be established in all ports of interests giving access to all seafarers of all nationalities. Excursions to places where practicable and accessible should be encouraged with the guidance of the port welfare bodies. Suitable facilities at ports of visit, for example sport fields, should be used for organizing events such as football matches and other athletic activities

5. Information and Educational Facilities in Port and on Board Ship

Appropriate education, information and training of seafarers on topics that affect their welfare should be given into consideration along with the dissemination of booklets among seafarers, in foreign languages, regarding the plan of the city and port, the transport, welfare and educational facilities and places of worship at ports of call, accessible to the general public. In order to spend their leisure time productively, appropriate literature and assistance should be encouraged in pursuing their hobby of interest. Other educational aids and relevant courses on subjects that matters the seafarers should also be available on individual ships where appropriate.

2.3 The road to MLC (2006)

Reasons why there has been given special reference on these two Recommendations above (No. 48 and No. 138), is because it has gained widespread acceptance and significantly guided administrations on how to provide and organise welfare services for seafarers, despite the fact that it is not mandatory to be adopted by Member States. In addition, these instruments have been a pillar for the following years of adopting ILO Conventions and Recommendations accomplishing a considerable achievement for the protection of the seafarers and the maritime industry. Both instruments and many other subjects related to seafarers' welfare and wellbeing have now been superseded and covered by relevant provisions of the MLC – Maritime Labor Convention.

On the other hand, Ship owners' and Seafarers' representatives at the Joint Maritime Commission (JMC)⁷ 2001, held in Geneva, expressed their concern on the review of relevant ILO maritime instruments. The main issue was that these international standards, although there were no doubts regarding the validity of the existing labour standards, still had room for changes as they did not have yet sufficient impact on the working and living conditions experienced by seafarers. The relevant Conventions, many of which dealt with a single issue, were unevenly ratified and even more unevenly implemented and enforced. Another challenge was that certain countries

⁷ The Joint Maritime Commission (JMC) is a bipartite standing body that provides advice to the Governing Body on maritime questions including standard setting for the shipping industry. https://www.ilo.org/global/docs/WCMS_162320/lang--en/index.htm

faced barriers in ratifying them as there was insufficient legal mechanisms to provide or rapid changes to their standards to keep pace with developments in the shipping industry, while those standards were in excessive details, set out in complex and uncoordinated. As a result, the member states found themselves uninterested on ratifying, showing that relevant ILO instruments had significantly less impact than other widely ratified Conventions in the maritime sector (i.e. S.O.L.A.S., S.T.C.W., and MAR.POL at that time) addressing the areas of safety at sea and protection of maritime environment. There was clearly a need for radical change which was voiced out by during the 2001 J.M.C. convention and proceeded to offer a draft of the eight preferred solutions of the seafarers and shipowners, laying the foundation for the discussions that lead to the elaboration, negotiation, and adoption of what was to become the MLC 2006. (McConnell, et al, 2011)

2.4 The MLC and How it works

The Maritime Labor Convention (MLC 2006)

The Maritime Labor Convention (MLC) 2006, was adopted by ILO in February 2006 by the 94th (Maritime) Session of the International Labour Conference (ILC), and came into effect on August 2013, a year after the ratification of the minimum number of 30 countries - member states, representing at least 33 per cent of the world gross tonnage of ships. Being under the umbrella of the I.L.O., it maintains its tripartite form of organization and particularly, it encourages consultation between the national social partners, the seafarers' and shipowners' organisations in matters related to implementation and compliance with the Convention, within a country concerned.

It is the 4th pillar of the international regulatory regime for quality shipping and it complements the three key maritime conventions, SOLAS, MARPOL, STCW (Dolumbia-Henry et al., 2006).

The MLC 2006 is of vital importance as it covers two main purposes:

- a) First, to ensure comprehensive worldwide protection of seafarers' rights, in a consistent form with the rapidly developing and globalized industry.
- b) In order to protect countries and shipowners from the unfair competition of substandard ships, the second purpose is to establish a "level playing field" for

those countries who are committed to providing decent conditions of work and living conditions for seafarers.

In other words, it contains the rights and protection of seafarers at work (decent working conditions) and creates conditions of fair competition for shipowners. It aims to be globally applicable and updatable, easily understandable and uniformly enforced.

The Convention contains comprehensive set of global standards, setting out the rights and obligations as well as technical minimum standards for seafarers' working and living condition, covering all aspects of decent work in the maritime sector. It consolidates existing maritime labour instruments, Conventions and Recommendations, as well as fundamental principles of other international labour Conventions, into a coherent single Convention with a different format, which is updated to modern conditions. According to Dr. Cleopatra Doumbia-Henry, president of World Maritime University (WMU), as of 31 March of 2022, the convention has been ratified by 101 states, which represents more than 90 per cent of global shipping.

The structure of the Convention

The Convention consists of three different parts, the Articles, The Regulation and the Code, but are all related between them.

The 16 Articles of the Convention along with the Regulations concern provisions on the core right and principles and the basic obligations of Members committed to the Convention.

The Regulations are complemented by a more detailed Code, comprised of Part A (mandatory Standards) and Part B (non-mandatory Guidelines).

The Code gives detailed information about the implementation of the Regulations. Following the Article XV of the Convention, the code can be amended through a simplified procedure but modifications to it should be remained according to the general scope of the Articles and Regulations.

The convention uses a “vertical integrated” format which means that the provisions are all arranged by subject thus a title includes Regulations, following the Standards and finally the Guidelines.

The Regulations and the code are organized into general areas under five Titles:

Title 1: Minimum requirements for seafarers to work on a ship

1. Minimum age, in order to ensure that no-under age persons work on board a ship.
2. Medical certificate, to ensure that all seafarers are medically fit to perform their duties on board a ship
3. Training and qualifications, in order to ensure that they are qualified to carry out their duties on board ship.
4. Recruitment and placement, to make sure that seafarers have access to an efficient and well-regulated recruitment and placement system.

Title 2: Seafarer’s employment agreement

1. Contract of Employment, all seafarers shall have fair employment agreement
2. Wages, to ensure that they are fully paid for their provided services
3. Hours of work and hours of rest, to ensure that they have regulated hours of work or rest (establish maximum hours of work or minimum hours of rest over given periods).
4. Entitlement to leave, to make sure all seafarers have adequate leave, by providing paid annual leave and granting shore leave when under appropriate conditions.
5. Repatriation, to ensure that all seafarers can return to their home country, with no cost to themselves.
6. Seafarer’s compensation for the ship’s loss or foundering, so that the seafarers are compensated adequately if the ship is lost or foundered.
7. Manning levels, to ensure that on board staff is sufficient for the safe, efficient and secure operation of the ship, while considering certain issues such as fatigue and the nature and conditions of the voyage.

8. Career and skill development and opportunities for seafarers' employment, to promote the development of their career and skill and greater employment opportunities.

Title 3: Accommodation, recreational facilities, food and catering

1. Accommodation and recreational facilities, to ensure that the accommodation and recreational facilities on board are adequate, consistent with promoting the seafarers' health and well-being.
2. Food and catering, so to ensure that seafarers have access to good quality food and water, of appropriate quality and quantity, nutritional value and free of charge.

Title 4: Health protection, medical care, welfare and social security protection

The welfare provisions of the MLC are enshrined as a right of all seafarers under Article IV of the Convention, which states that "Every Seafarer has a right to decent working and living condition on board ship and health protection, medical care, welfare measures and other forms of social protection." Those rights are listed below:

1. Medical care on board and ashore, to ensure protection of the health of seafarers and provide medical access while on board and ashore
2. Shipowners' liability, to ensure that seafarers are protected from the financial consequences of sickness, injury or death occurring while serving under seafarers' employment agreement.
3. Health and safety protection and accident prevention, to ensure all seafarers' work environment is safe and hygienic.
4. Access to shore based welfare facilities and services, in order secure seafarers' health and well being.
5. Social security, so that all seafarers, including their dependants, provided for their national law, shall have access to social security protection.

Title 5: Compliance and enforcement

1. Flag State responsibilities. Each Member implements its responsibilities with respect to the ship that fly its flag and shall establish an effective system for the inspection and certification of industry's working and living conditions on ships.

The inspections or the issuance of the certification can be authorized by competent and independent public institutions, the flag State or other related organizations, under the sole responsibility of the Member.

The Maritime Labour Certificate is complemented by a Declaration of Maritime Labour Compliance (DMLC), attached to the maritime labour certificate, including measures for ongoing compliance. The Maritime Labour Certificate is issued to a ship for a period not exceeding five years and is subject to an intermediate inspection.

The Certificate and Declaration constitute prima facie evidence that the ship has been duly inspected by the Member whose flag it flies and that the requirements of this Convention relating to the working and living conditions of seafarers have been complied with to the extent that so certified.

Below are the following working and living conditions of seafarers that must be inspected by the flag State and must be approved in order to certify a ship:

- ✓ Minimum age
- ✓ Medical certification
- ✓ Qualifications of seafarers
- ✓ Seafarers' labour contracts
- ✓ Use of any licensed or certified or regulated private recruitment and placement service
- ✓ Hours of work or rest
- ✓ Manning levels for the vessel
- ✓ Accommodation and on board recreational facilities
- ✓ Food and catering

- ✓ Health and safety and accident prevention
 - ✓ On board medical care
 - ✓ On board complaint procedures
 - ✓ Payment of wages
 - ✓ Financial security for repatriation
 - ✓ Financial security relating to ship owners' liability
2. Port State responsibilities, to enable each Member to carry out its responsibilities under this Convention regarding international cooperation in the implementation and enforcement of the Convention standards on foreign ships
- Furthermore, a seafarer is entitled to report a complaint where there is noticed a breach of the requirements of this Convention (including seafarers' rights), to an authorized officer in the port at which the seafarer's ship has called.
3. Labor-supplying responsibilities, to ensure the effectiveness of implementing each Members' obligations under this Convention with respect to the recruitment and placement of seafarers and their social protection.

2.5 Welfare aspects of seafarers under the MLC 2006

The MLC outlines primarily comprehensive set of basic maritime labour principles and rights as well as ILO fundamental rights and provides a legal framework to address issues related to safety, security and physiological, needs of seafarers. Crew welfare aspects are addressed not only under Title 4, where there is a specific reference to "welfare" in the title, but also throughout the sections of MLC. Issues such as hours of work or rest, payment of wages, minimum age, etc. are included in provisions relating to welfare. Furthermore, under article V and title 5, there is provision of enforcement and compliance stipulating that ships of 500 gross tonnage or over must be inspected by flag States (either from government inspectors or authorized recognized organisations) and are required to carry a Maritime Labour Certificate as evidence that working and living conditions of seafarers at ships have been aligned with the requirements of national law, regulations, measures adopted to

implement the Convention. Port State Control (PSC) inspections as well play an important role in enforcing the standards of seafarers' welfare entitlements. The unifying of previous Conventions into one; by creating the MLC 2006, in clear, understandable language, expanded seafarers' knowledge regarding their rights and of remedies available, allowing them to make complaints both on board and ashore when working condition are not met. It improved enforcement of working and living conditions and gives a better understanding of the overall responsibility of the shipowner towards the seafarer. It is also vital for the shipping community and has forced many stakeholders in maritime industry to take actions and comply with international Conventions in order to protect their reputation and make their business competitive.

Chapter 3: Greek shipping and Filipino seafarers

At this chapter will provide a brief historical background on both countries, Greece and the Philippines, with an emphasis on their connection with shipping. Then, we will discuss how Greek shipping managed to be the worlds' leading country and we will present reasons why the Philippines – the largest supplier-country of seafarers globally, are preferred by foreign and Greek shipowners to work with them on board.

3.1 The Greek shipping – historical review

Greece has unquestionably always been considered a maritime nation by tradition, as shipping – their oldest form of occupation, has been a key component of the Greeks' economic activity since ancient times.

The geographical position of the region at the crossroads of the ancient sea routes of the eastern Mediterranean, the numerous islands and the proximity to other advanced civilizations contributed to the formation of the naval character of the Greek nation at an early stage.

In no time, they managed to prevail the region's maritime trade, gradually expanding it along the shores of the Mediterranean to Egypt, Phoenicia, Asia Minor, the Black Sea, and establishing colonies. Goods such as pottery, gold and copper objects existed between the Greek mainland and islands as evident that despite that such objects were

far away from their country of provenance, ancient Greece had ever since a wide-ranging network of shipping transport and trade.

The bravery of the ancient Greek navy was primarily displayed in naval battles during the Persian wars, the Delian League era and the Peloponnesian war. On the centuries that followed, Greeks had a significant role in shipping during the Byzantine Empire's existence as well as carrying out a large part of the marine trade of the Roman Empire.

Great geopolitical shifts played important role in the developments in the shipping sector and particularly in Europe, affecting Greece as well, such as the American and French Revolutions, the Napoleonic Wars, the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and restrictions in Egypt that closed their markets to foreigners. The Greek grain merchants in London and Odessa lost access to their traditional grain suppliers and markets and, rather than close, they seized the chance to invest in merchant fleets of steamships, and specialized in tramp shipping.

During the Ottoman empire, (1300-1839) and the Byzantine period - 330AD until the fall of Constantinople at 1453, the Greeks continued to be involved and play a major role in shipping industry where Greek ships could be spotted especially in the ports of the eastern Mediterranean. During the 16th century the Greeks noticed an increasing need of grain and expanded their maritime activities towards Western Europe, taking advantage of the market and bringing considerable fortunes to them. Also, they traded with the Balkans by supplying raw materials and managed to distribute the goods to the final markets and control the sea trade in the region, assuming the role of shipping agents.

Greek merchant shipping managed to displace the Western naval powers because of the Anglo-French wars, which led to the reduction of their trade, and the sailing of Greek ships under the protection of the Russian Empire in many cases. In the eastern Mediterranean, the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in 1922 in three Russo-Turkish wars was crucial for occupied Greece. The Treaty of Kuchuk-Kainarji, signed in 1774, placed new terms for maritime trade in the Black Sea and the Aegean, whose waters Greek ship-owners had previously sailed with vessels flying the Ottoman flag. Following the treaty, Greek ships would sail under Russian or British flags on more

advantageous terms. Many of these boats were outfitted with cannons to resist the piracy threat that plagued the Mediterranean at the time.

Gradually, Greek sailors earned a lot of money and gained further knowledge and experience as they had to improve their ships and themselves in the war against pirates. The development of the Greek merchant fleet gave them confidence and success, while their contact with Western peoples awakened their national consciousness and made them feel free. The existence of a pool of trained sailors was to prove an invaluable asset when the Greek war of independence broke out, when the Greek merchant fleet became a formidable weapon of war against the large and heavy ships of the Ottoman fleet.

Traditionally, the inhabitants were heavily involved in maritime trade, particularly on the Aegean Sea, islands of Hydra, Spetses, Andros, Syros, Chios, Kasos, Psara, and Mykonos.

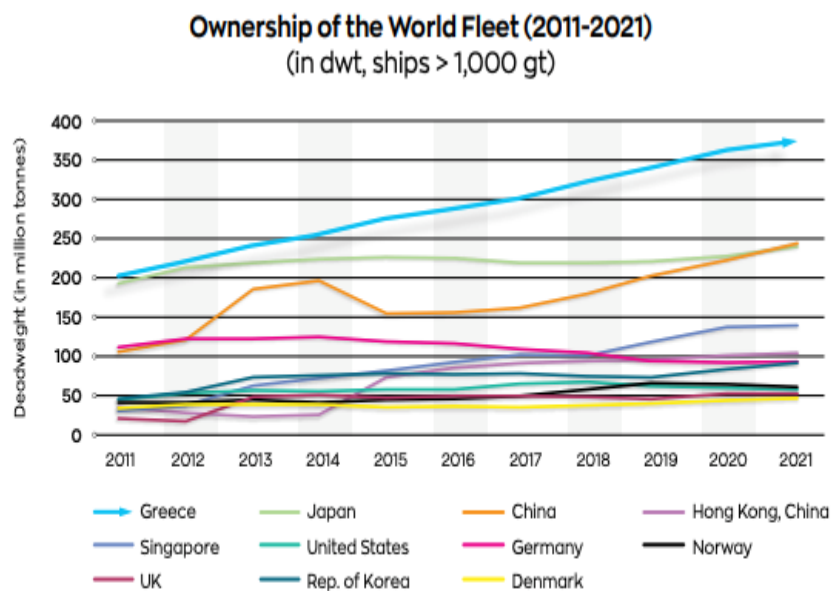
Moreover, the most prominent of the Greek cities that emerged as naval powers were those of western Greece, mainly Galaxidi and Missolonghi, but also Arta, Preveza, Paxos and Corfu.

The Second World War saw those Greek shipping companies operating in the Allied territories place their fleets under the control of British Merchant Shipping and suffer the same depredations and hardships.

After World War II the Greek government provided certain guarantees, allowing 100 Liberties and 7 T2 tankers to be delivered to Greek owners. The Greek-owned fleets were able to restore themselves under their national flag. As a result of the shifting dynamics, the Greek Merchant Marine service was established, and they became more firmly associated with their own national state. In the 30 years that followed, they reached the highest point in their long naval history, with nearly 5.000 ships of 52.000.000 gross tons ton in 1977 or 4.750 vessels of more than 54.000.000 gross tons in 1981, making them the largest fleet in the world.

3.2 The modern Greek Shipping

Greece is currently the world's leading shipping country (Figure 2), with Greek shipowners controlling approximately 21% of the world fleet in terms of tonnage (dwt) or 5,514 vessels at this moment⁸. Following tourism, Greek shipping is regarded the second largest contributor to the national economy. Based on the annual report of the Greek Shipowners' Association, the total capacity of the Greek-owned fleet increased by 45.8% compared to 2014, and even during the COVID-19 pandemic, from 2019 onwards, capacity rised by 7.4%.



Source: UNCTAD, *Review of Maritime Transport, 2011-2021*

Figure 2 Ownership of the World Fleet (2011-2021) (in dwt, ships > 1000gt)

As showed by below figure 3, shipowners are in control of:

- 31.78% of the world's oil tanker fleet
- 25.01% of the world's dry bulk fleet
- 22.35% of the world LNG fleet
- 15.60% of the world's chemical & petroleum products fleet
- 13.85% of the world LPG fleet
- 9.33% of the global container fleet, operating around the world.

⁸ EEE Calculations based on data from IHS Global Limited, March 2022

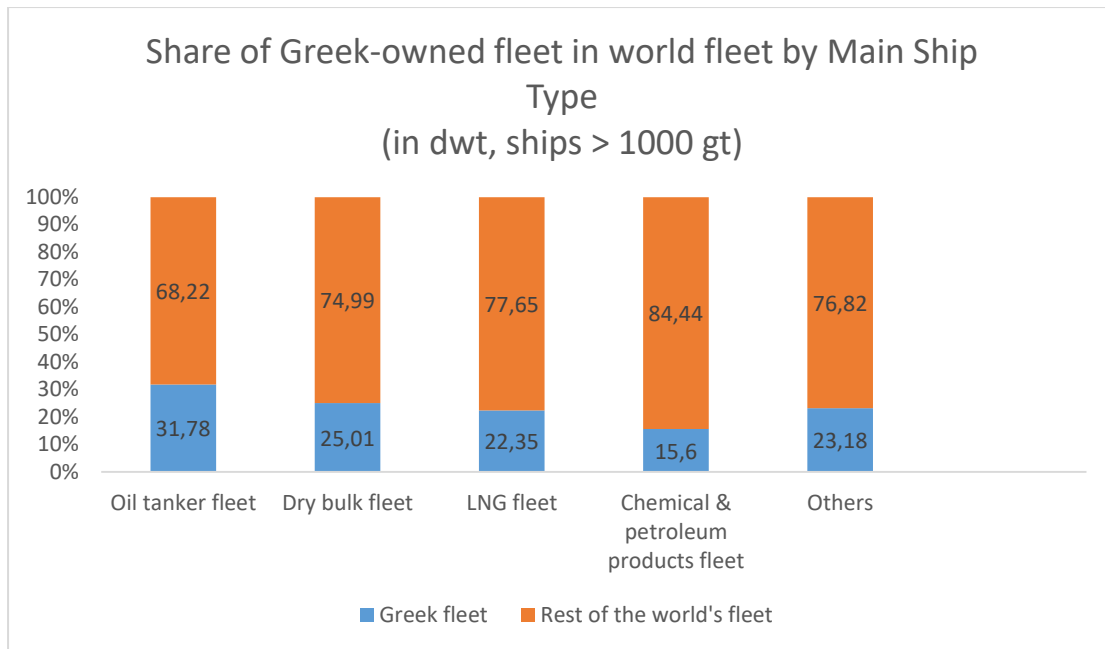
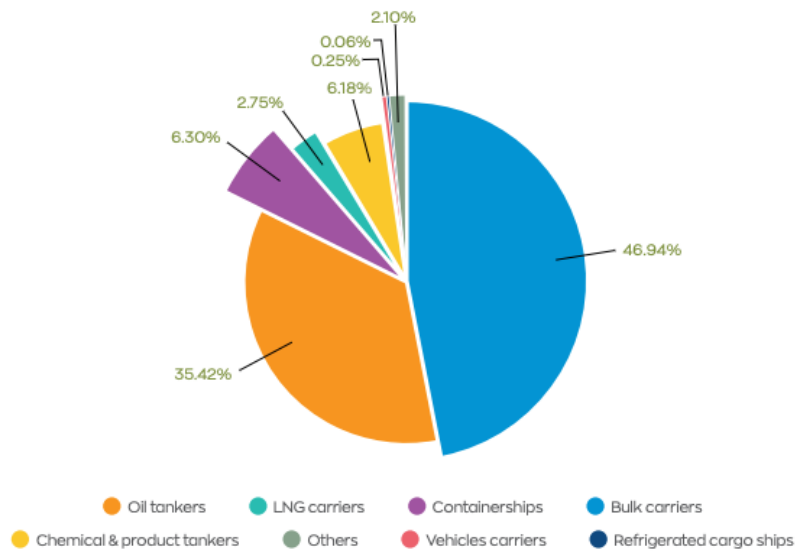


Figure 3 Share of Greek-owned fleet in world fleet by Main Ship Type (in dwt, ships > 1000 gt)

Source by IHS Global limited

The Greek-owned merchant fleet carries freight between third countries at over 98% of its capacity, making it the world's largest cross-border carrier. Greek shipping is mainly active in the bulk/tramp sector (as seen in figure 4), which is characterised by perfect competition: a very large number of private, mainly Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) operate globally in a competitive environment, with flexible and efficient administration and asset management, free access to a wealth of information and low entry and exit costs. Shipowners/operators in the bulk/tramp sector, carrying cargo on an ad hoc basis, are not in a position to influence the prices of the shipping market. As a general rule, the majority of ships owned by Greek nationalities are chartered under time charter party contracts. Charterers play a structural role, as they are the commercial managers of the ship and control the vessel's operating restrictions, such as the route, the type and quantity of cargo and the speed of the vessel, which in turn determine the carbon footprint of the ship during these charters.

Ship Type Analysis of the Greek-owned Fleet
(in dwt, ships > 1,000 gt)



Source: UGS calculations, based on data from IHS Global Limited, March 2022

Figure 4 Ship type Analysis of the Greek-owned Fleet (in dwt, ships > 1000 gt)

As presented by data of Union of Greek Shipowners (EEE), the average age of the Greek-controlled fleet (at 9.54 years) is below the global average of 10.28 years, resulting from continuous investments in green shipping, namely on energy-efficient ships and equipment friendly to the environment.

Greek shipping is regarded as the backbone of European shipping, as the country keeps increasing its percentage of the European Union (EU)-controlled fleet. Greek-owned fleet represents 59% of the EU-controlled fleet, of which more than 75% is active in the bulk/tramp sector. In other terms, more than a third of the Greek owned fleet or near 1706 vessels, fly an EU Member State flag.

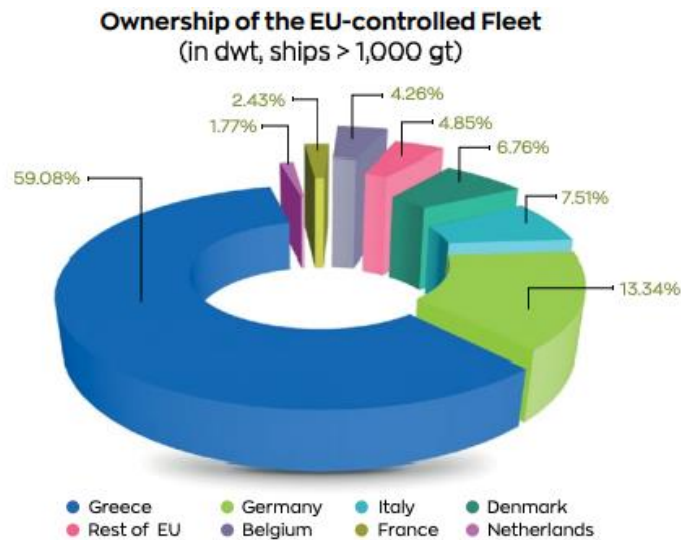


Figure 5 Ownership of the EU-controlled Fleet (in dwt, ships > 1000 gt)

Furthermore, the Greek fleet is among the safest in the world: Greece remains on the STCW (Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers) White List of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and on the White List of the Paris Memorandum of Understanding (Paris MoU) and the Tokyo Memorandum of Understanding (Tokyo MoU), while the Greek fleet is also one of the safest in the world, with 0.44% of the Greek merchant fleet (based on number of ships) and 0.50% (based on tonnage) involved in minor maritime accidents. As of 1.7.2021, Greece is included in the US Coast Guard's (USCG) QUALSHIP 21 List of Maritime Administrations.

In addition to the above, Greek shipowners have been particularly involved in participating welfare initiatives, with the Union of Greek Shipowners (UGS) being the only industry group in Greece to establish its own social welfare company, i.e. SYN-ENOSI.

On a national level, Greek shipping remains a strategic advantage, which is particularly important to the country's economy: Maritime transport contributes more than 3% of gross added value and comes up to almost 7% of gross domestic product (directly and indirectly), offering some 200,000 jobs, per the EEE report.

Shipping also offers significant net inflows to the Greek economy: A recent study concludes that the total contribution of the Greek shipping industry in the country,

including indirect and induced effects, exceeded € 11 billion in 2019 accounting for 6.6% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Following the pandemic virus outbreak of 2020, the inflows in Greek payments balance's marine transport in 2021 were not only higher than they were in 2019 but also the highest since records began in 2008, reaching 17 billion euros.

3.3 Nationalities of seafarers

3.3.1 Seafarer - supplying countries in 2021

According to BIMCO/ICS Seafarer Workforce Report, the total global supply of seafarers in 2021 reached at 1,892,720, an increase of workforce, in compared to 2015, where there was 1,647,494. Of these, 857,540 were officers, and 1,035,180 were ratings. The Philippines, the Russian Federation, Indonesia, China, and India were the five countries that supplied the most seafarers.

Asia ranked as world's largest pool of professionals working on ships, accounting for four of the top five countries supplying seafarers in 2021, which can be justified in the table below.

	All Seafarers	Officers	Ratings
1	Philippines	Philippines	Philippines
2	Russian Federation	Russian Federation	Russian Federation
3	Indonesia	China	Indonesia
4	China	India	China
5	India	Indonesia	India

Figure 6 Top five Seafarer supplying countries in 2021

Figure credits: RMT 2021, UNCTAD, based on ISF and BIMCO Seafarer Workforce Report 2021

UNCTAD'S (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development) review of Maritime Transport 2021, published on 18 November, revealed Asia as predominant continent in global maritime trade, strengthened in 2020 as it remained the largest seafarer supply region, it maintained a 41 per cent share of total goods loaded and increased its volume of goods charged.

As we can see in table 1, the five largest seafarer-supplying countries were the Philippines, which ranked first as the top provider of both officers and ratings - the skilled seafarers who carry out support work, Indonesia took third place for ratings and fifth for officers, China took the third place in terms of officers and fourth in terms of ratings, and India was fourth for officers and fifth for ratings.

The Russian Federation was the other non-Asian country in the top five which ranked second in the list after the Philippines. All of them represent the 44 per cent of the global human capital, working to facilitate the way we live.

As is clear from the numbers, 519,031 Filipino seafarers who were deployed in 2019 alone are estimated to have sent 6.5 billion USD to their home –country. The following year, 2020, the remittances coming from seafarers fell of 2.8 per cent providing an income of \$6.4 billion in 2020. This occurs at a time when the COVID-19 pandemic affected the crew change issue leaving hundreds of thousands of seafarers stranded at sea far beyond the end of their contract term. This depicts that despite the difficulties that the industry is facing, the Philippines and Asia in general remains strong in the game and plays a significant role in the industry as a seafarer – supplier region.

The major sources of seafarers are countries that offer low cost labour. The reason for the decline of seafarers from developed countries, and the increase of seafarers from poorer countries in the first place depends on the price of labour – their lower wages. For example, the average monthly wage of a first mate in U.K. is not the same or even close to what a Filipino first mate receives. Price, of course, is one of the main factors, but there are other factors that ultimately influence the selection of certain nationalities.

Some of these are:

- The current relationship between supply and demand,
- Maritime tradition
- Statistics of accidents and incident whilst on board,
- Training and the chance of education
- Loyalty and reliability,
- Distance of the ship (fleet) accommodation
- National restrictions,

- Trade unions and other protection of seafarers, etc.

3.4 Introduction to Philippine history

Pre-Spanish history

In ancient times the inhabitants of the Philippines were a diverse agglomeration of people who arrived in various waves of immigration from the Asian mainland and who maintained little contact with each other.

Long before the Spanish arrived in the Philippines, the communities in the archipelago have been trading with what is now called China, India, Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Its location next to continental Asia and along the border of the Pacific Ocean provided the archipelago's inhabitants the opportunity to interact and communicate with different groups of people.

Filipinos of the 15th century were engaged primarily in shifting cultivation, hunting, and fishing, according to later accounts.

India and Arabia have had a significant impact on the nation. By A.D. Islam had been established in the Sulu Archipelago, and it later extended to Mindanao and eventually, to the now capital of the country Manila, by 1565. In the midst of Islamic proselytism it was then when the Spanish arrived, introducing Christianity.

The Spanish occupation

The Spanish Colonial Period began with the arrival of the Spaniards in 1521 and ended in 1898—lasting a total of 333 years.

The first European to be known to have arrived in the Philippines was Ferdinand Magellan. On his voyage around the world, he landed in March 1521 and claimed property for the king of Spain. Unfortunately, he met an untimely death on the nearby island of Mactan. After several unfruitful expeditions, the first permanent settlement was established in Cebu in 1565. After defeating a local Muslim ruler, the Spanish set up their capital at Manila in 1571, and they named their new colony the Republic of the Philippines, to honor King Philip II of Spain. By the end of the 16th century most of the coastal and lowland areas from Luzon to northern Mindanao were under

Spanish control. Christianity was also given heavy emphasis during this period as soon they achieved nominal conversion to Roman Catholicism of all local inhabitants under Spanish rule. An exemption was the Muslims of Mindanao and Sulu, whom the Spaniards called Moro, were never fully subdued by Spain.

The American occupation and beyond

After Spain's defeat in the Spanish-American War, the Philippines was occupied by America in 1898 where the US Navy destroys Spanish fleet in Manila Bay. Spain cedes Philippines to US, which proclaims military rule. Then in 1941, there is the invasion and occupation by Japan and again, by America, after World War II in 1944 where US forces retake islands.

By 1946, the islands granted full independence and renamed Republic of the Philippines. The United States had ceded its sovereignty over the country, and elections were held to elect the first president of the independent republic.

Languages of the Philippines

Filipino was designated as the national language of the Philippines in 1937.

Filipinos typically grow up bilingual, and many even speak three languages: English, Tagalog and the indigenous language of their region.

Locals in various provinces speak approximately 181 languages, 131 of which are considered official languages, including Filipino and English.

3.5 Filipinos in maritime industry

The Philippines is regarded as the world's most important supplier, with an estimated one Filipino seafarer for every four people on board a ship at any given time. Among Asia region, the country took its lead in maritime business and trade continuing to be the largest provider of officers and ratings.

Like other island nations and archipelagos, the Philippines seems to have a long and historical affiliation with the sea, seeking not only for internal communication and transport, but also for trade and interaction with neighboring countries.

Given that they have a coastline that extends over 36,000 kilometers, it is not surprising that they have a natural affinity with the waters, whether as a source of food or as a means of sustaining their lives. Throughout the archipelago, and in almost all provinces of the country, one can find clusters of maritime industries. Ship operators, shipbuilders, ship repairers, fishermen and many others, all actively involved in the Philippines.

Filipino seafarers are, rightly, a source of pride for the country, not only in terms of their numbers, but also in terms of their quality and competitiveness.⁹

According to the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), since 1987 the Philippines remains the world's main supplier of seamen, making the country the manning capital of the world.

One of the biggest sources of income, comes from the remittances by the Overseas Filipino Workers, or OFWs¹⁰. A record-breaking of 34 billion USD in remittances from OFWs in 2021 alone represented 8.9% of the nation's GDP. One noteworthy category of OFWs comes from the maritime sector, which provides invaluable service to most maritime businesses globally as well as to their home land.

3.5.1 Reasons why Filipinos choose to work at ships.

There are various reasons why Filipinos choose seafaring as their profession and source of income, identifying mostly economic reasons for going to sea (Markkula 2018, 2021).

The high level of unemployment in the country along with the higher salary and benefit packages that offers by working on internationally trading ships, significantly

⁹ Philippine Maritime Industry Stakeholders -Lunch Forum
Speech by Koji Sekimizu (8 February 2012)
Secretary-General, International Maritime Organization

¹⁰ According to Overseas Workers Welfare Administration OWWA, OFW stands for Overseas Filipino Worker. It refers to the Filipinos who have left their home in the Philippines in order to work abroad and provide for their families

higher than most shore-based employment, makes seafaring a very appealing occupation. The reality is that the prevailing wage structure in the Philippines is one of the lowest in the region and many Filipinos cannot meet their obligations with their salaries based on their regular jobs, while at the same time there is uncertainty of regular and financially rewarding employment in their country.

Seeing that the government is unable to provide basic services to the majority of its population and the low rate of economic growth, many people become frustrated and choose to leave the country. They become productive citizens of other countries because they do not like the direction the economy is heading. Thus, they choose to leave the Philippines and seek opportunities abroad.

The country regularly produces great professionals who can excel in various fields of work, including the shipping industry, but they face limited number of jobs and career opportunities, forcing them to seek more vacancies and opportunities in foreign locations, where not only will they earn currency of higher value, but they will have the opportunity to pursue professional growth.

Another significant reason is so that they can save money and support financially their beloved ones. Being a family-oriented society, Filipinos put their family at the center of their lives, so their benefit is taken into consideration. Although working at ships might be tough, considering that the ship is both a working and living environment, they choose to be separated from their families in order to earn more and save money. With a good salary they are able to provide a good education for their children and support other members. The seafarers in the Philippines are regarded as wealthy people.

Around 229,000 workers are on board merchant shipping vessels around the world at any given time, according to the Department of Labor and Employment of the Philippines. Overall, Filipino seafarers accounted for more than 25% of the world's 1.5 million mariners, making them the single largest nationality bloc in the shipping sector.

It comes as no surprise that Filipino seafarers have made a name for themselves in this industry. The country is an archipelago, with local seafarers traveling long before Spanish galleons between Manila and Acapulco. However, the increase in the number of Filipino personnel at sea occurred during the oil crises in the 1970s, when the

world could no longer afford Western crews. The need for seafarers attracted Filipinos in the underprivileged provinces of their country to enroll in the local maritime schools. By 2013, 460,000 or so Filipino students had graduated from marine institutions annually.

Up to this moment, the nation has maintained its dominance as the world's top supplier of seafarers for tankers and sea vessels from other nations, most notably Denmark, Greece, Cyprus, Norway, Germany, the United States, Panama, the Bahamas, Jamaica, Liberia, Malta, Singapore and Japan.

More and more young Filipinos are attracted by the industry with primarily reason the monthly salaries that are exponentially higher than local job opportunities. While the average wage in the Philippines as of 2020, was approximately 45 thousand Philippine pesos or around 800 USD per month, the starting monthly salary of a Filipino seafarer working abroad is 900 USD. Male seafarers who work for international companies and make money and fortune promises to family and friends, are frequently praised as heroes in their provinces. There are numerous stories of Filipino seafarers who were able to retire after enrolling their kids to local schools and who used their wages to purchase expensive homes and vehicles. Despite the difficulties and isolation of working at sea, these became the common dreams of Filipino seafarers.

3.5.2 Why foreign shipowners prefer Filipino seafarers?

Given the vast Philippine coast line (twice the size of the United States and nearly three times more than China), the locals have a natural maritime instincts that place them at an advantage over other nationalities. Filipino seamen are recognized to be preferred by foreign shipowners for equally important traits, including commitment, discipline, flexibility, loyalty, English language fluency, adaptability, positive work mindset, law-abiding behavioral patterns, and problem-solving ability.

A publication of SAFETY4SEA 2011, explains some of the reasons why foreign ship owners, thus Greek shipowners prefer Filipino seafarers as follows:

1. Seafarers by Nature:

Philippines has vast coast line of 36,289 km, almost equal with Russia (37,653 km), but more than USA (19,924 km), UK (12,429 km), China (14,500 km) and France (4,668 km). As the Philippine archipelago is made up of 7,107 islands, they have natural mariner's instincts and always work cheerfully despite their months of separation from their families.

2. Hard-Working:

Their sense of duty to their families is the motivator to make sure hard work is put in so they can contribute to their families. Filipinos strive to do their best, valuing integrity and reputation. Filipino seafarers have more stamina and work physically more on board the ships at point where often they develop back injuries or hernia from heavy lifting.

3. Work for less Salaries:

The Philippines and generally most Asian countries have cheaper labour force in compared to EU countries for example.

4. Flexibility and highly trainable:

Filipino seafarers, willingly perform extra duties if necessary and often they are subjected to excessive working hours. Furthermore they are highly trainable and adapt to changing environment.

5. Attitude:

The Philippine Islands were a Spanish colony from 16th century. Mixed colonial influences have enabled Filipino seafarers to make friends easily with foreigners and their combined Asian and Hispanic cultures have turned them into the most lighthearted workers with positive attitude. They can easily get along with fellow crew members and value the seafarers life at sea.

It is worth to mention also that one of the reasons that the Philippines remain the highest provider of labour to international fleets is that its population has the ability to communicate effectively in English (Leggate and McConville 2002a).

Furthermore, the presence of Philippines Seafarers' Promotion Council (PSPC) contributed to the country to promote through marketing techniques a double

objective: ensuring high standards of maritime training and education producing seafarers of quality to recruiters, and on the other hand offering seafaring as a career path to its nationals (Leggate and McConville 2002b).

Lastly, another important factor of shipowners' decision on selecting seafarers from Asia to work on their ships is the increased use of 'open registers,' more commonly known as 'Flags of Convenience'. These flags allow shipowners to register ships with commercial flag-states, such as Panama, Liberia or Marshall Islands, to evade the stricter labor regulations of the countries in which their companies are based (DeSombre 2006). As a result, the global shipping industry has come to increasingly rely on cheaper and more flexible labor from countries such as the Philippines. These workers often have worse labor conditions and contracts than their colleagues from Europe or Japan, even when employed on the same ship.

The Secretary General of the International Maritime Organization, Efthimios E. Mitropoulos, stated in 2010 that Filipino seafarers are "unsung heroes" of an "unsung industry", namely shipping that carries "most of the world's trade in goods". Mitropoulos also added that "the international community should tribute to Filipino seafarers" and to the Philippines for their contributions to shipping and international maritime trade. The former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, as well encouraged Filipino youths to join the seafaring profession.

In addition, a European shipping Company with human resources agency in Manila, has been hiring the past decades (since 2004) exclusively Filipino crew to complement its tanker fleets. This can confirm that Filipinos over the years have established their presence in the global industry being the most sought-after suppliers in the maritime sector.

In fact since 2010, there is a day dedicated to Filipino seafarers to celebrate the importance of the contribution of the seafarer to world economy and civil society. The "Day of the Seafarer"¹¹ (which is celebrated every year at June 25), was introduced by International Maritime Organization for the first time in 2010 acknowledging that the worldwide commerce and economic system would not be the same without the

¹¹ The Day of the Seafarer was first celebrated in 2011, following its establishment by a resolution adopted by the Conference of Parties to the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW), 1978, held in Manila, Philippines, in June 2010, which adopted major revisions to the STCW Convention and Code.

presence of seafarers in the industry. At its first celebration, the character was mainly international, with many countries participating as a way to honor local shipping industries and their workers. The celebration quickly took on special significance in the Philippines, as one of the world's largest suppliers of shipping services. Figure 7 demonstrates the timeline that led to the celebration of Filipino seafarers.

<i>THE DAY OF THE FILIPINO SEAFARER TIMELINE</i>	
3000 B.C.	
First Maritime Trade Routes	The first maritime trade routes are created in the Arabian sea, to facilitate trade between India and parts of Africa.
1730s	
First Commercial Shipping Company	The earliest shipping company in history, The British Shipping Company, is established.
1948	
The International Maritime Organization	The International Maritime Organization is founded as an effort to consolidate efforts and provide training for seafarers around the world.
2011	
First Celebration	The first international commemoration of The Day of the Seafarer takes place.

Figure 7 The Day of the Filipino Seafarer timeline¹²

3.6 Filipinos on board Greek – owned ships and Greek flagged ships

An interesting study of I. Theotokas and M. Progoulaki (2006)¹³, sourced from the General secretariat of national shipping statistical service of Greece showed on table 1 and 2 the exact number of nationality of personnel working at Greek owned merchant ships and Greek flagged vessels. The statistics can confirm that even back at 2000s, from year 2000 to 2004, the Philippines was the main source of seafarer's labour and that it covers a large percentage of the crew of the Greek-owned and Greek-flagged fleet. It should be noted that the percentage of Filipinos on board Greek flagged

¹² <https://nationaltoday.com/the-day-of-the-filipino-seafarer/>

¹³ <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237674136>

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vessels increased during that 4 year period. In the case of Greek owned vessels, the percentages of Filipinos and Indians were extremely high, especially when compared to the percentage of Greek seafarers.

Table 1 Nationalities of seafarers employed on Greek flagged merchant ships (2000-2004)

Nationalities on Greek flagged ships	Number of seafarers 2004	Number of seafarers 2000
Greek	16.672	17.202
Filipinos	5.377	4.292
Pakistan	112	228
Indian	109	181
Indonesian	106	151
Sri Lankan	28	142
Bangladesh	0	15
Korean	0	5
Total	29.302	24.365

Source Theotokas and Progoulaki (2006)

Table 2 Nationalities of seafarers employed on Greek owned merchant ships (2000-2004)

Nationalities on Greek owned ships	Number of seafarers 2004	Number of seafarers 2000
Greek	1.225	1.248
Filipinos	1.155	724
Pakistan	671	466
Indian	388	403
Indonesian	9	24
Sri Lankan	1	2
Bangladesh	0	4
Korean	0	0
Total	3.449	2.871

Source Theotokas and Progoulaki (2006)

Furthermore, a survey among Greek seafarers and shipping companies shows that Filipinos are more preferred and considered as the most compatible nation to associate with Greek seafarers (Theotokas and Progoulaki 2007).

The below table indicates the total number of Greek and foreign seafarers working under Greek owned merchant ships of 100 GRT and over, under Greek flag and Greek flagged ships from year 2016 to 2020.

Table 3 Greek and foreign seafarers employed on Greek and Greek-owned merchant ships under foreign flag (2016 - 2020)

Years	Total	Greeks	Foreigners	Greeks %	Foreigners %
2016	21440	12163	9277	56,7	43,3
2018	20691	12042	8649	58,2	41,8
2020	15667	9322	6345	59,5	40,5
Average				58,1%	41,8%

Source by General secretariat of national shipping statistical service of Greece

Of the total of 1,072 vessels recorded on the day of the census 2020, 16,541 Greek and foreign seamen were employed. More specifically, 15,667 seamen were employed on the enumerated ships under Greek flag; 59.5% of the crew was Greek seamen while 40.5% were seamen with foreign nationality.¹⁴

The data also shows that from 2016 to 2020 there is a small drop each year of the percentage of foreign seafarers, while there is rise of percentage of Greek nationalities. The average of the percentage of Greeks and foreigners working either on Greek ships or on Greek flagged ships the past 3 years, is around 60% - 40%. More specifically, an average of 58,1% consist of Greek seafarers and 41,8% consist of foreign seafarers from years 2016 to 2020.

Chapter 4. Filipino seafarers' well-being and mental health

As explained on Chapter 1 regarding seafarers' challenges and stressors, particular care should be paid to the welfare and mental health. Research on the mental health of merchant seafarers has recently gained increasing attention on the particular framing of mental health as part of seafarers' well-being. On the other hand, up to now, the study on seafarers' mental health, especially of Filipino nationality, has drawn little attention, despite their well-established presence in the maritime labour market since the 1970s. The majority of the published material began after the peak of the maritime piracy crisis between 2009 and 2012, where a significant number of Filipino seafarers were attacked, or killed in hostage situations. (Abila SS, Acejo IL 2021).

¹⁴ Census of merchant ships and crews on the 20th of September 2020 retrieved by ELSTAT

Seafaring is not an easy job and is not always a positive experience especially for those struggling with homesickness. Being away for long periods of time and missing out important moments of their children growing up, being unable to be present on significant occasions are described as mental difficulties, which according to Guo et al. (2007, p. 135) might lead to psychological problems. To confront those feelings, many Filipinos use their religion for spiritual guidance and blessing (Dimayuga, 2008, p.85).

In the study of McVeigh and MacLachland (2019), the authors examined the perceptions and experiences of Filipino ratings towards stress, resilience and well-being in relation to 11 aspects. Those are referred to: workload, safety, social, support, salary, shore leave, signing on and off, ethnicity and culture, administration, inequality and optimization. Stress resulted as a very common and everyday experience of seafarers that is known to contribute to poor mental health. This finding is not new, but echoes a widespread view of seafarers' health where stress is considered not only an ongoing problem over the years, but a day to day reality (Abila SS, Acejo IL 2021).

Findings in Lefkowitz & Slade (2020) survey to determine rates and risk factors associated with mental health conditions in international seafarers, examining 1,572 seafarers from various ethnicities were of these: 25% had scores suggesting depression, 17% demonstrated anxiety, and 20% had suicidal thoughts. 621 of respondents was of Filipino nationality.

4.1 Well-being and impact of Covid-19

It is also of importance to mention how Covid-19 impacted in a negative way a large number of seafarers, including Filipinos who are already facing the consequences for their mental health. These negative consequences include dealing with prolonged stays on ships due to difficulties in changing crew caused by national travel restrictions and very few opportunities for shore leave when calling at ports.

According to two studies that demonstrate negative effect of the pandemic on seafarers' mental health (including stress, mental exhaustion, and depression due to

prolonged contracts working on ships), the majority of participants included Filipino seafarers. Particularly, out 671 respondents 32% were Filipinos. 15,4% said they were depressed almost daily, 21,9% expressed they were anxious almost every day and 73,3% stated that they were mentally exhausted.(Birgit Pauksztat et.al 2022) Furthermore, in another study, 7,7% of the 752 respondents were Filipinos. The majority of respondents report some negative effects of the pandemic related to their physical, social and economic well-being. These effects have a negative influence on health, work efficiency, safety on board and economic well-being of seafarers, particularly those who have not worked for prolonged period of time. (Slišković 2020).

During 2021 a global crew welfare questionnaire was conducted by SAFETY4SEA, asking 14.748 seafarers serving on board 1.241 ships. Namely, the majority of participants were by far seafarers from Philippines representing 48% of the sample. Next countries that followed was Ukraine, Greece and Russia. The highlight of the survey was that the question that marked the lowest satisfaction level was “Q39, My health and wellbeing have been affected by Covid-19”. More than half of the respondents (53,8%) agreed with the statement, showing that the seafarers have been deeply affected by Covid -19, despite the good spread of information on board regarding the pandemic. In addition, the most common complaint from seafarers was poor connection on the internet and communication with people ashore. The majority highlighted the need for mental support on board and shore leave, and raised the issue of finding ways to enhance mental, physical and social well-being (e.g. planning meetings on best resilience practices, improving recreational and food facilities, organizing on-board activities).

By the end of the survey the seafarers were able to express key areas for consideration, in an open feedback questions. Those items are given in a priority order:

- Free internet to enhance communication with families/friends (33,9%)
- Improvement of recreational facilities and gym equipment (10,1%)
- Human element issue (9,5%). There is an increased concern for both physical and mental health of seafarers.
- Personal satisfaction (8,3%)

- Improvement in health care system (6,9%)
By providing on board and ashore health support.
- Contract termination/Repatriation (6,4%)
Repatriation and shore leave were also among the major concerns of seafarers as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and crew change challenges.
- Increased salary and bonus (5,9%)
- Safety issues on board (4,4%)
- Other (4,6%)
- Food/Water Quality-Quantity (3,6%) , many participants asked for a healthier nutrition rich in fruits and vegetables.
- Shore leave issues (3,6%)
- Increased Work Load (3%)

As we can see the top 3 major issues are regarding the provision of free internet data, the improvement of recreational facilities and human element issues, which combined represent 53,5% of their problems.

As for the internet communication, seafarers stressed that affordable means of communication e.g. free internet data package would greatly improve communication with their relatives and friends ashore and subsequently their well being significantly. They also feel that the recreational facilities have a room for improvement and lastly, there is a need for certain focus on human element. Specifically, many respondents referred to the theme of a greater focus on social life on board and investing in team bonding with group activities, e.g. karaoke nights, Sunday barbecues and games on board.

Other major complaints related to human factor issues are mental health training, resilience meetings, support of an expert related to mental health issues, healthcare support on board and ashore and medical insurance of extended family.

Findings at this survey indicated ways of mitigating the negative impact of the pandemic by enhancing support from fellow crew members on board, ensuring the availability of external support and providing fast and reliable Internet access on board.

Finally, several participants underlined the importance of ship management to check crew's feelings and emotions and their mental health from time to time.

Discussion and Conclusions

Having now a better perspective of what is well-being and how significant it is to focus on human factor, it should be embraced as a key element, as not only the seafarers themselves can be benefited by it, but also indirectly the entire maritime sector. Seafarers' Welfare in Ports Recommendation, 1936 (No. 48) along with Seafarers' Welfare Recommendation, 1970 (No. 138) initiated first the notion of crew well-being and in the following decades have led to the universal application of the MLC 2006, which is marked as one of the most significant international maritime conventions. The ratification of MLC 2006 by member – countries, among other things, have surely upgraded the quality of working and living conditions, by setting fundamental rights and seafarer' labor and social standards. On the other hand, there is still need to further establish the concept of crew welfare and mental health, as it has not been entirely succeeded and thus, factors such as stress or fatigue and social isolation continue to influence in a negative manner the well-being of seafarers.(Exarchopoulos et. al 2018). Karin Orsel, CEO of MF Shipping Group stated that contrary to 10 years ago, the industry has made great progress in the level of attention it gives to mental health, promoting open debates on the subject.

Consequently, there is an urge to address further attention to Filipino seafarers' well-being and mental health as they represent the majority of seafarers, being the largest supplier-country in Asia. To be more specific, the few resources of primary data on Filipino seafarers to date do not focus on mental health issues, making it difficult to understand the extent of the problem. The situation regarding seafarers' mental health disclosures, suffers from inconsistent reporting, and the lack of a mandatory centralized database offers little help in understanding further significant issues like those of repatriation and even so, suicide rates.(Abila SS, Acejo IL 2021).

Furthermore, after discussing the reasoning why foreign shipowners, thus Greek shipowners prefer Filipino seafarers to man their ships and work for them, and why Filipinos choose seafaring as their profession, we conclude that it could be a “win-win” situation. Analyzing the findings from the researches of I. Theotokas and M.

Progoulaki 2007, on chapter 3.6, demonstrated that Greece have collaborated with crew from the Philippines throughout the years, showing as well their preference among other nationalities as they are the most compatible nation to associate with Greek sea workers. The statistical numbers on table 1 and 2 are evidences that main source of seafarers were Philippines. On the other hand, Filipinos prefer to be seafarers for two reasons: mainly, for financial reasons (which was analyzed in chapter 3.5.2), having in mind that the beginning monthly salary of a seafarer of the lowest rate is higher than the average monthly wage in the Philippines, as of 2020. Secondly, because they are already familiarized with the sea due to their history and surroundings of thousands of islands, while their competitive advantage is their command in English.

Lastly, seafaring is already a challenging profession on its own. Leaving their loved ones, their comfort and normal life to work and live on confined spaces for extended period, while on top of that, they are facing the consequences of the corona-virus outbreak, have definitely challenged seafarers' well-being and especially their mental state. Their health and welfare is of interest not only to prevent the spread of the virus and comply with regulations, but also it is an element of significant importance for ship owners to meet their goals for safe and effective cooperation. Education of seafarers in the context of their work related to issues of well-being and mental health is important for proactive training and development. Human factor is the heart and soul of shipping operations, therefore protection on safety and health of seafarer and priority on their well-being is of paramount importance by the stakeholders and the entire shipping sector.

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