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MANAGEMENT**

**Analysis of seafarers' wages in relation to the flag
and type of vessel**

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ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Η παρούσα μελέτη επιχειρεί πρώτα να αναλύσει τους όρους της ναυτιλίας και του ναυτικού επαγγέλματος. Η ναυτιλία περιλαμβάνει μια ποικιλία μεθόδων, τεχνικών και διαδικασιών που χρησιμοποιούνται για τη μεταφορά εμπορευμάτων από τον έναν γεωγραφικό τόπο στον άλλο. Το ναυτικό επάγγελμα είναι ζωτικής σημασίας για το παγκόσμιο εμπόριο, καθώς οι ναυτικοί επαγγελματίες είναι υπεύθυνοι για την πλοήγηση και συντήρηση των πλοίων, εξασφαλίζοντας την ασφαλή και αποτελεσματική μεταφορά εμπορευμάτων και επιβατών και για την τήρηση των διεθνών νόμων και κανονισμών που διέπουν τις ναυτλιακές δραστηριότητες. Θα ερευνήσουμε επίσης τη σταδιοδρομία στη ναυτλιακή βιομηχανία, την εκπαιδευτική διαδρομή που μπορεί να ακολουθήσει ένας ναυτικός και την ιεραρχία των θέσεων του πληρώματος εν πλω. Επιπλέον, θα εξετάσουμε τους κύριους φορείς που διαμορφώνουν τις συνθήκες εργασίας και τους μισθούς των ναυτικών, συμπεριλαμβανομένων της Διεθνούς Σύμβασης για την Εργασία στη Ναυτιλία, του Διεθνούς Οργανισμού Εργασίας και της Πανελλήνιας Ναυτικής Ομοσπονδίας. Επιπλέον, θα εξετάσουμε τη λειτουργία του τμήματος πληρωμάτων, τα κριτήρια επιλογής και τις διαδικασίες πρόσληψης που χρησιμοποιούν, καθώς επίσης και την ποικιλία των εθνικοτήτων που επιλέγεται για το πλήρωμα εν πλω. Στο δεύτερο μέρος της παρούσας έρευνας θα εστιάσουμε στην αμοιβή των ναυτικών και στους παράγοντες που την επηρεάζουν. Ο πρώτος παράγοντας που θα εξετάσουμε είναι η σημαία του πλοίου, με έμφαση ιδιαίτερα στις σημαίες ευκαιρίας. Ο δεύτερος παράγοντας που θα ερευνήσουμε είναι ο τύπος του πλοίου (πετρελαιοφόρο, φορτηγό πλοίο, LNG). Τέλος, ο τρίτος παράγοντας που θα εξετάσουμε στην παρούσα μελέτη, είναι οι εθνικότητες των ναυτικών και πώς η εθνικότητα επηρεάζει την αμοιβή τους.

Λέξεις-κλειδιά: Ναυτικό επάγγελμα, ΠΙΝΟ, ΜLC, Σημαίες ευκαιρίας, μισθοί ναυτικών, συμβάσεις εργασίας ναυτικών

SUMMARY

This study attempts firstly to analyze the terms of shipping and maritime profession. Shipping encompasses a variety of methods, techniques, and procedures utilized to transport goods from one geographical location to another. The maritime profession is vital to global trade because maritime professionals are responsible for navigating and maintaining ships, ensuring that cargo and passengers are transported safely and efficiently, and complying with international laws and regulations that govern maritime activities. We will also explore the career paths in the shipping industry, detailing the educational and training pathway a seaman can follow and the hierarchy of crew positions on board. Furthermore, we will delve into key entities that shape the working conditions and pay scales for seafarers, including the International Maritime Labour Convention, the International Labour Organization, and the Panhellenic Seamen's Federation. Moreover, we will delve into the variety of nationalities represented onboard, the crew department's operation, the selection criteria and the recruitment processes. In the second part of this research, we will go through the compensation of seafarers. We will examine this issue through the lens of the vessel's registration, particularly with an emphasis on flags of convenience. We will also investigate how the type of vessel—whether tanker, cargo, or LNG—affects salary structures. To conclude, we will delve into the common nationalities represented among seafarers and consider how this impacts their salaries.

Key words: Maritime profession, PNO, MLC, Flags of convenience, seafarers' wages, seafarers' employment agreements,

ABBREVIATIONS

IMO	International Maritime Organization
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
STCW	International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers
LNG	Liquefied Natural Gas
MLC	Maritime Labour Convention
ILO	International Labour Organization
ITF	International Transport Workers' Federation
JMC	Joint Maritime Commission
PNO	Panhellenic Seamen's Federation
CDC	Continuous Discharge Certificate
P&I	Protection and Indemnity
FoC	Flag of Convenience
PSC	Port State Control
CBA	Collective Bargaining Agreement
TEUs	Twenty-foot Equivalent Units
AMOSUP	Associated Marine Officers' and Seamen's Union
MARINA	Maritime Industry Authority

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Chapter 1: Shipping and Maritime Profession

1.1 Definition of shipping

Shipping encompasses a variety of methods, techniques, and procedures utilized to transport vessels safely and efficiently between different locations on Earth. It plays a crucial role in facilitating peaceful international trade across the globe. Various types of ships transport people, as well as packaged or bulk dry and liquid cargoes, vehicles, animals, and more, to destinations all around the world.

Although the word "shipping" might appear simple, it embodies a complex web of actions, rules, and organizations working together to ensure the smooth transportation of goods globally.

At its core, shipping involves the physical transportation of goods from one geographical location to another. This movement can take place through a variety of transportation modes, including ships, aircraft, trucks, and trains. However, when we discuss shipping in its most conventional sense, we are primarily referring to maritime shipping, where goods are transported by sea using a diverse range of vessels, such as container ships, bulk carriers, and tankers.

We will analyze some of the key elements and aspects of shipping that contribute to its complexity and significance:

1. Logistics Management: Shipping is intrinsically intertwined with logistics. It encompasses the meticulous planning, coordination, and management of the entire supply chain, ensuring that goods are efficiently transported from their point of origin to their destination. The ultimate goal is to achieve efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and timeliness in the movement of goods.

2. Ports and Terminals: Ports serve as vital nodes within the shipping network, acting as central hubs for the loading and unloading of cargo from vessels. These ports are equipped with facilities designed to handle a wide variety of cargo, ranging from standard shipping containers to bulk goods and liquid cargo.

3. Shipping Companies and Carriers: The shipping industry comprises numerous companies and carriers that operate on both a local and global scale. These entities own, operate, or charter vessels and provide the essential services required to transport goods efficiently and reliably.

4. Containerization: One of the most transformative innovations in the history of shipping is the widespread adoption of standardized containers. Containerization revolutionized the industry by enabling the efficient loading, unloading, and transportation of goods. This innovation significantly reduced handling costs and shortened transit times.

5. International Regulations: Shipping is subject to a complex web of international regulations and conventions. These regulations, often overseen by organizations like the

International Maritime Organization (IMO), address crucial aspects such as safety, environmental protection, and security in the shipping industry.

6. Global Trade Facilitation: Shipping plays a pivotal role in facilitating global trade by connecting producers and consumers across continents. It acts as the conduit for the import and export of raw materials, manufactured goods, and commodities on a massive scale.

7. Environmental Impact: The shipping industry, particularly maritime shipping, is a significant contributor to global greenhouse gas emissions. Recognizing this impact, efforts are ongoing to develop more environmentally friendly technologies and practices within the industry.

8. Economic Significance: The shipping industry has a profound economic impact, generating jobs, stimulating investments in infrastructure, and contributing substantially to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of many countries. It often serves as an indicator of global economic health.

9. Technological Advancements: Like many sectors, shipping has embraced technological advancements. Satellite communication aids navigation, automation enhances efficiency, and digital solutions facilitate cargo tracking and management.

The concept of "world shipping" encompasses all national industries that operate under and adhere to the maritime laws established by the International Maritime Organization (IMO)¹. This organization, which is a technical branch of the United Nations headquartered in London, consists of member states that vote on International Conventions, Codes, and Regulations in three primary areas:

- a) Education and Certification of seafarers,
- b) Ensuring the safety of human life and property at sea, including passengers, ships, and cargo, and
- c) Protecting the marine environment from pollution caused by commercial vessels.

In conclusion, shipping represents a complex and multifaceted system that lies at the heart of global trade and economic activity. It serves as the critical link between producers and consumers across the world, enabling the efficient movement of goods on a massive scale. A comprehensive understanding of shipping is essential for businesses, policymakers, and individuals engaged in international trade and logistics, as it significantly influences the creation, transit, and usage of products in our interconnected and globalized world.

¹ <https://www.imo.org/en/About/Pages/Default.aspx>

1.2 Definition of maritime profession and maritime work.

Studies have conclusively shown that the role of a sailor is one of the top 10 most hazardous jobs globally. While it might appear straightforward to those onshore, the maritime world is vast and complex. The field of maritime work covers a broad spectrum of roles closely connected to the functioning and oversight of ships and other maritime craft. This includes an intricate mix of professions such as ship construction, piloting, engineering, supply chain management, and safety. Especially in the case of seafaring profession, the quality of working conditions and work-life balance are essentials for the effective and safe operation of ships. The ship is a working and simultaneously a living environment, thus making seafaring a profession with particular patterns and needs.²

Maritime professionals are responsible for piloting and upkeeping vessels, ensuring the safe and efficient transport of cargo and passengers, and navigating the intricate web of international laws and regulations governing maritime activities. Their expertise finds application in diverse sectors of industry, shipbuilding, offshore oil and gas exploration, marine engineering, marine research, and fisheries. The demands of maritime careers necessitate a specialized skill set that includes mastery of navigational systems, a deep understanding of international maritime laws and regulations, effective communication skills, and physical dexterity. Seafarers can be characterized as a unique employment group which has a free-lancing character, experiences prolonged isolation in combination with limited available on board services, while access to any port can be difficult.³

Every individual aboard a ship, from the upper management to the dedicated crew, should show responsibility for safely navigating the vessel and addressing the challenging or precarious scenarios that may arise during the voyage. Collectively, the maritime profession plays an indispensable role in global trade and commerce. It acts as the lifeblood of international trade, facilitating the movement of goods and people across the vast expanse of the world's oceans. The maritime profession showcases human creativity and flexibility while playing a crucial role in maintaining our interconnected globalized society

² <https://spoudai.unipi.gr/index.php/spoudai/article/view/87/160> (pp76)

³ <https://spoudai.unipi.gr/index.php/spoudai/article/view/87/160> (pp 76)

1.2.2 Difficulties of the maritime profession

A distinct characteristic of the maritime profession is that ships are always moving across the world's big oceans. This continuous movement exposes seafarers to an ever-present array of dangers, including turbulent seas, towering waves, and capricious weather patterns. Seafarers face numerous work-related stress factors including extended separation from family, social isolation, increased workload, difficult living and working conditions, job insecurity, constant inspections, bullying, harassment, and insufficient rest. Seafaring is more than a job; it's a unique lifestyle marked by constant cycles of departures and returns, affecting the lives of seafarers and their families deeply. The transition between life at home and the distinct working environment onboard ships profoundly impacts their personal and professional lives, which are closely intertwined.⁴

Furthermore, these issues can lead to mental health problems, higher injury and illness rates, and a higher turnover in the profession. In most instances, sailors must live and labor in remote locations far from their families, amplifying the emotional strain of their situation. Extensive research has delved into different factors that pose risks to the mental well-being of seafarers, revealing that the maritime work environment can subject them to stress and psychological distress, as evidenced by various studies. Despite this, there exists a stigma surrounding mental health issues, leading to seafarers being hesitant to acknowledge such problems and seek assistance. Seafarers work under tough conditions: they're often stuck in tight spaces, away from family, and can't get off the ship for a long time, which can really stress them out and make them feel depressed or anxious. The job is physically hard, too, with workers like deckhands and engine staff dealing with non-stop movement, heat, and noise. Captains and officers also have it hard with long shifts and lots of pressure. Many injuries on ships happen to the crew doing the day-to-day jobs, and lots of officers say the job is more stressful than most. Sadly, these tough job conditions have made suicide rates among seafarers the highest compared to other jobs.⁵

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly worsened mental health issues for seafarers due to travel restrictions and a crew change crisis that left 400,000 workers stranded on ships past their contract dates. Added to their usual work stressors were uncertainties about crew rotations, no opportunities for shore leave, and fears of COVID-19 infection. These factors have led to severe mental health challenges and, tragically, have resulted in suicides among seafarers.

⁴ A.M. Baylon & E.M.R Santos Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific Mariveles Bataan, Philippines Attractions, Problems, Challenges, Issues and Coping Strategies of the Seafaring Career: MAAP Seafarers Perspectives
https://www.researchgate.net/profile/AngelicaBaylon/publication/300126089_Attractions_Problems_Challenges_Issues_and_Coping_Strategies_of_the_Seafaring_Career_MAAP_Seafarers_Perspectives/links/5fb1e976a6fdcc9ae05815e0/Attractions-Problems-Challenges-Issues-and-Coping-Strategies-of-the-Seafaring-Career-MAAP-Seafarers-Perspectives.pdf

⁵ Umut Yildirim, Arda Toygar , Cavit Çolakoğlu Marine Policy Volume 143, September 2022, 105155 Compensation effect of wages on decent work: A study on seafarers' attitudes
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0308597X22002020>

In reaction to this situation, stakeholders have implemented a range of strategies to tackle the crisis and other issues brought about by the pandemic while also providing assistance for the mental well-being of seafarers. Nevertheless, the industry's adopted measures and, perhaps more crucially, the perspectives and feedback of seafarers regarding these measures remain uncertain.⁶

1.3 The Contribution of the Maritime Profession in Greece

The maritime profession in Greece has a long and storied history, dating back to ancient times. Greece's geographical position and the nature of its topography—with its multitude of islands and extensive coastline—made it a hub of maritime activity from the earliest days of navigation. Over the centuries, Greece's maritime tradition has remained strong, and today, it is recognized globally for its significant contribution to the maritime industry. Here are key points regarding the contribution of the maritime profession in Greece:

1. Economic Contribution

Major Economic Driver: Shipping and maritime activities have traditionally been one of the major contributors to the Greek economy.

Employment: The sector provides employment opportunities for a considerable number of Greek citizens, both at sea and ashore.

Foreign Exchange: The shipping industry is a significant source of foreign exchange earnings for Greece.

Trade: Given its strategic geographical location, Greece has been a vital hub in international trade routes, facilitating global commerce.

2. Global Standing

Ship Management: Greek shipowners manage the largest merchant fleet globally, contributing to international trade and logistics.

Ports: The Port of Piraeus, among others, is recognized as one of the major ports in Europe and a vital transshipment hub for cargo.

3. Educational and Professional Aspects

Maritime Education: Greece is home to numerous maritime academies and institutions that educate the next generation of seafarers, ship managers, and maritime executives.

Maritime Clusters: Various organizations and associations contribute to maritime research, technological advancements, and policymaking.

⁶ Lijun Tang, Sanley Abila, Momoko Kitada, Serafin Malecosio Jr., Karima Krista Montes Marine Policy 145 (2022) 105276 Seafarers' mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic: An examination of current supportive measures and their perceived effectiveness

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0308597X22003232#ab0010>

4. Cultural Influence

Maritime Tradition: The maritime profession is woven into the cultural and traditional tapestry of Greece, influencing various aspects of daily life, traditions, and cultural expressions.

Maritime Events: Various events, such as shipping week and maritime festivals, celebrate the country's rich maritime heritage.

5. Environmental and Technological Contribution

Maritime Research: Research in maritime sciences, oceanography, and marine archaeology is prominent in Greece.

Technological Innovations: The Greek maritime industry has increasingly embraced technology, contributing to developments in shipping, navigation, and maritime safety.

6. Geopolitical Relevance

Strategic Location: Situated at the crossroads of Europe, Asia, and Africa, Greece plays a pivotal role in global maritime activities.

International Relations: Through its maritime activities, Greece maintains and fosters international relations, partnerships, and collaborations.

7. Legal and Regulatory Framework

Maritime Law: Greece has a robust legal framework that governs maritime activities and also influences international maritime laws and regulations.

International Cooperation: Greece is an active participant in international maritime organizations, contributing to shaping global maritime policies and regulations.

According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the fleet controlled by Greeks represents about 18% of the worldwide tonnage capacity. This is impressively disproportionate considering Greeks make up just 0.15% of the global population.⁷

The maritime profession in Greece is not merely an economic activity; it's an integral part of its heritage, culture, and international presence. Understanding its multifaceted contributions provides insight into its significance and the potential future trajectory in a global context. Without a doubt, maritime profession has always held and will continue to hold a promising future in Greece, given that our country stands as the foremost maritime force globally. Through the ages, Greece has embraced its identity as a seafaring nation and shipping remains an integral facet of our economy, tracing back to ancient times.

But we have to take into consideration that the rigorous and often solitary lifestyle of seafaring, characterized by extended periods away from home and their loved ones may discourage young people who are looking for more stable and balanced jobs.

⁷ <https://www.greeceinvestorguide.com/sectors/maritime/>

1.4 Professional rehabilitation in shipping

Individuals who pursue a career in the shipping industry can expect immediate opportunities for professional growth and long-term career development with significant financial benefits.

Embarking on a career in the maritime sector, particularly as a seaman, necessitates a specific educational and training pathway that is delineated by international standards and national regulations.

Here's a general guide to the educational requirements and progression for individuals aiming to become seafarers⁸:

- Preliminary Education / Basic Education: A high school diploma, with a focus on subjects like mathematics, physics, and English (as it is the working language at sea), is usually the minimum requirement.
- Maritime Academies & Institutes: The exemplary quality of education and expertise manifested by the alumni of Merchant Marine Academies propels them from initial positions such as Second Mates or Engineers, potentially all the way to the helm as Captains or Chief Engineers, subject to sea service and pertinent training. The current sea service prerequisite for elevation to Chief Officers or First Engineers stands at 24 months, a decrease from the previous 36 months.
- Certifications and Licenses:

STCW Certification: Seafarers must adhere to the standards set by the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers. This includes obtaining various certifications, such as basic safety training, fire prevention, firefighting, personal survival techniques, and more.

Competency Certificates: After completing their education, seafarers must pass examinations to obtain competency certificates, which validate their capability to perform specific roles such as, for example, Officer of the Watch.

- Career Progression & Further Education:

Sea Time: Seafarers must accumulate a certain amount of sea time (i.e., practical experience on ships) to qualify for further certifications and promotions.

Advanced Certifications: Seafarers can pursue additional certifications for career advancement and to qualify for specialized roles (e.g., Dynamic Positioning Operator)⁹.

Management Level Courses: For those aiming for senior ranks (e.g., Chief Engineer or Captain), management-level courses and examinations are necessary.

⁸<https://www.isalos.net/naftiki-ekpaidefsi/>

⁹<https://www.ynanp.gr/el/gia-ton-polith/naytikh-ekpaideysh/apoktese-diplomaton-choregese-pistopoietikon-bebaioseon/>

- Specialized Training: Seafarers might undergo specialized training depending on their career trajectory (e.g., LNG carriage, offshore operations).

Moreover, a career in the field of Shipping extends far beyond working on ships alone. It encompasses a wide range of economic sectors and activities, including shipping companies, shipbuilding, repairs and maintenance, supply chains and logistics, agency services, surveying, insurance, and various public and private organizations. These sectors present alternative employment opportunities and significant potential for professional advancement, depending on individual aspirations and ambitions.

Embarking on a maritime career entails a blend of structured education, practical experience, and continuous professional development, ensuring seafarers are competent, safe, and effective in their roles within the dynamic environment of the maritime industry.

1.5 Seafarer's professions and ranks

The smooth operation of the ship around the clock relies heavily on its crew members who execute all essential processes on board. The crew is comprised of all enrolled sailors, except for the Captain, who have a seaman's book and serves as officers or lower crew members, according to both private and public maritime law codes. To ensure compliance with the law, the required number of crew members, their ranks, and specialties are specified, with the composition varying based on the type of vessel. The ship's crew is made up of individuals with specific responsibilities and tasks, excluding the Captain. Exceptions that allow for reduced crew numbers are only approved if the safety of the ship and its crew is not compromised. Factors that influence the crew's composition include the capacity, type, engine power, and the executed voyages. Maintaining an organized structure that emphasizes collaboration and teamwork is crucial to provide quality services on board. As a result, each shipping company can have its own unique organizational chart for their crew members.

The ranks are as follows:

-Master¹⁰: The individual holding the position of captain or master is the highest-ranking officer on board, acting as the representative of the ship's owner. The Master is the highest seafarer rank and the most prestigious of all seafarer jobs. A Master has ultimate responsibility for everything that happens on his/her vessel, including the security of the ship, as well as the safety of the crew and cargo, and any passengers, both when in port and when at sea. In addition, a Master will plan the route of the ship and ensure it is correctly executed. The Master is also responsible for making sure that repairs and maintenance are dealt with, and that cargo is handled properly and must also make sure operations are as risk free as possible by continuously monitoring and managing fire, hazard and damage limitation procedures.

¹⁰<https://www.martide.com/en/blog/ships-master-jobs-artide>

Deck department: *Under the captain's management, the deck department is responsible for the safe navigation and operation of the vessel, both at sea and in port.*

-Deck officers¹¹: Deck officers are licensed mariners who are responsible for maintaining watches on the bridge at sea and about the ship in port. They are responsible for passage planning, safe navigation of the vessel, cargo loading and discharge, ship stability, communications and maintenance of the hull and deck equipment.

- Chief Officer or Chief Mate¹²: The chief mate/chief officer holds a position of authority as the head of the deck department. Acting as the second-in-command after the ship's master, they have many duties and responsibilities. Specific duties and responsibilities vary by vessel but typically include deck department management, navigation watch-standing, cargo operations, safety and firefighting operations, environmental protection, as well as acting as a vessel security officer and medical officer. Their role also encompasses various crucial tasks. They supervise the members of the deck department including Second and Third Mates, able-seafarers, and ordinary seaman or deckhands. The chief mate's foremost responsibilities include overseeing cargo operations and ensuring the vessel's stability.

Typically, the chief mate assumes the 4-8 navigation watch and directs the bridge team. However, on some ships where additional Third mates are present, the chief mate can focus more on cargo and deck operations, relieving them of the navigational watch duty. Furthermore, the chief mate undertakes the maintenance of the ship's hull, cargo gear, accommodations, life-saving appliances, and firefighting appliances.

Moreover, the chief mate plays a significant role in training the crew and cadets on various crucial aspects, encompassing safety protocols, firefighting techniques, search and rescue operations, and other emergency contingencies. Finally, in the absence or incapacitation of the ship's master, the chief mate assumes command of the entire vessel, thereby shouldering the responsibility for its overall operation and safety.

¹¹<https://maritime.solent.ac.uk/careers/career-progression-and-advice/deck-officers>

¹² <https://www.mitags.org/become-chief-mate/>

-Second mate / Second Officer¹³: The second mate is a qualified watch stander, directing the bridge team and navigating the ship. The second mate is the third most-experienced deck department officer after the captain/master and chief mate. The second mate's duties revolve around the ship's bridge. He is in charge of testing and maintaining all navigational equipment including the gyro compass, chronometer, EPIRB, barometer, and many others. Additionally, he/she updates various publications including navigational charts. Furthermore, Second Officers report to the Master for Navigation, Bridge Operations, and Emergency Responses. For all other duties, he reports to the Chief Officer. Additional responsibilities of the second mate may encompass supervising line handlers, cargo watches, anchor detail, as well as instructing and training crew members.

-Third mate/ Third Officer¹⁴: The third officer holds a position junior to the second mate. One of the primary responsibilities of a third officer on board a cargo ship is navigation. They are responsible for overseeing the navigation of the vessel and ensuring that it stays on course. They use charts, GPS, and other navigation tools to plot the ship's course and keep track of its position. They also use weather forecasts to help determine the best route to take, taking into account wind, waves, and other factors that may impact the voyage. Additionally, the third mate is responsible for supervising line handlers, cargo watches, anchor details, as well as providing training and instructions to crew members. During emergencies and drills, he or she is an integral part of the command team.

-Deck cadet¹⁵: Deck cadets are trainees, officers in training. They can be found on any type of vessel. They are indispensable in daily operations and vessel running. They are all-rounders which means that they help with different kinds of tasks on board, as former deck cadet. While the position is generally considered to be the lowest of all the entry level ship jobs, a Cadet still has an important part to play in the day-to-day running of the vessel. A Deck Cadet's duties will normally include assisting with preparations for departure and arrival at port. Deck Cadets are also tasked with carrying out inspections on the vessel's safety and lifesaving equipment. Inspection involves checking for any issues and repairing equipment, if necessary, as well as making a note of equipment expiry dates and ordering replacements if those dates are about to expire.

¹³ <https://academic-accelerator.com/encyclopedia/second-mate>

¹⁴ <https://vesseljoin.com/article/third-officer-duties-and-responsibilities/>

¹⁵ <https://www.martide.com/en/blog/deck-cadet-jobs>

-Boatswain (Bosun)¹⁶: The boatswain also known as a bosun, is the senior crewman of the deck. The boatswain, who is the highest-ranked unlicensed (rating) within the deck department, is typically responsible for executing tasks assigned by the chief mate. Their duties primarily involve the supervision of cargo handling. They also inspect and maintain rigging and deck gear. Other duties include supervising anchoring, mooring, towing, and fueling. A bosun is also responsible for the safe transfer of personnel and cargo, and the operation and maintenance of ship's boats.

-Able seaman (AB)¹⁷: An Able Seaman (AB) works on a ship's deck and is a rank above an Ordinary Seaman (OS), because they have more experience on their seafarer resume and more sea time. They answer directly to the Bosun who is in charge of the deck crew and the contact between crew and officers. An AB plays an active role in deck operations such as docking, undocking, and line handling and to help with the unloading and loading of cargo when the vessel docks in port. Additionally, their responsibilities may take on a supervisory role, assigning tasks and ensuring that any lower seafarer ranks in the deck crew, such as newer ABs, and Trainee and Ordinary Seaman are carrying out their duties correctly and in due time.

-Ordinary seaman¹⁸: The lowest ranking personnel in the deck department. An ordinary seaman (OS) typically assists able seamen with various tasks. The work of an Ordinary Seaman is physically demanding because they help to clean and maintain the ship's deck and certain items of equipment and assist with operations. Their duties can include sweeping, washing, buffing and painting the deck, performing maintenance on the gear that handles cargo, as well as running and rigging gear, and launching and recovering the lifeboats and life rafts.

Engine department: *The engine department operates, maintains and repairs engines, boilers, pumps, generators, and other machinery and systems crucial to a vessel's operation. Personnel working in this department are divided into two categories: licensed and unlicensed personnel.*

-Chief engineer¹⁹: The chief engineer of the ship is the head of the technical department of the ship. The role of the Chief Engineer is responsible for all operations and maintenance that has to do with any and all engineering equipment throughout the vessel. It is his/her duty to ensure that the engine room machinery works properly for a smooth voyage. Their responsibilities are on par with those of the captain, including financial compensation and rank.

¹⁶ https://www.maritimemanual.com/boatswain/?utm_content=cmp-true

¹⁷ <https://www.martide.com/en/blog/able-seaman-jobs>

¹⁸ <https://www.martide.com/en/blog/ordinary-seaman-jobs>

¹⁹ <https://www.oosinternational.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Chief-Engineer.pdf>

-Second engineer²⁰: The second engineer, also known as the first assistant engineer, is one of the most important positions in the hierarchy level of maritime professionals working on the ship. His/her responsibility is not only to carry out his own duties but also to look after the entire operation of the engine room and other technical aspects of the ship. The Second Engineer provides utmost assistance to the Chief engineer for running the ship efficiently. Moreover, the second engineer is also in-charge of all the operational engineers and the crew of the engine room. He / She ensures their personnel safety and routine duties. He also plans the overall maintenance of all the machinery present in the engine room of the ship.

-Third engineer²¹: The engineer ranked third or the assistant engineer ranked second is typically responsible for monitoring and maintaining the ship's machinery. This involves ensuring that all mechanical equipment is running correctly, including the main engine, auxiliary engines, generators, pumps, and other vital systems. They must also be familiar with the ship's machinery and have a thorough understanding of the various components and systems that make up the engine room. A third engineer works closely with the other members of the engineering team to ensure that all machinery is operating efficiently and effectively. This may involve collaborating with the Chief Engineer and other senior officers to develop maintenance schedules, as well as working with junior engineers and mechanics to carry out repairs and maintenance tasks. Additionally, they will need to be able to perform regular inspections and tests to identify any signs of wear and tear, corrosion, or other damage to the ship's machinery.

Engine ratings / unlicensed

-Electrician²²: Ship electricians are responsible for the operation and maintenance of electrical systems aboard ships. Their duties include installing, inspecting, repairing and replacing electrical components and wiring. They will also be responsible for the repair and maintenance of electrical systems and equipment on board the vessel. An Electrician may also be responsible for upgrading components, systems or equipment, and they will regularly use testing and measuring tools such as ohmmeters, oscilloscopes and voltmeters to run diagnostics and check everything is in good working order. They also need to closely follow maintenance schedules -and record any work undertaken or observations made.

²⁰ <https://www.marineinsight.com/careers-2/duties-of-2nd-engineer-on-ship/>

²¹ <https://vesseljoin.com/article/3rd-engineer-duties-and-responsibilities/>

²² <https://www.martide.com/en/blog/marine-electrician-jobs>

-Engine cadet²³: An Engine Cadet on a ship is an individual in the early stage of their maritime career, serving as an apprentice or trainee seafarer. They are onboard in order to work and learn so that they can progress through the various seafarer ranks found in the engine room of a vessel. The main duties of the job will be the maintenance of the various equipment and systems in the engine room, although you may be required to assist the engineer on duty in engine room watches.

-Fitter²⁴: They are responsible for all the necessary structural repair work in a ship which includes re-creating parts and fitting them to wipe out any damage onboard.

-Motorman²⁵: The motorman is an unlicensed member of the engine department. A Motorman has a varied list of duties and responsibilities. They will stand watch with the Engine Officer on duty, and he/she will also help with repair and maintenance as well as carry out more basic tasks in the engine room and around the vessel such as cleaning or painting. Their duties also include making routine checks of machinery, as well as of the bilge and pump rooms, and the tanks. They also inspect equipment such as turbines, condensers, and pumps and record their findings and report any issues or problems that they find to their Officers, and safely rectify them if possible.

-Pumpman²⁶: A Pumpman is an unlicensed crew member who works almost exclusively on tanker vessels. Pumpman jobs encompass a wide range of duties and responsibilities. One of them is that they need to make sure that the cargo oil is flowing into the necessary pipes and collected without any issues.

-Oiler²⁷: The oiler is an unlicensed member of the engine department, with more experience than a wiper who helps the Engineers maintain the correct lubrication for the propulsion engine system and spend much of their time in the engine room. An oiler will also be tasked to work on heavy machinery onboard in other parts of the ship. This could include checking the lubrication of sewage and air conditioning systems, and water pumps and therefore means working with machinery such as shafts, compressors, gears, blowers, bearings and motors.

²³ <https://www.martide.com/en/blog/all-about-engine-cadet-jobs>

²⁴ <https://gigamare.com/blog/all-news-1/gigamares-shipfitter-training-program-9>

²⁵ <https://www.martide.com/en/blog/motorman-jobs>

²⁶ <https://www.martide.com/en/blog/pumpman-jobs>

²⁷ <https://www.martide.com/en/blog/marine-oiler-jobs>

-Wiper²⁸: The wiper is an unlicensed member of the engine department, usually with the least experience. A wiper's responsibilities revolve around keeping the engine room and rest of the vessel well maintained.

Table 1

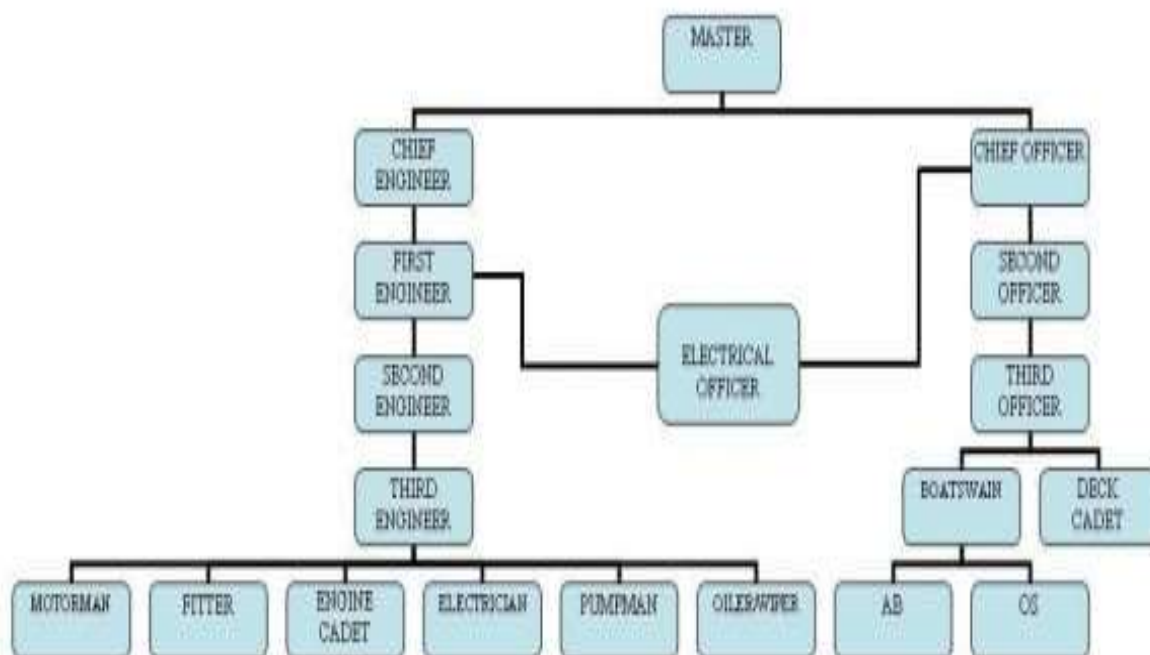


TABLE 1 SOURCE: [HTTPS://NEDCON.RO/CREW-STRUCTURE-ON-BOARD-MERCHANT-VESSELS-DECK-DEPARTMENT/](https://nedcon.ro/crew-structure-on-board-merchant-vessels-deck-department/)

²⁸ <https://www.marineinsight.com/careers-2/who-is-a-wiper-on-ships/>

Chapter 2: The International Maritime Labour Convention

2.1 General Information

The International Maritime Labour Convention (MLC), which was adopted by the International Labour Conference of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 2006 and came into force on August 20, is a crucial regulation developed by the International Labour Organization (ILO)²⁹. Its objective is to safeguard the rights and ensure decent working conditions for seafarers. The MLC is often referred to as the "Seafarers' Bill of Rights" because it consolidates, and updates more than 68 international labor standards related to seafarers adopted over the last 80 years. In addition to safeguarding the rights of seafarers worldwide, the Convention also strives to foster an environment of fair competition among countries and shipowners who uphold the rights of maritime personnel and provide adequate working and living conditions aboard ships.

The convention applies to all ships engaged in commercial activities, except for those which navigate exclusively in inland waters, ships engaged in fishing, and traditional ships such as dhows and junks.

Countries that are party to the Convention have a binding commitment to uphold its requirements and protect the fundamental rights of workers. This includes ensuring freedom and making sure people can join groups, getting rid of all forced work, stopping child labor, and ending unfair treatment at work. In addition, countries that have ratified the MLC are responsible for implementing and enforcing its provisions and are subject to periodic audits by the ILO to ensure compliance.

The Convention offers several advantages. Firstly, it gathers essential international standards into one place to guarantee fair working conditions for over 1.5 million seafarers worldwide. These seafarers play a vital role in international trade, tourism, and recreation.

The MLC, 2006 ensures that every seafarer has the right to:

- A safe and secure workplace meeting safety standards.
- Fair employment terms.
- Decent living and working conditions on board ships.
- Health protection, medical care, welfare measures, and social protection.

Secondly, it promotes fair competition among ship owners from countries that have ratified the MLC, 2006. This ensures that fair working conditions are part of a level playing field.

²⁹https://www.ilo.org/global/standards/maritime-labour-convention/what-it-does/WCMS_219665/lang--en/index.htm

Thirdly, the MLC, 2006 demonstrates how cooperation and dialogue between different parties can effectively address the challenges of providing decent conditions for seafarers in one of the world's most globalized industries while maintaining fair competition for ship owners.³⁰

2.2 Structure

The International Maritime Labour Convention is considered as a comprehensive international labor convention, which sets out seafarers' rights to decent conditions of work. It also has a unique structure compared to other international conventions and adopts a novel structure to manage data within the IMO. The MLC³¹ encompasses a wide array of subjects related to maritime labor and three types of regulations: articles, regulations, and the code.

Articles serve as binding obligations for member states, reflecting their primary rights and responsibilities.

The Code includes specific instructions for implementing the *Regulations* and is divided into two parts. The first part contains mandatory standards for implementation, while the second part consists of optional guidelines. These guidelines essentially serve as templates for applying the regulations, based on defined requirements. States have the freedom to enact different measures for implementing the regulations. Consequently, if a state party to the International Convention cannot fully comply with the rights and regulations specified in the first part of the Code, they may introduce alternative provisions that achieve substantially equivalent outcomes as the standards outlined in the International Convention.³²

³⁰https://www.ilo.org/global/standards/maritime-labour-convention/what-it-does/WCMS_219665/lang--en/index.htm

³¹[Maritime Labour Convention: New consolidated text of the Maritime Labour Convention now available, including amendments on increased protection for seafarers against shipboard harassment and bullying \(ilo.org\)](#)

³²<https://www.ilo.org/global/standards/maritime-labour-convention/what-it-does/faq/lang--en/index.htm>

The Regulations and the *Code of Standards and Guidelines* are structured into broad thematic units under five titles, which regulate the following areas:

Title 1. Minimum Requirements for Seafarers to Work on a Ship

- Age*: Ensures that no under-age people work on a ship.
- Medical Certificate*: Seafarers must be medically fit.
- Training*: Ensures that seafarers are trained or qualified for their positions.

Title 2: Conditions of Employment

- Seafarers' Employment Agreements*: Contract terms and conditions must be clear.
- Wages*: Establishes rules for the payment of wages.
- Hours of Work and Rest*: Sets limits on hours of work and mandates minimum rest periods.
- Entitlement to Leave*: Prescribes annual leave and shore leave.
- Repatriation*: Guarantees that seafarers can return home after their employment agreement ends.
- Career and Skill Development*: Promotes training and career development.

Title 3: Accommodation, Recreational Facilities, Food, and Catering

- Accommodation and Recreational Facilities*: Ensures adequate accommodation and recreational facilities.
- Food and Catering*: Ensures that seafarers have access to good quality food and clean drinking water.

Title 4: Health Protection, Medical Care, Welfare, and Social Security Protection

- *Medical Care on Board Ship and Ashore*: Ensures access to medical care on board and facilitates hospital treatment ashore.
- Shipowners' Liability*: Outlines the shipowners' liability in case of sickness, injury, or death.
- Health and Safety Protection*: Ensures health and safety on board.
- Social Security*: Provides access to social security schemes.

Title 5: Compliance and enforcement

- Flag State Responsibilities*: Ensures that ships flying their flag comply with the requirements of the convention.

-Port State Responsibilities: Allows inspections of foreign ships in port to ensure they comply with the convention.

-Labor-supplying Responsibilities: Ensures that countries that supply seafarers to the international market comply.

Amendments:

The MLC allows for amendments to keep pace with the changing nature and demands of the industry. For example:

-2014 Amendments³³: Introduced provisions concerning the financial security of seafarers, aiming to ensure that they are not abandoned in foreign ports and providing compensation in cases of death or long-term disability due to occupational injury, hazard, or disease.

-2016 Amendments³⁴: Addressed issues related to shipboard harassment and bullying and fair access to onboard internet facilities.

The MLC, being a comprehensive and widely accepted regulatory instrument, plays a crucial role in maintaining a universal standard for the rights and working conditions of seafarers globally. If you're engaged in maritime activities, understanding the details and implications of the MLC is vital in ensuring legal compliance and promoting a safe and secure working environment on board.

2.3 International Labour Organization (ILO)

The International Labour Organization (ILO), established in 1919 as the first specialized agency under the United Nations, is an international organization. Its membership comprises countries that have joined the organization, and its activities are coordinated through the International Labour Office. It is important to note that as an international organization, the ILO does not directly enforce international laws or regulate workers, employers, shipowners, ships, or seafarers. Instead, its primary role is to facilitate the development of global standards and support their implementation by member countries on a national level.

Specific to the MLC, 2006, the Director-General of the ILO has particular responsibilities concerning the receipt and dissemination of information required by the Convention to be shared with ILO members. Additionally, the ILO conducts assessments of how its member countries implement ratified Conventions, following its standard oversight process led by the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, established under the ILO's constitution.³⁵

³³ https://www.ilo.org/ilc/ILCSessions/previous-sessions/103/reports/WCMS_248905/lang--en/index.htm

³⁴ https://www.ilo.org/ilc/ILCSessions/previous-sessions/105/reports/provisional-records/WCMS_488452/lang--en/index.htm

³⁵ <https://faqmlc.ilo.org/en/knowledgebase-category/a/a29/>

The International Labour Organization aims to advance labor rights, promote fair employment opportunities, and foster social protection and dialogue concerning labor issues in the industry. Its conventions, which set global regulatory standards for employment conditions, must be implemented by the member states that ratify them, thereby giving them the force of a binding agreement. Even if a convention has not been ratified, it still represents an international labor standard. Ratification commits a country legally to adopt the provisions of the convention. The ILO monitors compliance with these standards. Ratifying countries are required to report regularly on their efforts to implement them, typically every two years, detailing actions taken, relevant legislation, and practices. Additionally, the ILO may receive input on the implementation from national workers' and employers' groups.³⁶

The structure of the ILO is notably unique, employing a tripartite system that involves representatives from governments, employers, and workers in its decision-making processes. The International Labour Organization (ILO) stands out within the United Nations system with its distinctive tripartite framework, where the voices of employers and employees are just as influential as those of member governments in the development of its policies and programs. The ILO is tasked with safeguarding workers from illness, disease, and injury that arise from occupational hazards, which also encompass risks related to ergonomics and the organization of work. One primary role of the ILO is to create global norms and guidelines concerning labor and employment practices. This system pervades its various bodies, including the International Labour Conference, which annually sets international labor standards and policies; the Governing Body, which guides these policies and establishes the program and budget; and the International Labour Office in Geneva, Switzerland, acting as a secretariat.³⁷

In its pursuit of establishing basic labor rights³⁸—like the abolition of forced labor, ensuring collective bargaining, and eliminating child labor—the ILO develops international labor standards. These standards materialize as international treaties or conventions and recommendations, which serve as non-binding guiding principles. The ILO, with 187 member states as of January 2022, imposes an obligation on its members to respect, promote, and realize fundamental principles and rights at work. The agency delves into a broad range of labor-related areas, including employment creation, enterprise development, social protection, labor law and standards, gender equality in the workplace, elimination of forced and child labor, and workers' education and skills development.

³⁶ Jason Angelopoulos, Constantine Chlomoudis, Eustratia Dalvadani International Dock Work Conventions in the Era of PostGlobalization SPOUDAI Journal of Economics and Business, Vol.64 (2014), Issue 1, pp. 5-15

³⁷ Shengli Niu, Ergonomics and occupational safety and health: An ILO perspective, Applied Ergonomics Volume 41, Issue 6, October 2010, Pages 744-753

³⁸ <https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/lang--en/index.htm>

Profound in its research and publications, the ILO annually produces a multitude of documents on issues surrounding work, employment, social protection, and the work environment while providing policy advice, technical assistance, and support to governments and social partners. The ILO's unwavering efforts to promote peace among classes and pursue justice for workers were acknowledged when it was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1969. By establishing international labor standards and advocating for rights at work, the ILO has significantly impacted global labor practices and facilitated policy changes in numerous countries, steering them towards creating fair and equitable working environments. In a world that is globalizing rapidly, the ILO's role remains crucial to ensuring that the global economy's growth is beneficial to all workers, at all levels, bringing attention to the often-overlooked plight of workers and ensuring policies and practices are devised and implemented beneficially and protectively for the global workforce.³⁹

To conclude, in our ever-globalizing era, the ILO remains an anchor, ensuring the global economy's growth is inclusive, benefiting workers at every echelon. It shines a spotlight on the struggles of workers often left in the shadows and assures that national and international policies and practices are crafted and executed to benefit and shield the global workforce. It's noteworthy that, given the ILO's active role, their official website is a reservoir of current updates and detailed information.

Furthermore, from the aspect of the wages we should know that if a ship is covered by an ITF agreement, then all the seamen onboard are entitled to the wages in that agreement. Wage levels on national flag vessels can be set by a national collective bargaining agreement and negotiated with social partners representing seafarers and shipowners. If they are not, the ITF believes that they should be set in line with national wage scales. The ITF believes that no seafarer should be paid below the minimum level recommended by the International Labour Organization (ILO).

The International Labour Organization (ILO) advises a base salary for a competent seafarer. This recommendation is established to safeguard seafarers on an international scale and promote dignified work conditions for them.

In this context, a seafarer is described as someone who, based on national regulations or collective accords, works in any role on a maritime vessel. However, this wage guidance specifically targets competent seafarers and doesn't suggest wages for other seafarer roles.

³⁹ Exarchopoulos, G., Zhang, P., Pryce-Roberts, N., & Zhao, M. 2018 "Seafarers' welfare: A critical review of the related legal issues under the Maritime Labour Convention 2006" *Marine Policy*, 93, 62-70

As per MLC's Guideline B2.4.4, the monthly compensation for a competent seafarer shouldn't be below the figure regularly decided by the Joint Maritime Commission.

Comprising representatives from both shipowners and seafarers, the Joint Maritime Commission (JMC) was founded under the ILO's auspices. Its Joint Working Group convenes biennially. In 2022, they resolved to raise the ILO's suggested base monthly salary for a proficient seafarer to⁴⁰:

-USD658 as of 1 January 2023,

-USD666 as of 1 January 2024, and

-USD673 as of 1 January 2025.

In addition to setting the minimum wage for an able seafarer, the ILO has determined the following entitlements of all seafarers to hours of work, leave, rest and overtime.

According to the MLC's Guideline B2.2.2⁴¹, the typical working duration for seafarers shouldn't surpass 48 hours weekly, which is equivalent to 208 hours monthly. The total duration a seafarer works should adhere to one of two guidelines: they should work a maximum of 14 hours daily or 72 hours weekly, or they should have a minimum resting period of 10 hours daily or 77 hours weekly. Seafarers are entitled to a minimum of 2.5 days of leave for each month. To calculate a day's salary, one should divide the monthly base salary by 30 and then multiply this number by 2.5 to determine the monthly leave compensation. Additionally, the MLC's Guideline B2.2.2 stipulates that for every extra working hour (overtime), payment should be 1.25 times the regular hourly rate. It's also crucial to maintain a record of overtime worked, and this record should bear the signatures of both the seafarer and the ship's captain or an authorized officer.

⁴⁰ https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_845493/lang--en/index.htm

⁴¹ https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:91:0:::P91_SECTION:MLCA_AMEND_A2

2.4 Panhellenic Seamen's Federation (PNO)

The Panhellenic Seamen's Federation (PNO)⁴², established in 1916, stands as a cornerstone of the Greek maritime industry, fervently championing the rights and interests of seafarers. Its steadfast mission revolves around safeguarding and elevating the professional, labor, and economic welfare of Greek seafarers, encompassing a diverse array of maritime labor unions, each dedicated to representing distinct segments of the maritime workforce, from captains and officers to the dedicated crew members.

At the heart of the PNO's activities lie the intricate negotiations of Collective Bargaining Agreements. Through ardent discussions with employers and government bodies, the federation strives to shape collective accords that define crucial aspects of seafarers' employment, including wages, working conditions, and hours. Throughout its history, the PNO has employed the powerful tool of strikes to pressure employers and governmental entities into meeting their demands, further underscoring their commitment to securing fair wages, improved working conditions, and the overarching rights of seafarers.

In its capacity as an unwavering advocate and representative, the PNO consistently raises the voices of Greek seafarers on both national and international stages. Additionally, the federation provides invaluable legal support and representation to its members, offering assistance in employment disputes, accidents, or other legal matters inherent to maritime employment.

Nonetheless, like many labor unions, the PNO navigates a challenging terrain shaped by the prevailing economic and political climate in Greece. The actions and demands of the federation are inevitably influenced by these powerful forces. In the era of globalization sweeping through the shipping industry, the PNO faces the challenge of non-Greek seafarers who may accept employment under different conditions, potentially weakening the union's bargaining position.

On the international front, the PNO may engage in collaborative maritime discussions and form alliances with other global maritime unions. This collective endeavor serves to address common challenges and issues that seafarers worldwide encounter, forging a unified front that stands as a testament to the resilience and solidarity of the global maritime industry. In the face of changing tides and evolving challenges, the PNO remains dedicated to upholding the rights and well-being of Greek seafarers and contributing to the broader maritime community.

⁴² <https://www.pno.gr/history>

2.5 Seaman's Book

The Seaman's Book, also known as a Seafarer's Identification Document, Seaman's Discharge Book, or Continuous Discharge Certificate (CDC), is an official and legal record of a seafarer's career experience and certifications. Recognized globally, it stands as a pivotal document for those working on ships. It serves multiple purposes. First, it chronicles a seafarer's sea service by detailing the ships they've worked on, the duration of their service, and their roles onboard. It also acts as an identification tool, verifying the holder's credentials, qualifications, and experience. In some instances, the Seaman's Book can even be used for travel purposes, like a visa, especially when joining or leaving a vessel in foreign ports. Moreover, it's not uncommon for employers to scrutinize the Seaman's Book to confirm a seafarer's qualifications and experience.

The book contains essential personal details such as:

1. Name of the seafarer with a recent photograph,
2. Age and gender,
3. Identification marks,
4. Nationality and address,
5. Service Book identification number (unique),
6. Date and place of birth,
7. Date of record issuance and expiry,
8. Issuing authority's name and rank.⁴³

Additionally, it lists information related to the certifications held by the seafarer, including STCW qualifications, and provides a comprehensive sea service record that includes details of ships, their IMO numbers, the ranks held, and the service duration.

It is typically valid for periods like 5 or 10 years so seafarers must ensure the timely renewal of their Seaman's Book. It's equally important to check for adequate blank pages for fresh entries. Generally, the maritime authority or administration of a seafarer's country of registration or nationality issues the Seaman's Book. Some nations even allow foreign seafarers to acquire a Seaman's Book under their jurisdiction, given they meet certain criteria.

There are some crucial legal and regulatory facets to consider. For instance, conventions from the International Labour Organization (ILO) lay down specific standards and specifications for seafarer identification documents. Moreover, individual countries might introduce their own rules concerning the design, issuance, and utility of the Seaman's Book.

⁴³ <https://www.marineinsight.com/careers-2/what-is-seamans-service-book/>

To acquire a Seaman's Book, seafarers usually approach the appropriate maritime authority, furnishing proofs of identity and nationality, pertinent maritime certifications, and, where applicable, evidence of sea service. The application procedures might differ across countries, with some offering online portals and others mandating in-person submissions.

In the employment landscape, the Seaman's Book is a staple during the hiring phase, especially for shipping companies and crewing agencies, to verify a seafarer's qualifications and experience. Additionally, during ship inspections, authorities like port state control officers might request to inspect the Seaman's Book.

Although its primary role is record-keeping, there are times when the Seaman's Book assists seafarers in achieving visa-free travel, especially during their sign-on or sign-off from ships. Given its significance, seafarers must protect their Seaman's Book diligently. Accurate and timely entries about sea service are vital, and any damage or loss of the book should be immediately communicated to the issuing authority.

In conclusion, the Seaman's Book is instrumental in shaping a seafarer's professional journey. As both an exhaustive log of their maritime experiences and a universally acknowledged identification document, its relevance spans across employment avenues, international regulatory compliance, and travel. It undeniably remains an indispensable asset in a seafarer's professional arsenal.⁴⁴

Chapter 3: Crew Department - Operations

The seamless functioning of the maritime company, previously touched upon, is the outcome of collaborative efforts and synergy among its various divisions. Each division holds a critical function in ensuring the company operates smoothly and effectively. In matters pertaining to crew management, the crew division holds pivotal importance. Human resource management concerns fall under the purview of the crew division. The workforce of a company, together with the manner in which they perform their duties, reflects the caliber of services provided. The existence of a crew department is a commonality across all maritime companies. Consequently, processes executed by this department directly influence the stable functioning of a vessel. The core objective and fundamental reason behind the crew department are the identification and assignment of appropriate individuals to the corresponding positions, with an aim to effectively organize the crew on a vessel. The primary objective of the department is to form a team that will be positioned on the vessel and can perform both proficiently and safely under any conditions.⁴⁵

⁴⁴<https://www.maritime.com/en/blog/what-is-a-seamans-book>

⁴⁵<https://www.mfshippinggroup.com/en/ship-management/crew-management>

Crew selection criteria are diverse and understandably, compiling and presenting them isn't a straightforward task of collection and listing. Various factors delineate these criteria and perform their respective roles. Examples include the vessel's points, crew costs, qualifications, corporate culture, its standards, quality assurance, and regulatory compliance. There exists a broad spectrum of factors, each playing its role in the crew selection and formulation process.

Even in smaller companies, with a limited fleet, the crew department's presence is crucially vital. The planning of actions and a collective endeavor are approaches that, although might seem standard, pave the way for safe outcomes, mitigating error possibilities.

Should we attempt to list the tasks undertaken by the crew department, the following would be mentioned as indicative:

- Attraction and safeguarding of sailors
- Oversight in alterations to the composition of crews
- Training and skill development of sailors
- Insurance provisions and pension-related matters
- Offering consultancy services to sailors
- Adherence to each vessel's cost budget
- Maintaining records of employment trajectories
- Formulation of employment contracts⁴⁶

3.1 Process of Selecting Crew Member

Maritime companies each carve out their own path for growth and advancement. Over time, these businesses nurture a maritime culture, tweaking aspects to align with international maritime standards, while ensuring that this culture lends a unique identity to the company. Establishing a strategic framework for optimal business operations has become paramount. Such strategies not only uphold the qualitative standards of these enterprises but also enhance their service offerings. In this landscape, companies strategize their approach in the market to recruit the requisite maritime personnel. A common approach among these companies is to develop a guideline, outlining their stance on crew recruitment and setting forth the baseline criteria for shipboard staff. This guideline solidifies the company's standpoint and shapes its perspective on crew recruitment. It also provides a foundation for oversight, sets a protocol for various operational tasks, and reinforces the company's commitment to excellence. This foundational approach cascades effects throughout the company's operations. Importantly, this manual is crafted in line with global maritime mandates and agreements. It also allows for flexibility in adjusting roles and periodic updates to meet the ever-evolving demands of global shipping.

⁴⁶<https://www.nautilusshipping.com/crew-management-services>

According to the office manual concerning the crew management of the maritime company, the objective of the procedure is to validate that every seafarer meets the minimum STCW certification requirements, undergoes medical evaluations to competently fulfill their duties, and comprehends the demands of the Company's Safety Management System prior to assuming their roles.

Crew selection adheres to both the requirements of the flag state and corporate standards. Each company, contingent upon its fleet, formulates a schedule, strategizing seafarer rotations before their contract terminations. In this context, the crew department must maintain a roster of immediately available seafarers for replacements and emergencies. Moreover, the Department Director shoulders several responsibilities such as:

- Ensuring that all crew changes are scheduled in time to ensure the safe staffing of the ship
- Ensuring that new crew members have valid certificates for the expected duration of service
- Ensure that new crew members have a valid license/visa/required per rank or the necessary applications have been forwarded to the Flag Administration
- To keep records of the certificates of all seafarers in electronic or printed form.

Crew recruitment can be done directly through the company's crew department. Another way to acquire seafarers is through ship Manning Agencies. Thus, the shipping company signs a manning agreement with the agency, initiating their collaboration. In this way, the agency meets the shipping company's needs for officers and lower crew members in line with the requirements of the Maritime Labor Convention (MLC 2006). The crew agency deals with two main processes: agencies that do manning and agencies that do crew management. The difference between these two categories is evident in the responsibilities defined by the shipping company needing the crew. When referring to the term 'crew manning,' the agency's duties are limited only to finding the right person for the corresponding position.

However, when referring to 'crew management,' the agency undertakes to find the entire crew that meets all the prerequisites defined by the company's crew department. Also, among the agency's responsibilities are the procedures for the crew change plans, always considering the seafarer's contract and the port where the ship is set to sail. The final decision lies with the company's crew department; any change in the crew and its composition follows a series of discussions with the office and the captain. Some suggestions are made, and if they meet the required needs, the necessary procedures for the ship's manning are carried out.

When it comes to crew composition, these guidelines are observed:

- Crew members may be chosen either from the shipowner's nation or other countries, creating a diverse crew composition.
- Officers, both senior and junior, are typically from the shipowner's country, whereas the rest of the crew often hails from developing nations.
- While top-tier officers originate from the shipowner's country, their junior counterparts come from developing countries, and other crew members may be from a different country altogether.
- The ship's captain is usually from the shipowner's country, with the remaining crew being from a diverse set of countries.
- Companies have their own stance on multicultural crew configurations. For instance, some companies dictate in their crew handbooks that the crew can encompass anywhere from 2 to 4 different nationalities.

3.2 Cultural Aspects – Diverse crewing in the maritime industry

The maritime sector has emerged as a profoundly international and multicultural domain, owing to the global workforce of sailors. Around two-thirds of the worldwide trade fleet is staffed by a diverse crew, potentially consisting of two to three varied nationalities. English is the prevailing language onboard, necessitating crew members to be proficient in it. According to incident reports, 80% of all naval mishaps result from human errors, such as negligence, exhaustion, incapacity, or miscommunication. Additionally, cultural variances within groups of disparate nationalities, unless tactically managed, can bring about significant conflicts, thereby influencing the safety of both the crew and cargo. Research has been undertaken to scrutinize certain facets of Asian culture and traditions⁴⁷. From these studies, several strategies have been proposed to enhance professional relationships among the multicultural crew members, aiming to enlighten them about the identities of their sailors.

⁴⁷ Theotokas, Ioannis & Tsamourgelis, Ioannis & Progoulaki, Maria & TSAGARI, Efstathia. (2006). SOUTH-ASIAN SEAFARERS ON BOARD GREEK-OWNED SHIPS: ORGANISATIONAL, MANAGERIAL AND CULTURAL ISSUES.

Technological advancements minimized crewing scales, and the deployment of multinational crews on ships for fiscal motives (that is, employing fewer and less-expensive workers, equating to a notable cost decrement for shipping firms) have been implemented. Utilizing multicultural crews has spawned issues, for instance, communication difficulties that might jeopardize the safety of both crew and cargo. Communication holds a crucial role in human interactions. Misapprehensions in the sailors' professions could give rise to severe maritime episodes that pose risks to the safety of the crew and cargo and imperil environmental preservation.

Consequently, the challenge arises in a crew comprising various nationalities, where English, being the formal language for alerts and commands, necessitates the implementation of measures (from shipping corporations and the ship captain alike) to assure crew members can validate their proficiency in the maritime industry's universal language, English, adhering to the STCW'98 stipulations. Furthermore, it's vital that the crew members' nationalities are cohesively intertwined, enabling effective team collaboration. To foster this cultural congruence, training sessions exploring diverse cultural traditions and behavioral norms should be arranged for both executives and crews.

The selection of Asian culture is strategic since a predominant portion of the multinational crew members identifies as Asian. Hence, it's imperative for shipping companies and captains to understand this culture, facilitating the training of other nationalities in what to do and avoid, with the primary aim of establishing a congenial work atmosphere. The initiative is twofold: Asian crew members should simultaneously receive education on the cultures and traditions of their counterparts.

Common behavioral attributes within Asian cultures include sincerity, humility, precision, patience, faith, adherence to familial structures, and respect for religious and cultural beliefs, as well as establishing relationships and trust among peers. An illustration of this is that individuals from other nationalities should maintain a level of indirectness when interacting with their Asian peers, abstaining from any form of physical or verbal aggression and withholding expressions of anger. Asians, typically obedient and adept at executing precise instructions, respond sub optimally to shouting, perceiving it as a form of aggression that demotivates and hinders their performance in their duties.

The challenge we face is ensuring that crews from various cultural backgrounds undergo training in intercultural understanding to acquaint themselves with different cultural norms and practices. As a result, we need to craft a curriculum on this topic. Developing this guide involves both numerical and descriptive research to identify challenges faced by international crews. Using this gathered data, we should devise strategies to mitigate conflicts and foster a collaborative workspace.

In conclusion, to safeguard both ship crew and cargo, recruitment processes need to prioritize a robust maritime English assessment for both internal and external communication, offering guidance for improvement if the applicant doesn't meet the standard. The responsibility of intercultural training rests with shipping firms and ship leaders. It is firmly believed that a

match in nationalities is vital to prevent onboard tensions. However, we recognize that market forces dictate shipping companies' choices, often leading them to favor cost-effective options. This makes it unlikely for them to prioritize an ideal national mix. Profit motivations heavily influence hiring choices and crew pairing, aiming for a synergistic team onboard. It's widely recognized that developing nations play a role in the maritime sector by supplying crews. Yet, as the maritime field grows and demands on its workers escalate, crews from these nations are pushed to be more competitive.

Currently, the multitude of requirements are such that they tend to debunk the theory that maintaining smaller crews is only economically advantageous. Presently, all sailors undergo a variety of assessments; tests encompass ship operations, personality, and language, and companies conduct personal meetings with officers to develop a candidate profile, facilitating a more straightforward and comprehensive evaluation. Each company's candidate assessment policy may differ, but a similar foundational idea is adhered to across the board. The companies aim to staff with competent crews, amidst discussions of mitigating operational costs through crew wages.

In recent decades, there has been a trend towards minimizing sailors' wages, and as a result, the demand for crews from developing countries has surged. The maritime industry has already formulated a market network to acquire the necessary crews. The major nationalities involved in shipping include Filipinos, Romanians, Ukrainians, Turks, Indians, Indonesians, Russians, among others. There are studies that showcase the unique characteristics of nations involved in shipping, illuminating cultural practices and each people's culture. In research focusing on the culture and cultural attributes of sailors, exemplified by Greek sailors, it was observed that Greek sailors encounter no issues of cohabitation and cooperation with other nationalities. The maritime tradition that typifies Greek sailors renders them notably competitive, resulting in a prominent wage disparity compared to other nationalities. Furthermore, their ability to cohabit without issues with other nationalities provides a positive feature, consistently making them a preferred choice for maritime companies, who recognize the capabilities and performances they can bring to a ship. Groups of individuals of the same nationality crewing a ship are anticipated to bring their cultural traits from their homeland, unequivocally influencing personal relationships with sailors from other nationalities.

Hence, a conversation unfolds concerning the vessel's operational expenses. The ship's crewing expenditure is categorized under operational costs, encapsulating both direct and indirect financial outlays. The direct costs entail remuneration of the sailors, expenses for their transport to the ship and for repatriation, the cost of feeding the crew, and all costs associated with thoroughly preparing sailors via their training; this category also incorporates contributions to labor unions. Indirect costs envelop: the entire recruitment process costs borne by the company, requisite medical tests for sailors, social insurance-related expenses for sailors, allowances for sailors' communication while sailing, shipping company's bank transaction costs, various risk-cover contributions (insured by P&I clubs), harbor fees, and payments to port agents to facilitate numerous procedures like crew rotation, provisioning the ship, and other ship-related tasks involving the respective agent at every port.

A pivotal detail to note is the substantive impact of the ship's flag—whether of convenience or traditional maritime—on crewing costs due to observable substantial disparities in salary structures. While a flag of convenience might ostensibly imply reduced crewing costs, they

actually escalate in reality. This escalation results from numerous costs emerging from training and adequately preparing sailors from developing nations. While opting for less expensive labor might be a strategy, maintaining quality is crucial for shipping firms. Consequently, when the crew is deficient in this area, expenditures on training and apt preparation spike. The investment from shipping entities is targeted at averting possible maritime mishaps, incidents of marine contamination, and safeguarding lives at sea. Every company establishes its demands based on the training that its ship crew must possess. There exist training matrices that illustrate the basic preconditions a sailor must meet, correlated with their specialization.

Apart from the specific certifications held by a sailor, as previously noted, continuous training is crucial to keep them updated on the latest technologies and safety-related matters. The crew department takes the initiative to arrange for its members to attend particular seminars and e-learning courses, ensuring they fulfill every necessary criterion. While these training sessions do incur costs for the shipping company, they are viewed as essential investments towards improving onboard practices and preventing potential issues. Beyond just the practical aspects taught in seminars, the diverse backgrounds of the crew and their interaction have a profound impact on their collective performance. Sailors spend most of their time on the ship, so harmoniously living with crewmates of various nationalities is non-negotiable. As such, familiarizing sailors with different cultures and prepping them for a harmonious onboard environment is pivotal for achieving the ultimate aim: effective teamwork leading to peak performance.

Every culture is characterized by its own unique attributes, encompassing aspects such as religion, language, shared traditions, values, symbols, and food preferences. The cultural dynamics of multiethnic ship crews have been comprehensively researched, given the dominance of such crews in the maritime sector. Thus, culture significantly impacts not only the performance of crew members in their roles but also how they interact with fellow crew members from various nationalities. In multiple studies focused on the performance of ethnically diverse crews, communication barriers were identified, resulting in misunderstandings and both minor and major safety-related issues arising unnoticed. These issues can pose serious threats to the ship's operation and overall safety. The problem of communication is intensified when the crew itself is in denial and fails to act decisively. All tasks on the ship need to be accurately defined, and instructions from supervisors must be clear and comprehensible to ensure the secure and efficient operation of the ship.

Various strategies exist for crewing ships, focusing on optimizing the benefits of having diverse, multiethnic teams on board. Essential to these strategies are the emphasis on maintaining strong English proficiency, given its pivotal role in maritime communication. This proficiency is crucial not only for recruiting officers but also for the wider crew, as effective teamwork hinges on clear communication to ensure safety and quality. Establishing rigorous job standards in the maritime realm is the subsequent step. Initiatives led by the Captain to foster crew camaraderie, alongside the adoption of anti-discrimination measures, are also pivotal. Several approaches have been identified to address and ease potential issues, including opting for shorter voyages, offering continuous rather than trip-based employment, and providing chances for sailors to journey with their families for set durations. While some of these initiatives might come with elevated costs, many advocate for the maritime industry

to prioritize human connections over automation, which might lead to a reduced workforce. With the right educational and awareness initiatives, cultural and national tensions can be effectively navigated.

The challenge lies in navigating the diverse cultural backgrounds of crew members. Embracing practices that foster an understanding of varied ethnicities and ensuring harmonious temporary living arrangements are essential. Forming multiethnic crews offers the chance to curate high-quality teams by adhering to specific guidelines and practices. Foremost among these is the need for clear and effective communication between the crew department and the ship. The crew department's primary objective should be addressing the ship's needs and offering timely and efficient solutions to potential onboard issues. From the ship's perspective, there should be an underlying assurance that they are backed by a skilled team, ever prepared to step in, offer insights, and address any arising challenges. The synergy and open dialogue between the two units are paramount and should be consistently maintained.

Chapter 4: Flags of Convenience

4.1 Flags of Convenience – Definition

"Flags of Convenience" (FoC)⁴⁸ refers to a practice within the international maritime sector where shipowners register a merchant vessel in a country other than their own.

This is typically done to economize on operating costs or to sidestep certain stringent regulations. This strategy reveals a complex network of intricacies, implications, and concerns within the maritime domain.

There's a notable disparity between the location of ship registration and the nationality of ship owners or the location of operating companies. The motivation behind adopting FoC often involves the circumvention of stricter safety, labor, and environmental protocols in a shipowner's home country. Shipowners enjoy a variety of financial benefits, including reduced registration fees, taxes, and lower operating (including labor) costs. Countries offering FoC generally enforce more lenient maritime laws and impose fewer obligations on shipowners concerning safety and labor rights.

Recognized for its permissive taxation and minimal maritime oversight, Panama is a preeminent choice for FoC registration. Commanding one of the world's largest ship registries, Liberia appeals to shipowners with its lenient legal framework and tax incentives. With modernized legislation and attractive tax incentives, Marshall Islands is a burgeoning registry on the maritime landscape.

⁴⁸ <https://www.itfglobal.org/en/sector/seafarers/flags-of-convenience>

FoC can pave the way for subpar working conditions, diminished wages, and scant legal protections for crew members. The potential dilution of safety standards raises red flags about jeopardizing crew welfare and environmental safety. Lax environmental oversight may engender poor pollutant management and augmented environmental perils. Nations enforcing strict regulations may find their shipowners languishing in a competitive rut compared to counterparts utilizing FoC. Ascertaining liability in incidents or regulatory violations becomes a convoluted affair when ownership and registry are decoupled.

Vigorously opposing the FoC system, the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) focusses assiduously on championing seafarers' rights and optimal working conditions. While the International Maritime Organization (IMO) doesn't directly arbitrate the utilization of FoC, it promulgates global standards that navigate safety, security, and environmental stewardship in shipping. Port State Control (PSC) is a collaborative international arrangement whereby inspections of foreign vessels in national ports ascertain compliance with international conventions concerning the vessel, its equipment, and crew.

Despite the substantial challenges and criticisms, the FoC system maintains its standing as an integral and consequential element in global shipping, primarily due to the economic boons it bestows upon ship owners. The delicate equilibrium of juggling economic gains with ethical, safety, and environmental stewardship remains a pivotal challenge permeating the maritime industry.

4.2 Flag of Panama

Panama is one of the most renowned flags of convenience (FoC) in the international shipping industry. Ship owners from around the world choose to register their vessels under the Panamanian flag, making it one of the largest ship registries globally. The phenomenon of using a flag of convenience involves registering a merchant ship in a country other than that of the shipowner's, typically to take advantage of favorable conditions such as lighter regulations, reduced operating costs, or more lenient labor laws.

As concerned as the favorable regulations we can note the following:

- *Tax Benefits*: One of the primary reasons shipowners chose the Panamanian flag is the notable tax incentives. Panama allows foreign-owned vessels to register under its flag and does not impose income taxes, offering a fiscal-friendly environment for international operators.
- *Flexible Labor Laws*: Panama has comparatively more flexible labor regulations, allowing ship owners potentially to save on labor costs and to operate with considerable leeway in terms of crewing arrangements.

- *Confidentiality*: Panama often provides a degree of confidentiality for vessel owners, which can be an attractive feature for certain operators.
- *Easy Registration*: The country provides a straightforward and efficient registration process, minimizing bureaucratic hurdles for ship owners seeking to register their vessels.
- *Admiralty Law*: Panama's admiralty laws are generally considered favorable for shipowners, providing a legal framework that is supportive of the industry's interests.

In terms of employment and economics, the shipping sector offers numerous job opportunities within Panama itself, involving ship registration, inspection, and legal services, while also contributing significantly to the nation's economy. On the other hand, the lenient regulations of Panama's ship registry often lead to criticisms, particularly in the domains of labor rights, safety protocols, and environmental impacts. Concerns are often raised about the protection of seafarers in terms of working conditions and wages, the adherence to safety conditions on ships, and the environmental standards followed by the vessels registered under the Panamanian flag.

Despite the clear advantages for ship owners, the FoC system, including that of Panama, has faced criticism. Critics often highlight concerns related to worker's rights, citing that crews on Panamanian-registered vessels may work under conditions or for wages that would not be acceptable under other jurisdictions. Additionally, ships under flags of convenience (FoC⁴⁹), such as Panama's, sometimes face scrutiny over safety protocols and environmental standards.

The critics argue that the looser regulations can lead to compromised safety standards and environmental practices. Moreover, the widespread use of FoC can have implications on countries with stringent regulatory environments, as they may struggle to compete in terms of cost-effectiveness in the global market. The complex interplay between the economic advantages provided by the FoC system, and the critiques regarding labor, safety, and environmental aspects, creates a multifaceted challenge in the global maritime industry.

Various international bodies have established frameworks to oversee and regulate global shipping standards, including those applicable to ships flying the Panamanian flag. While the International Maritime Organization (IMO) does not directly control flags of convenience (FoC), it establishes global standards for safety, environmental performance, and security, applicable to all member states, including those known for being FoC nations like Panama. In a parallel initiative, Port State Control (PSC) involves the inspection of foreign ships in national ports to verify both the condition of the vessel and the competency of its crew, ensuring compliance with various international conventions.

⁴⁹ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-28558480>

Additionally, the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) actively campaigns against FoC registries that do not uphold seafarers' rights and working conditions. The ITF aims to shield maritime workers from exploitation and unsafe working conditions by advocating for the adherence to acceptable working standards and conditions on ships under all registries, FoC included.

Panama's role as a prominent player in the FoC system makes it pivotal within the global shipping industry. The balancing act between offering a competitive, attractive environment for shipowners, while also addressing international concerns about labor rights, safety, and environmental standards, continues to be a dynamic, ongoing process within the maritime domain. This highlights the complexity of ensuring ethical and safe practices in a global industry, where regulations and standards can vary widely between jurisdictions.

4.3 Flag of Liberia

Liberia is one of the most notable countries in the world known for offering a "flag of convenience" (FoC) to international shipowners⁵⁰. It operates one of the largest ship registries globally, and this prevalence is attributable to various factors related to its maritime regulations, or sometimes, the lack thereof. Shipowners from around the globe frequently select the Liberian maritime flag due to its numerous advantages, including favorable tax structures, lenient regulatory framework, and the country's stance on certain international maritime conventions.

As concerned as the advantages we have the following:

- *Regulatory Environment:* Liberia's maritime regulations are known for being relatively lax compared to more restrictive regulatory environments. This can involve more lenient standards related to labor, safety, and environmental practices, which can be attractive to shipowners looking to minimize operational costs and navigate through fewer bureaucratic hoops.
- *Taxation Benefits:* Liberia provides a tax-friendly environment for shipowners, which is a pivotal factor behind its popularity as an FoC. The nation offers various financial incentives, including low registration costs and favorable tax structures, that make it economically appealing to register vessels under its flag.
- *Crewing Flexibility:* The Liberian registry often allows for more flexible crewing arrangements, which can involve lower labor costs and fewer restrictions regarding crew nationality or labor practices on board.

⁵⁰ <https://www.lisr.com/>

However, like other countries offering a FoC, Liberia has faced criticism and challenges, notably regarding labor rights, safety standards, and environmental practices of ships sailing under its flag. Concerns include ensuring proper working conditions, fair wages, and adherence to safety and environmental standards. Seafarers on ships under flags of convenience, including Liberia's, sometimes experience poor working conditions and reduced legal protections.

The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) has actively opposed the FoC system, raising concerns about its potential for exploitation of crews and advocating for robust safeguarding of seafarers' rights and conditions.

In terms of regulatory oversight, even though the Liberian registry might have more relaxed regulations than other nations, vessels registered under its flag are still subject to international laws and conventions. Additionally, ships can be inspected by port state control in different international ports to ensure compliance with global standards. Liberia, being a member of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), is also expected to adhere to the organization's safety, security, and environmental performance guidelines.

In essence, while the Liberian flag offers substantial economic and regulatory benefits to international shipowners, it also brings forth a set of challenges and criticisms, particularly pertaining to the ethical and safe operation of vessels, which needs continuous addressing and balancing within the global maritime domain.

4.4 Flag of the Marshall Islands

The flag of the Marshall Islands⁵¹ is notable within the context of "flags of convenience" (FoCs) in the global shipping industry. In the domain of international maritime commerce, FoCs refer to the registration of ships in a country that is different from that of the shipowners, typically with the intent of benefiting from more lenient regulations, reduced operating costs, and strategic advantages in terms of regulatory compliance.

The Marshall Islands, despite their remote location in the central Pacific Ocean, have developed a prominent position in the global maritime industry. Also, they have established themselves as an attractive registry for shipowners, and over time, it has gained popularity and has become one of the largest registries in the world. For shipowners and operators, utilizing the Marshall Islands flag allows them to tap into a host of advantageous features.

Here are some key aspects⁵² related to the Marshall Islands flag in the context of FoCs:

- *Regulatory Framework:* The Marshall Islands offer a regulatory environment that is often viewed as more favorable to shipowners, with competitive registration costs and an administrative framework that balances safety and operational flexibility.

⁵¹ <https://www.register-iri.com/corporate/corporate-general-information/>

⁵² <https://maples.com/en/knowledge-centre/2021/3/the-role-of-the-marshall-islands-flag-in-the-shipping-industry>

- *Tax Benefits:* One of the key attractions of registering under the Marshall Islands' flag is the fiscal benefits it can offer, with shipowners often seeking to optimize tax liabilities and operational costs.
- *Crewing Flexibility:* The crewing regulations under the Marshall Islands' flag might offer more flexibility compared to stringent labor laws in other jurisdictions. This can be pivotal for shipowners and operators, particularly in terms of hiring practices, wage structures, and working conditions on board.
- *Safety Protocols:* While offering various advantages, it's essential to note that ships under the Marshall Islands' flag are still subject to certain safety and operational standards, designed to ensure that vessels operating under the flag maintain requisite levels of safety and environmental compliance.
- *Lower operating costs:* *Lower operating costs* including labor costs, is another significant driver for shipowners to opt for the Marshall Islands as their flag state. This often revolves around the ability to hire crews under terms and conditions that may not be permissible under the regulatory frameworks of other nations.

Vessels sailing under the flag of the Marshall Islands, while enjoying numerous benefits associated with regulatory and fiscal leniencies, are tasked with the responsibility of adhering to varied international maritime conventions and norms.

This adherence is particularly critical when these ships enter the territories of countries with stringent port state control (PSC), which governs the inspection of foreign ships in national ports to ensure compliance with international conventions on safety, pollution prevention, and shipboard living and working conditions. Even with the favorable regulatory and fiscal frameworks provided by the Marshall Islands, these vessels must navigate a sea of international compliance, ensuring that their operations, from crew management to safety protocols, align with global maritime standards, which can sometimes bring about complex navigational and operational challenges.

In the context of environmental considerations, despite the business-friendly climate that the Marshall Islands' flag offers, there emerges a wave of critiques particularly directed towards environmental stewardship and the management of emissions and pollutants from ships. Vessels, while being instruments of robust economic activity, are concurrently potential sources of significant environmental impact. The scrutiny intensifies in the context of flags of convenience, including that of the Marshall Islands, where critics often point to potential

lapses or leniencies in enforcing stringent environmental standards and norms, particularly in an era where global shipping is under the lens for its carbon footprint and pollutant emissions.

Additionally, labor and ethical concerns have continually ebbed and flowed within the discourse surrounding flags of convenience, enveloping the Marshall Islands within this dialogue. The critique often arises from disparities observed in the working conditions, wages, and legal protections accorded to the crews onboard these ships. Even amidst the fiscal and operational advantages that the flag provides, there have been instances and allegations of crews facing sub-optimal working conditions, potential exploitation, and a lack of robust legal recourses, highlighting a critical area that often becomes a fulcrum for ethical discussions within the international maritime community.

Through the lens of regulatory flexibility and fiscal incentives, the flag of the Marshall Islands undeniably continues to be a substantial actor within the global shipping registry tableau. It brings to the fore the inherent complexities and disputations that consistently characterize the practice of utilizing flags of convenience, weaving an intricate narrative that interlaces economic viability with regulatory, environmental, and ethical considerations. The discourse thus finds itself at an intersection where the economical propulsion provided by the regime is perpetually in a dialogue, and sometimes in contention, with the spheres of environmental consciousness, labor rights, and ethical practices within the vast expanse of the international maritime domain.

Chapter 5: Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA)

5.1 Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) Definition

A Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) in the maritime sector is a negotiated contract between a shipping company or group of companies and the labor union representing their seafarers, focusing on varied facets of seafarer employment and conditions on board. This crucial document often establishes a wage scale applicable to different ranks and vessel types, specifying overtime rates and conditions while also occasionally providing for periodic wage increments or bonuses. Moreover, it establishes the standard working hours and conditions for overtime, ensuring that seafarers are allotted adequate rest between work shifts in compliance with international regulations and detailing provisions for paid leave, vacations, and holidays.

Concerning employment duration and conditions, a CBA typically details the length of employment contracts along with conditions for renewal or termination, and the conditions and responsibilities of both parties during joining and sign-off, including aspects related to repatriation. It is also concerned with the living conditions on board, addressing aspects such as accommodation, food, and recreational facilities. Health and safety, vital for seafarers, are covered under CBAs, with specifications related to the provision of medical care on board and ashore, adherence to safety standards and practices, and delineation of insurance coverage, which might include health, accident, and life insurance.

Importantly, CBAs include mechanisms for resolving disputes that arise between the seafarers and management and might also contain provisions for grievance handling. In terms of social security and benefits, CBAs typically detail provisions related to social security benefits for seafarers, which might include pension schemes, and specify other benefits, such as family insurance or educational support. Training and career development opportunities might also be stipulated within CBAs, along with provisions related to union dues and membership, and a description of the rights of the union and seafarers in the context of union activities both on board and ashore.

CBAs also contain provisions to safeguard seafarers from discrimination and harassment and ensure compliance with international regulations and standards, such as the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC). The applicability of the CBA, including details on the vessels and seafarers it covers, is also outlined in this vital document. It's vital for seafarers to familiarize themselves with the applicable CBA and to seek clarification from their union or employer on any aspects that are uncertain or concerning, also being aware of the mechanisms available for enforcing the CBA's terms and addressing any non-compliance.

5.2 Wages of seamen working on a tanker vessel

A tanker vessel is a large ship designed to transport liquid cargo in bulk. These liquids can range from crude oil and its derivatives (such as gasoline and diesel) to chemicals, vegetable oils, wine, and even fresh water. Tankers play a crucial role in the global economy, as they are instrumental in the international trade of energy products and other liquid commodities.

Tanker vessels are undeniably vital for maintaining a reliable supply of energy products worldwide, given that they transport unrefined crude oil from extraction points to refineries and subsequently bring the refined products to market. Chemical tankers, on the other hand, transport various liquid chemicals, demanding more specialized coatings and configurations in their tanks to ensure safe transit.

The significance of tankers in global trade is inarguable, providing a means to facilitate global trade in liquid commodities, thereby underpinning economies and allowing the expansive distribution of critical energy resources. However, they are not without their challenges and risks. Navigating through challenging and often dangerous sea routes demands skilled seamanship and strict adherence to maritime regulations. Furthermore, with the potential for catastrophic environmental impacts in the case of accidents or spills, stringent safety protocols and regular maintenance are imperative.

Operating in the tanker shipping industry also involves managing the complexities of international and local regulations, related not only to safety and environmental protection but also maritime security. Crew members aboard tanker vessels must comply with rigorous safety protocols and often require specialized knowledge and training concerning the handling of specific liquid cargoes.

Life on a tanker is invariably challenging due to factors such as isolation, rigorous work schedules, and the constant need for vigilance concerning safety and operational performance. While ensuring the continuity of global trade, tanker vessels embody a

confluence of engineering mastery and operational excellence, simultaneously mitigating risks and enabling the movement of vital resources across the world.

The wages of seamen aboard a tanker vessel can vary widely depending on a multitude of factors, such as the seaman's rank, experience, the size and type of the vessel, the employing company, and the route that the tanker is sailing. Additionally, international and national regulations, as well as union standards (if applicable), can influence salary levels.

Table 2

SALARY OF SEAFARERS ON DIFFERENT TYPES OF TANKERS

RANK	PRODUCT	CHEMICAL	VLCC	LPG/ LNG
MASTER	11,500 to 12,500	12,000 to 14,000	8,488 to 14,067	12,800 to 15,400
CH. MATE	8,000 to 11,250	10,500 to 11,444	8,000 to 11,062	10,900 to 12,000
2nd MATE	4,000 to 4,800	4,500	4,000 to 4,800	4,760 to 5,250
3rd MATE	3,300 to 3,800	3,500 to 4,420	3,100 to 3,800	3,500 to 4,500
CH. ENGINEER	11,200 to 12,000	12800 to 13880	10,500 to 13,200	12,300 to 15,141
2nd ENGINEER	8,000 to 11,062	10200 to 11,400	10,400 to 10,400	9,900 to 12,300
3rd ENGINEER	4,000 to 4,800	4,200 to 5259	4,000 to 4,800	4,760 to 5,250
4th ENGINEER	3,300 to 3,800	3,500 - 4,700	3,100 to 3,800	3,500 to 4,500
GAS ENGINEER				7,500 to 10,000
ELECTRICIAN	3,200 to 3,600	4,000 - 6,500	3,500 - 6,010	6,000 to 8,100
PUMPMAN	2,250 to 2,500	2,250 - 2,900	2,250 to 2,500	2,500
BOSUN	1,950 to 2500	2,000 to 2,600	1,950 to 2500	2,300 TO 2,500
AB (ABLE SEAMAN)	1,450 to 1,950	1,450 to 2,100	1,450 to 1,950	1,700 to 2,100
OS (ORDINARY SEAMAN)	900 to 1,300	1,050 to 1,500	900 to 1,300	1,300 to 1,800
FITTER/ WELDER	1,950 to 2500	2,100 - 2,500	1,950 to 2500	2,000 to 2,500
OILER	1,450 to 1,950	1,450 to 2,100	1,450 to 1,950	1,700 to 2,100
WIPER	900 to 1,300	1,050 to 1,500	900 to 1,300	1,300 to 1,800
COOK	1,750 to 2,300	1,875 to 2,500\$	1,750 to 2,300	1,800 to 2,500
MESSMAN	1,450 to 1,950	1,450 to 2,100	1,450 to 1,950	1,300 to 1,900
CADET	600 to 1,055	725 to 1,155	600 to 1,055	680 to 1,255

ALL FIGURES ARE IN US DOLLARS (USD)

TABLE 2 SOURCE: [HTTPS://WWW.SEAMANMEMORIES.COM/SEAMANS-SALARY-PER-MONTH-ON-INTERNATIONAL-SHIPS/](https://www.seamanmemories.com/seamans-salary-per-month-on-international-ships/)

Based on the information in the table above, we can observe how a seaman's wage is analyzed based on their rank and the type of vessel. However, we will analyze the wages for LNG vessels separately at a later time.

5.3 Wages of seaman working on a cargo vessel

A cargo vessel, broadly speaking, is a type of ship or boat that is employed to transport goods and materials from one port to another. Across the world, they play a pivotal role in international trade, facilitating the exchange of goods and commodities between nations and continents. There's an incredible variety in types and sizes of cargo vessels, each designed to cater to specific types of cargo or navigate particular sea routes.

In the realm of cargo vessels, numerous sub-categories exist, each designed and utilized for specialized purposes. Some of the key types include:

-*Container ships*, designed to carry standardized cargo containers, enabling efficient loading, unloading, and transport of goods. Their capacity is often measured in Twenty-foot Equivalent Units (TEUs).

-*Bulk carriers* are utilized for the transport of bulk cargo, like coal, ore, grains, and cement. These are usually large vessels, optimized to carry vast quantities of cargo that are loaded directly into the hold.

-*General cargo ships*, which are versatile vessels, capable of transporting a wide variety of goods from dry goods to refrigerated cargo. They might not have the specialized capabilities of other ship types but offer valuable flexibility.

-*Roll-on/Roll-off (RoRo) ships*, which are specifically designed to carry vehicles, machinery, and other items that can be driven or towed onto the ship. These vessels are fitted with ramps and unobstructed deck areas to facilitate the easy loading and unloading of cargo.

-*Reefer ships*, specialized for transporting perishable goods, such as fruits, meat, and dairy products, which need to be refrigerated or frozen. These ships have temperature-controlled holds to maintain the quality of the cargo during transit.

Cargo vessels operate with a common aim: to safely, efficiently, and economically transport goods across water. Each design, from the sturdy general cargo ship to the vast bulk carrier, contains unique features and capabilities to perform its role in the global trade system. Seafarers working on these vessels must be well-versed in their operation, with knowledge of loading and unloading procedures, navigation, machinery operation, and in some cases, the handling of specialized cargo.

Seaman wages in a cargo vessel can vary considerably based on a range of factors including rank, vessel size, shipping company, route, and the seafarer's nationality, amongst others. However, here are some general approximate figures to give you an idea of monthly wages across various roles on a cargo vessel:

Table 3

SALARY OF SEAFARERS ON DRY CARGO SHIPS

RANK	BULK	CONTAINER	CAR CARRIER	GEN. CARGO
MASTER	8,100 to 12,100	8,000 to 11,700	8,100 to 12,600	9,000 to 13,000
CH. MATE	6,000 to 9,500	6,900 to 7,100	5,500 to 7,750	5,500 to 8,670
2nd MATE	2,500 to 3,500	2,700 to 3,700	3,200 to 4,500	2,500 to 4,500
3rd MATE	2,000 to 3,990	3,100 to 4,000	3,300 to 3,500	2,500 to 3,300
CH. ENGINEER	8,400 to 12,000	8,200 to 11,000	7,500 to 10,200	7,700 to 10,200
2nd ENGINEER	6,700 to 9,500	6,900 to 7,100	5,500 to 7,750	5,500 to 8,670
3rd ENGINEER	2,700 to 4,000	2,700 to 4,300	3,200 to 4,500	2,500 to 4,500
4th ENGINEER	2,200 to 3,000	2,000 to 3,200	2,200 to 3,200	2,500 to 3,150
ELECTRICIAN	4,000 to 5,600	3,400 to 5,000	2,000 to 5,600	2,750 to 5,040
BOSUN	1,600 to 1900	1,600 to 1900	1,600 to 2,000	1,600 to 1800
AB (ABLE SEAMAN)	1,387 to 1,400	1,300 to 1,672	1,300 to 1,672	1,100 to 1,600
OS (ORDINARY SEAMAN)	900 to 1,220	910 to 1,285	900 to 1,220	1131 to 1,400
FITTER/ WELDER	1,650 to 1,900	1,636 to 1,850	1,600 to 2,000	1,636 to 2,201
OILER	1,387 to 1,400	1,300 to 1,672	1,300 to 1,672	1,100 to 1,600
WIPER	900 to 1,220	910 to 1,285	900 to 1,220	1131 to 1,400
COOK	1,600 to 1,988	1,632 to 1,900	1,600 to 2,000	1,400 to 2,000
MESSMAN/ 2ND COOK	500 to 1,400	900 to 1,446	900 to 1,446	900 to 1,446
CADET	200 to 750	400 to 650	400 to 650	250 to 700

ALL FIGURES ARE IN US DOLLARS (USD)

TABLE 3 SOURCE: [HTTPS://WWW.SEAMANMEMORIES.COM/SEAMANS-SALARY-PER-MONTH-ON-INTERNATIONAL-SHIPS/](https://www.seamanmemories.com/seamans-salary-per-month-on-international-ships/)

Based on the information presented in the table above, we can discern the wages of seamen based on their rank and the type of cargo vessel. Additionally, we can see that the seamen's wages on cargo vessels are lower than those on a tanker vessel. The discrepancy in wages between cargo and tanker vessels can be attributed to several factors, with one of the most prominent being the distinct set of skills, knowledge, and training that seamen on tanker vessels must possess. The nature of their work demands a heightened level of expertise and competence, given the potentially hazardous cargo they handle. In contrast, seamen on cargo vessels, while still performing crucial roles in maritime operations, may not require the same level of specialized training and expertise as their counterparts on tanker vessels. Cargo vessels typically transport a broader range of goods that may not pose the same level of risk, which can impact the skill set and training requirements for the crew.

5.4 Wages of seamen working on a Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) vessel

LNG vessels, or LNG carriers, are ships designed for transporting liquefied natural gas (LNG) across the oceans. LNG is natural gas that has been cooled to a temperature of approximately -162 degrees Celsius, which converts it into a liquid form and significantly reduces its volume, making it feasible and economical to transport over long distances where pipelines are not available.

LNG vessels play a crucial role in the global energy supply chain, enabling the export of natural gas from regions with abundant resources to areas with high demand but limited local production. This becomes particularly relevant in the context of an evolving global energy landscape, where natural gas is often considered a ‘transition’ fuel, helping to move away from more carbon-intensive energy sources like coal and oil towards a cleaner energy future.

The wages for seamen working on Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) vessels can be influenced by various factors such as rank, experience, the vessel's operating region, and the employing company. LNG carriers are specialized ships, and working with LNG requires specific knowledge and expertise due to the volatile nature of liquefied gas and the complex technologies used on these ships. Hence, the wages tend to be higher compared to other merchant vessels.

Table 4

SALARY OF SEAFARERS ON DIFFERENT TYPES OF TANKERS				
RANK	PRODUCT	CHEMICAL	VLCC	LPG/ LNG
MASTER	11,500 to 12,500	12,000 to 14,000	8,488 to 14,067	12,800 to 15,400
CH. MATE	8,000 to 11,250	10,500 to 11,444	8,000 to 11,062	10,900 to 12,000
2nd MATE	4,000 to 4,800	4,500	4,000 to 4,800	4,760 to 5,250
3rd MATE	3,300 to 3,800	3,500 to 4,420	3,100 to 3,800	3,500 to 4,500
CH. ENGINEER	11,200 to 12,000	12800 to 13880	10,500 to 13,200	12,300 to 15,141
2nd ENGINEER	8,000 to 11,062	10200 to 11,400	10,400 to 10,400	9,900 to 12,300
3rd ENGINEER	4,000 to 4,800	4,200 to 5259	4,000 to 4,800	4,760 to 5,250
4th ENGINEER	3,300 to 3,800	3,500 - 4,700	3,100 to 3,800	3,500 to 4,500
GAS ENGINEER				7,500 to 10,000
ELECTRICIAN	3,200 to 3,600	4,000 - 6,500	3,500 - 6,010	6,000 to 8,100
PUMPMAN	2,250 to 2,500	2,250 - 2,900	2,250 to 2,500	2,500
BOSUN	1,950 to 2500	2,000 to 2,600	1,950 to 2500	2,300 TO 2,500
AB (ABLE SEAMAN)	1,450 to 1,950	1,450 to 2,100	1,450 to 1,950	1,700 to 2,100
OS (ORDINARY SEAMAN)	900 to 1,300	1,050 to 1,500	900 to 1,300	1,300 to 1,800
FITTER/ WELDER	1,950 to 2500	2,100 - 2,500	1,950 to 2500	2,000 to 2,500
OILER	1,450 to 1,950	1,450 to 2,100	1,450 to 1,950	1,700 to 2,100
WIPER	900 to 1,300	1,050 to 1,500	900 to 1,300	1,300 to 1,800
COOK	1,750 to 2,300	1,875 to 2,500\$	1,750 to 2,300	1,800 to 2,500
MESSMAN	1,450 to 1,950	1,450 to 2,100	1,450 to 1,950	1,300 to 1,900
CADET	600 to 1,055	725 to 1,155	600 to 1,055	680 to 1,255

ALL FIGURES ARE IN US DOLLARS (USD)

TABLE 4 SOURCE: [HTTPS://WWW.SEAMANMEMORIES.COM/SEAMANS-SALARY-PER-MONTH-ON-INTERNATIONAL-SHIPS/](https://www.seamanmemories.com/seamans-salary-per-month-on-international-ships/)

Additionally, certain companies might offer additional benefits and bonuses, such as a loyalty bonus for staying with the company for an extended period, hazard pay for working with volatile cargo, or a bonus for completing certain certification courses.

Moreover, the market demand for LNG and the geopolitical situation, which affects gas prices, can also impact the wages in the LNG shipping industry. Given the complexity and the responsibilities associated with operating and maintaining an LNG vessel, those with specific certifications and experience may find themselves in a favorable position in terms of wages and benefits.

As we can see, seafarers who operate Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) carriers are often equipped with specialized knowledge and skills due to the technical complexity and safety protocols associated with these vessels. LNG carriers utilize sophisticated technologies to safely manage and transport the liquefied natural gas, necessitating crew members to be well-versed in complex cargo containment and management systems. The volatile nature of LNG also mandates the adherence to stringent safety protocols, requiring seafarers to undergo specialized training to manage the potential risks associated with transporting such hazardous cargo, thereby justifying higher remuneration.

Furthermore, the navigational aspects of LNG carriers can sometimes present additional challenges. Specific routes and ports impose particular restrictions and requirements for these vessels, demanding a nuanced understanding of varied navigational mandates. The management and handling of LNG, which is both cryogenically frozen and flammable, inherently involve elevated risks. Crew members are entrusted with the critical task of executing their duties with utmost precision to prevent any incidents, and this elevated risk and responsibility often translates into higher pay.

In addition to managing the tangible risks associated with the cargo itself, seafarers on LNG carriers also navigate through a stringent framework of international, regional, and port-specific regulations. Ensuring compliance with these rigorous rules demands a sophisticated level of expertise and responsibility, attributes that are typically rewarded with higher wages in the sector. Consequently, the combination of specialized knowledge, adherence to rigorous safety protocols, and the management of elevated risks and strict regulatory compliance contributes to the heightened wage structure observed for seafarers on LNG carriers.

Chapter 6: The significance of seafarers' nationalities

The significance of seafarers' nationalities encompasses a broad spectrum of considerations. Economically, shipowners might employ seafarers from certain countries due to lower wage expectations, optimizing operational costs. Countries with a high number of nationals working in maritime roles, like the Philippines, India, and Indonesia, heavily rely on the

remittances sent back home, supporting local economies. Additionally, nations such as the Philippines, Ukraine, and Greece are known for their robust maritime training institutions that produce well-trained seafarers, making them attractive to shipowners. These institutions often align with international standards like the STCW, ensuring a competent maritime workforce.

Cultural and linguistic backgrounds play a crucial role in maritime operations. A crew with a shared linguistic background can foster smoother communication, leading to efficient operations and safer environments. Certain cultural backgrounds might influence work ethics, discipline, and the overall dynamic onboard. Moreover, shared nationality can promote a sense of camaraderie, boosting crew morale and mental well-being, especially given the challenges of life at sea.

Legal and regulatory frameworks also impact hiring decisions based on nationality. National regulations, labor laws, and international conventions can influence which nationalities are preferred for certain routes or vessels. In some cases, flag states or charterers might have specific requirements or preferences about the crew's nationality, particularly for vessels navigating specific routes.

Geopolitically, the nationality of seafarers can become significant in conflict zones. Neutral or friendly nation seafarers might be at lesser risk, and political relationships between countries can affect visa provisions, shore leave, or crew change processes. In essence, the nationality of seafarers plays a pivotal role in the maritime industry, influencing operational, economic, cultural, and geopolitical dynamics.

Diagram 1

SEAFARERS' NATIONALITIES

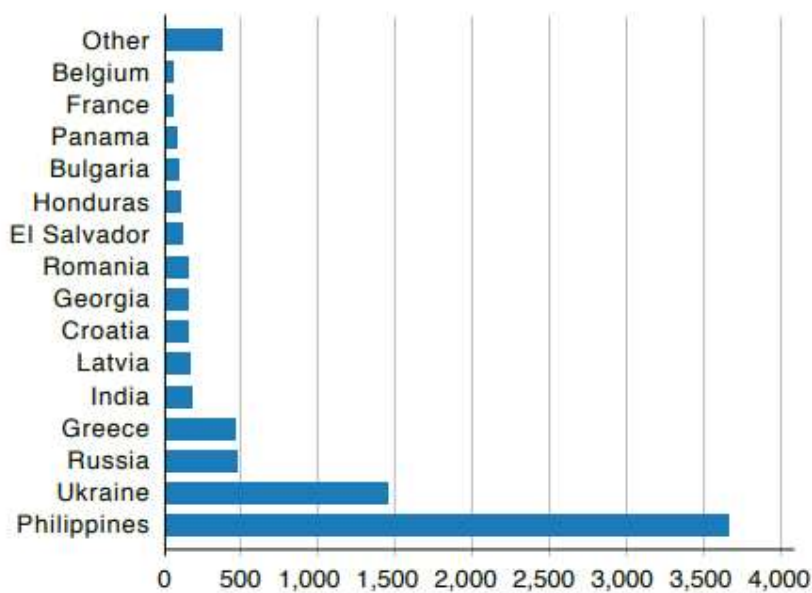


DIAGRAM 1 SOURCE: [HTTPS://SAFETY4SEA.COM/CM-THREE-REASONS-WHY-FILIPINO-SEAFARERS-ARE-THE-HAPPIEST-CREW/](https://SAFETY4SEA.COM/CM-THREE-REASONS-WHY-FILIPINO-SEAFARERS-ARE-THE-HAPPIEST-CREW/)

6.1 Filipino seafarers

About 90% of the world's goods are shipped across the oceans on a fleet of around 100,000 vessels (UNCTAD 2019), manned by roughly 1.6 million seafarers. A significant portion of these maritime workers hail from East and Southeast Asia, with the Philippines standing out as a key provider of seafaring labor. Filipino sailors are vital to maintaining the flow of global trade and the worldwide economy's connectivity. The reality of modern globalization relies heavily on the continuous efforts of these seafarers.

Filipino seafarers are widely recognized for their skills and work ethics in the global maritime industry, playing a vital role and being in demand across various types of vessels worldwide. Renowned for their proficiency in English and adeptness in various maritime tasks, they are products of the Philippines' robust maritime education and training system, which offers courses in fields like Marine Engineering and Marine Transportation, along with providing necessary certifications required by international standards such as the STCW. Numerous maritime academies and specialized training centers in the Philippines are dedicated to producing competent and reliable seafarers who are deployed across different types of vessels, facilitated by various manning agencies within the country.

Despite the acknowledged contributions to the maritime industry and the Philippine economy, Filipino seafarers face significant challenges related to health and safety, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, and issues related to fair wages and working conditions. Organizations like the Associated Marine Officers' and Seamen's Union of the Philippines (AMOSUP) and the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) work towards ensuring the welfare, rights, and regulatory adherence of Filipino maritime professionals.

The wages earned by working on internationally trading ships are significantly higher than most shore-based employment. Remittances from Filipino seafarers are a crucial part of the Philippine economy, offering substantial foreign exchange and financial support to local communities and families. This dynamic interplay between economic contribution and ensuring the rights and welfare of seafarers necessitates a balanced approach that considers the physical and mental wellbeing of the seafarers while safeguarding their economic output.⁵³

⁵³ Johanna Markkula Department of Social Anthropology, University of Oslo, Oslo, Norway (2019) We move the world': the mobile labor of Filipino seafarers <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/epdf/10.1080/17450101.2021.1880129?needAccess=true>

The table below provides an overview of the salary range categorized by the rank and type of ship:

Table 5

WAGE BRACKETS		
		merchantsealife.com
RANK	TANKERS	BULK/CONTAINER/GEN. CARGO
MASTER	\$10,000 - \$14,000	\$8,500 - \$10,000
CHIEF OFFICER	\$8,000 - \$9,500	\$6,900 - \$7,500
2ND OFFICER	\$4,000 - \$6,000	\$3,200 - \$4,200
3RD OFFICER	\$3,000 - \$4,000	\$2,500 - \$3,100
DECK CADET	\$1,000 - \$1,200	\$450 - \$750
CHIEF ENGINEER	\$9,000 - \$12,000	\$8,500 - \$9,500
2ND ENGINEER	\$7,500 - \$8,800	\$6,900 - \$7,500
3RD ENGINEER	\$4,000 - \$6,000	\$3,200 - \$4,200
4TH ENGINEER	\$3,000 - \$3,800	\$2,500 - \$3,000
ELECTRICIAN	\$4,000 - \$6,000	\$3,800 - \$4,800
BOSUN	\$2,400 - \$2,800	\$1,900 - \$2,200
AB	\$1,800 - \$2,200	\$1,400 - \$1,900
OS	\$1,400 - \$1,800	\$900 - \$1,300
DECK HAND	\$800 - \$1,000	\$700 - \$900
FITTER	\$2,400 - \$2,800	\$1,900 - \$2,200
OILER/MOTORMAN	\$1,800 - \$2,200	\$1,400 - \$1,900
WIPER	\$1,400 - \$1,800	\$900 - \$1,300
ENGINE HAND	\$800 - \$1,000	\$700 - \$900
CHIEF COOK	\$2,400 - \$2,800	\$1,900 - \$2,200
MESSMAN	\$1,400 - \$1,800	\$900 - \$1,300

TABLE 5 SOURCE: [HTTPS://MERCHANTSEALIFE.COM/FILIPINO-SEAMANS-SALARY/](https://merchantsealife.com/filipino-seamans-salary/)

The Philippines, adhering to international conventions like the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) and the STCW, maintains standards to ensure Filipino seafarers are not only well-trained but also treated in accordance with internationally accepted norms. As the maritime industry evolves with technological advancements and changes in the global labor market, the continuous upgrading of skills and adherence to emerging trends becomes paramount to maintaining the competitive advantage of Filipino seafarers.

Life at sea for Filipino seafarers involves overcoming the challenges of being away from family for extended periods and navigating the multicultural and multilingual environment aboard vessels. This has resulted in a unique maritime culture among Filipino seafarers, intertwining their professional and personal lives in a distinctive diaspora that influences both the maritime sector and the social and economic aspects of life in the Philippines.⁵⁴

The substantial contributions, alongside the challenges and experiences of Filipino seafarers, intricately weave into the maritime industry's global tapestry, reflecting not only in the sector but also significantly impacting the socio-economic aspects of the Philippines. Further specific insights and up-to-date information about Filipino seafarers would ideally be sourced from the latest reports and official platforms dedicated to their advocacy and support.

6.2 Ukrainian seafarers

Ukrainian seafarers are widely recognized in the global maritime sector for their skills, expertise, and significant contribution to international shipping. They play a pivotal role in various areas of the maritime industry, being part of the crew on merchant ships, cruise ships, and also working in offshore sectors.

Ukraine, boasting a robust maritime educational system, provides an array of maritime training and educational programs that comply with international standards, specifically those stipulated by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the STCW Convention. Ukrainian maritime training institutions have historically produced a substantial number of highly skilled and competent seafarers, offering expertise in navigation, marine engineering, and various other maritime-specific skills.

Navigating through the complexity of the global maritime industry, Ukrainian seafarers often grapple with a myriad of challenges such as securing fair wages, ensuring safe and secure working conditions, and managing the social and psychological impacts of life at sea. This is where various maritime unions and organizations step into advocate for their rights and welfare, ensuring their employment conditions, work hours, and repatriation rights are safeguarded and are in alignment with international standards and norms.

Ukrainian seafarers are not only a crucial asset to the global maritime industry but also contribute significantly to the Ukrainian economy. Remittances from seafarers represent a vital source of income for families and communities in Ukraine. Therefore, the welfare, job security, and continuous professional development of seafarers are not only pivotal in a personal and social context but also from an economic perspective.

⁵⁴ Lindgren Nina, Nilsson, Jessica University of Borås/School of Education and Behavioural Sciences , 2012 Filipinos sailing on the seven seas: a qualitative study of Filipino seafarers working on international vessels <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A1308309&dswid=-1923>

In a broader context, understanding the life and challenges of Ukrainian seafarers involves recognizing the multifaceted nature of their profession. The social and psychological implications of long periods away from family, operating within multinational and multilingual crews, and managing the demands and stressors of maritime work are complex and multifaceted. Thus, providing adequate support, mental health resources, and ensuring regular and reliable communication with family becomes imperative.

As the maritime industry undergoes continuous evolution, shaped by technological advancements and altered by global trade patterns and environmental regulations, the role, challenges, and opportunities for Ukrainian seafarers will also undoubtedly transform. Keeping abreast of these changes, ensuring continuous upskilling, and adhering to evolving industry standards will be key to ensuring that Ukrainian seafarers continue to play a vital role in the global maritime industry in the future.

Ukrainian seafarers have been a significant part of the global maritime workforce for several decades, and their wages can vary significantly based on a multitude of factors. In recent years, the wages of Ukrainian seafarers have been competitive, especially when considering the cost of living in Ukraine. Their training, professionalism, and work ethic make them sought-after in the global shipping industry, ensuring that their compensation remains competitive on the international stage.

It is essential to note that wages for Ukrainian seafarers, like those of other nationalities, are influenced by factors such as the type of vessel, rank and experience

Table 8

Salaries on oil tankers

Master	10 500 – 13 500
Chief Officer	7 600 – 8 200
2 nd Officer	3 300
3 rd Officer	2 800 – 3 000
Chief Engineer	9 500 – 10 000
2 nd Engineer	7 700 – 8 000
3 rd Engineer	3 700 – 4 000
4 th Engineer	2 800 – 3 500
ETO	5 000 – 5 300
Pumpman	2 200 – 2 400
Fitter	2 100 – 2 500
Cook	1 600 – 2 000
Bosun	1 800 – 2 000
AB	1 250 – 1 500
Oiler	1 250 – 1 500
OS	1 300 – 1 500
Wiper	1 000 – 1 100
Deck/Eng. Cadet	450 – 500

TABLE 8 SOURCE: [HTTPS://SEANEWS.RU/2020/06/23/RU-PRO-ZARPLATY-V-TANKERNOM-FLOTE/](https://seanews.ru/2020/06/23/ru-pro-zarplaty-v-tankernom-flote/)

Table 9
Salaries on LNG tankers

Master	13 200 – 13 400
Chief Officer	10 800 – 11 000
2 nd Officer	3 800 – 4 200
3 rd Officer	3 000 – 5 300
Chief Engineer	12 000 – 12 500
2 nd Engineer	9 500 – 10 000
3 rd Engineer	4 200 – 4 300
4 th Engineer	3 600 – 4 100
ETO	7 000 – 8 200
Gas Engineer	6 700 – 6 800
Pumpman	2 600 – 3 200
Fitter	1 900 – 2 200
Cook	1 700 – 2 000
Bosun	1 900 – 2 200
AB	1 500
Oiler	1 600 – 1 800
OS	1 300 – 1 500
Wiper	1 000 – 1 100
Deck/Eng. Cadet	500 – 700

TABLE 9 SOURCE: [HTTPS://SEANEWS.RU/2020/06/23/RU-PRO-ZARPLATY-V-TANKERNOM-FLOTE/](https://seanews.ru/2020/06/23/ru-pro-zarplaty-v-tankernom-flote/)

In recent years, the wages of Ukrainian seafarers have been competitive, especially when considering the cost of living in Ukraine. Their training, professionalism, and work ethic make them sought-after in the global shipping industry, ensuring that their compensation remains competitive on the international stage.

6.3 Russian seafarers

Russian seafarers are prominent and respected members of the international maritime community, backed by a nation with a rich and extensive history in naval and maritime undertakings. The training of these seafarers in Russia is facilitated through a solid educational and regulatory infrastructure that thoroughly covers both practical and theoretical maritime knowledge. Various marine academies and training institutions in the country employ stringent curricula that guarantee the thorough preparation of graduates for the demands of the maritime sector. Consequently, Russian seafarers find employment across diverse sectors, including cargo ships, fishing fleets, and offshore platforms in the oil and gas industry.

The employment and wage structure for Russian seafarers are influenced by several factors, including the opportunities available domestically and internationally, and the competency and expertise they bring to the table. Their salaries can fluctuate depending on a multitude of factors, such as their rank, experience, vessel type, and employing company, with the intention of offering competitive wages in the international market to allure skilled seafarers.

In order to safeguard their rights and ensure equitable working conditions and wages, seafarers are represented by unions and organizations. These bodies negotiate collective bargaining agreements and provide a safeguard against exploitation, as well as a pathway for redress in case of disputes. Adhering to national and international certifications and regulations, such as the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW), is vital for maintaining and updating their skills and knowledge.

Russian seafarers, similarly, to seafarers worldwide, often encounter demanding working conditions, which include long durations away from home, and occasionally, hazardous working environments. Furthermore, the global maritime market, influenced by economic shifts, geopolitical contexts, and international maritime legislation, also plays a crucial role in shaping their employment and wage prospects. Safety and security are paramount, with emphasis placed on the adherence to international laws and practices that protect seafarers during their international voyages.

In conclusion, Russian seafarers continue to play an integral role in the global seafaring community, attributed to their well-regarded skills and knowledge.

6.4 Greek seafarers

Greek seafarers, with their indomitable spirit and skill, stand as a testament to Greece's illustrious maritime legacy. This connection with the sea is not just a professional pursuit; it's an embodiment of the nation's ethos, tracing back to ancient times when Greek mariners were among the pioneers of navigation. Today, their skills are honed in prestigious maritime academies spread across Greece. These academies, revered globally, emphasize not only the theoretical nuances of the maritime profession but also its practical demands. Through partnerships with prominent maritime corporations and organizations, they facilitate internships and on-the-job training, bridging the gap between academic knowledge and the real-world demands of the sea.

The wage structure for Greek seafarers, like their international counterparts, is multifaceted. While it depends on the type of ship, rank, and the voyage's length, Greek shipping companies are keenly aware of the need to offer competitive remuneration. The deep-rooted significance of maritime trade to the Greek economy mandates that efforts be consistent in ensuring that the country's seafarers are both adequately compensated and work under favorable conditions. This is where the role of Greek maritime unions becomes paramount. Not merely as negotiators of wages, but as custodians of seafarers' rights, they serve as a buffer between seafarers and potential exploitation. Their efforts extend to ensuring that contracts are honored, work conditions are humane, and any grievances seafarers might have been addressed promptly.

Table 10

Salaries on oil tankers

	Rank	Wage
1.	Master / Captain	\$15.000,00
2.	Chief Officer	\$13.500,00
3.	Chief Engineer	\$13.500,00
4.	2nd Officer	\$10.000,00
5.	2nd Engineer	\$9.000,00
6.	3rd Engineer	\$7.500,00

TABLE 11 SOURCE [HTTPS://NAVAL-ACAD.GR/ΕΝΔΕΙΚΤΙΚΕΣ-ΑΠΟΔΟΧΕΣ /](https://naval-acad.gr/ενδεικτικές-αποδοχές/)**Table 11**

Salaries on a cargo vessel

	Rank	Wage
1.	Master / Captain	\$10.000,00
2.	Chief Officer	\$7.500,00
3.	Chief Engineer	\$9.500,00
4.	2nd Officer	\$5.000,00
5.	2nd Engineer	\$7.500,00
6.	3rd Engineer	\$5.000,00

TABLE 12 SOURCE [HTTPS://NAVAL-ACAD.GR/ΕΝΔΕΙΚΤΙΚΕΣ-ΑΠΟΔΟΧΕΣ /](https://naval-acad.gr/ενδεικτικές-αποδοχές/)

While their professional prowess is undisputed, what sets Greek seafarers apart is the intangible bond they share with their peers. The challenges of the sea - the isolation from family, the relentless waves, and the unpredictability of maritime elements - are countered with an ingrained sense of brotherhood. This sense of community is palpable even ashore. Greek seafarers are known to be active in their localities, often spearheading or participating in maritime events, festivals, and community development activities.

To encapsulate, Greek seafarers are not just sailors; they are custodians of a legacy that spans millennia. Their dedication and prowess, fortified by rigorous training and a profound sense of community, position them as esteemed members of the global maritime fraternity. Their contributions, both at sea and on land, are emblematic of Greece's enduring maritime heritage.

6.5 Romanian Seafarers

Romanian seafarers, like their counterparts from other nations, have been a crucial part of the global maritime industry, contributing to both the international shipping community and their domestic economy. With a rich history and tradition in maritime activities, Romania has established itself as a provider of highly skilled and competent seafarers in the global maritime industry. Recognized maritime training institutions and academies in Romania adhere to international standards, such as those set by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), providing comprehensive education and training to prospective seafarers. Courses typically cover a range of necessary competencies, such as navigation, engineering, and other specialized maritime skills. The curricula also adhere to the requirements of the STCW Convention to ensure Romanian seafarers can serve efficiently on vessels worldwide.

Despite their crucial role and considerable contributions, Romanian seafarers often encounter challenges that are pervasive in the international maritime industry, such as concerns regarding wages, working conditions, and issues related to repatriation, especially highlighted during crises like the COVID-19 pandemic. To address these issues, various unions and organizations work diligently to uphold the rights of seafarers, ensuring that their working conditions, wages, and overall wellbeing are aligned with international standards and conventions.

Romanian seafarers work on various types of vessels, from cargo ships to cruise ships, and their remittances significantly impact the national economy. These financial contributions not only support the families of the seafarers but also contribute to local communities and national economic stability. This economic aspect emphasizes the need for robust policies and interventions to safeguard the rights and wellbeing of seafarers, ensuring that they can continue to work in safe and fair conditions while contributing to the global maritime industry and their home country's economy.

Cultural and social aspects also intertwine with the professional lives of Romanian seafarers. The experience of spending extensive periods away from home, navigating the challenges of a multilingual and multicultural working environment, and managing the pressures and demands of maritime work shapes their experiences and lives in unique ways. Addressing the physical and mental health needs of seafarers, considering the specific challenges they face, remains pivotal.

As the maritime industry continues to evolve, shaped by technological advancements, environmental considerations, and changes in international trade and regulations, the role of Romanian seafarers will also inevitably adapt. Ensuring continuous skill development, adherence to emerging industry standards, and maintaining a robust support system for the seafarers will be crucial in navigating future pathways in the global maritime landscape.

At this point, it should be noted that all the wages of the sailors used in this research are approximate based on the research we conducted, and they do not necessarily apply, as the final amount is at the discretion of each employer.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

In summary, shipping is a cornerstone of global economic and trade systems, intricately connecting producers and consumers and facilitating the vast transfer of goods. Its complexity underscores the need for astute understanding by all stakeholders in international trade. The maritime profession, encompassing varied roles from engineering to navigation, plays a pivotal role in ensuring the safe and efficient movement of goods and people across seas. Furthermore, the unique challenges faced by maritime professionals, such as prolonged separations from family, highlight the mental and emotional resilience required in this sector. This underlines the significance of maritime work not only in terms of global logistics but also in terms of the personal sacrifices and adaptability of those who undertake it.

We should definitely highlight the importance of shipping and the maritime profession in Greece. Greece's maritime history is not just a testament to its ancient heritage but a significant pillar of its current economic, cultural, and international stature. With its geographical advantage, Greece has consistently been at the forefront of maritime activities, influencing global commerce, fostering international relationships, and contributing to maritime laws and advancements. The nation's maritime endeavors go beyond mere economic contributions; they are ingrained in its cultural fabric, reflecting in its traditions, education, and events. Moreover, with its robust presence in ship management, maritime research, and international collaborations, Greece holds a dominant position on the global maritime stage.

Based on the above study, we have to note that a career in the maritime industry offers a rich tapestry of opportunities, both in terms of professional growth and financial rewards. To embark on this journey, aspiring seafarers must navigate a well-defined educational and training path, underpinned by international standards and national directives. Starting with a foundational education, candidates transition to specialized maritime academies, followed by rigorous certifications, sea-time accrual, and advanced training tailored to their chosen trajectory. However, the maritime domain isn't just restricted to on-board roles. The vast ecosystem of shipping includes diverse sectors like shipbuilding, logistics, insurance, and more, each offering myriad avenues for career advancement. Ultimately, charting a course in this industry demands a harmonious blend of academic learning, hands-on experience, and a commitment to lifelong professional growth, ensuring that maritime professionals are not only equipped but excel in the ever-evolving maritime landscape. The seamless functioning of a ship around the clock is anchored by its meticulously organized crew, excluding the Captain, each with designated roles and responsibilities as stipulated by maritime laws. These crew members range from officers with intricate navigational and operational duties to unlicensed personnel who maintain and support essential ship functions. A ship's crew composition, determined by various factors such as vessel type and engine power, underscores the significance of specialization and hierarchy within maritime operations. The Deck Department, headed by the Master, primarily focuses on navigational and deck operations. Meanwhile, the Engine Department, spearheaded by the Chief Engineer, ensures the ship's machinery and systems run efficiently. Each rank in both departments brings its

own set of duties, responsibilities, and expertise. It is the collective effort of these crew members, each adhering to their distinct roles, that ensures the ship operates safely and efficiently. Furthermore, shipping companies often craft their own organizational structures, emphasizing the importance of collaboration and effective teamwork onboard. The wealth of ranks and positions on a ship is a testament to the complex nature of maritime operations, requiring a delicate balance of expertise, experience, and coordination.

Subsequently, we examined various organizations related to maritime labor, working conditions, wages, and the rights of seafarers.

Firstly, the MLC. The International Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) is a pivotal regulatory framework established by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 2006 to protect the rights and enhance the working conditions of seafarers globally. Often termed the "Seafarers' Bill of Rights," the MLC consolidates over 68 international labor standards spanning eight decades, promoting an equitable maritime industry by ensuring that nations and shipowners maintain decent work and living conditions on ships. With its unique structure, the MLC details binding obligations for member states and provides specific guidelines and standards under five major titles, addressing various aspects of maritime labor, from employment conditions to health and safety. The convention has a built-in provision for amendments to stay relevant with the evolving maritime industry, as evidenced by the additions in 2014 and 2016. For those in maritime professions, a comprehensive understanding of the MLC is essential to guarantee legal adherence and foster a secure, healthy, and equitable working environment for all seafarers.

Secondly, the ILO. The International Labour Organization (ILO) stands as a cornerstone in the global labor landscape, vigilantly championing workers' rights and establishing international labor standards since its foundation in 1919. Embracing a unique tripartite approach, the ILO actively engages governments, employers, and workers in shaping labor policies and standards. These efforts span across various sectors, ensuring workers' rights such as the abolition of forced labor, gender equality, and the termination of child labor. As a testament to its achievements, the ILO was honored with the Nobel Peace Prize in 1969, underlining its dedication to fostering peace and justice in labor relations. The organization's profound influence is also evident in its endeavors to set a global wage benchmark for seafarers. The ILO, in association with the Joint Maritime Commission, annually revises the *recommended base salary* for competent seafarers, ensuring that they are remunerated fairly in a rapidly globalizing economy. Moreover, the ILO's comprehensive guidelines, as encapsulated in the Maritime Labour Convention, emphasize balanced work hours, adequate rest, and just compensation for overtime, safeguarding seafarers' well-being and dignity. In a world where the workforce's dynamics are constantly shifting, the ILO serves as a beacon, ensuring that workers, irrespective of their roles or regions, are treated with equity, respect, and justice. Its persistent advocacy and policy guidelines reinforce its unparalleled commitment to creating a balanced, fair, and inclusive global labor environment.

Thirdly, the PNO. The Panhellenic Seamen's Federation (PNO) stands as an emblematic pillar in Greece's maritime industry, zealously defending the rights and interests of the country's seafarers since its inception in 1916. By encompassing diverse labor unions within its fold, the PNO ensures holistic representation for the entire maritime workforce. The federation's commitment is further evinced by its continuous engagement in negotiations and

its strategic use of strike actions as leverage to enhance working conditions, wages, and overall rights of seafarers. Despite navigating turbulent waters, stemming from both domestic and international challenges like globalization and the rise of non-Greek maritime workforce, the PNO remains unwavering in its mission. Through forging international alliances and collaborative discussions, the PNO underscores its vision for a unified, fair, and just global maritime landscape.

Moreover, we emphasized the importance of the crew department. The crew department plays an indispensable role in the maritime company, orchestrating a myriad of tasks that ensure seamless operations and safety aboard vessels. Its responsibilities range from selecting and managing the workforce to overseeing training and ensuring compliance with international maritime standards. The importance of this department is underscored by the intricate selection processes they employ, which is informed by diverse criteria, encompassing factors like qualifications, cost, and company culture. As the maritime landscape is shaped by both globalization and evolving standards, companies strategically mold their crew selection processes, relying on both in-house recruitment and partnerships with manning agencies. However, a consistent thread that runs through all these processes is the adherence to international mandates, ensuring the safety, competence, and multicultural integration of crew members on board. The company's approach to crew composition and management not only reflects its commitment to excellence but also its acknowledgment of the diverse, interconnected world in which it operates.

In the second part of this study, we focused on the wages of seafarers and the factors that influence them. One of the factors we examine is the flags of convenience. In conclusion, the "Flags of Convenience" (FoC) system is a deeply entrenched practice in the international maritime sector, allowing shipowners to register vessels in countries other than their own for economic advantages and leniency in regulations. While FoC brings significant *financial benefits to the shipowners*, including reduced fees and laxer maritime oversight, it also carries substantial concerns, notably compromising crew welfare, environmental safety, and complicating liability issues. Institutions like the International Transport Workers' Federation ardently challenge the system, emphasizing seafarers' rights and working conditions. Meanwhile, the International Maritime Organization sets global standards for safety and environmental practices, and Port State Control ensures compliance. Ultimately, the FoC system underscores the ongoing tension in the maritime world between economic motivations and the imperative to uphold ethical, safety, and environmental standards.

The Flag of Panama is one of the significant flags of convenience (FoC) in the global maritime sector, offering shipowners myriad advantages such as tax benefits, lenient labor laws, and supportive admiralty laws. These benefits not only bolster Panama's position in the shipping world but also contribute to its domestic economy and employment. However, this prominence comes with its set of challenges, mainly centered around concerns about labor rights, safety measures, and environmental impacts. Critics argue that the FoC system, exemplified by Panama, may inadvertently promote compromised safety and environmental standards, potentially impacting global competitiveness for countries with stricter regulations. International entities like the IMO and ITF play crucial roles in regulating and advocating for balanced maritime standards. Panama's central role in the FoC arena underscores the intricate

challenge of harmonizing economic incentives with the broader ethical, safety, and environmental imperatives in the international shipping industry.

The flag of Liberia stands out as a prominent flag of convenience (FoC) in the maritime sector, drawing shipowners with its advantageous regulatory landscape, tax benefits, and crewing flexibility. While these attributes have bolstered Liberia's position in the global ship registry, they have also ushered in challenges. Chief among these are concerns related to the welfare of seafarers, safety standards, and environmental practices. Organizations like the ITF have highlighted the potential for worker exploitation under the FoC system. Nonetheless, ships under the Liberian flag are not exempt from international maritime laws, and with Liberia being a member of the IMO, it is bound to adhere to its guidelines. The scenario underscores the intricate balance between economic incentives and the broader responsibility towards ethical, safety, and environmental concerns in the maritime industry.

The flag of the Marshall Islands stands out as a significant player in the arena of "flags of convenience" due to its attractive regulatory and fiscal frameworks for shipowners. While these benefits are undeniably alluring, it presents a multi-faceted tableau, reflecting the complexities inherent in global maritime commerce. On one hand, there's a clear economic allure associated with the Marshall Islands' flag, manifested in regulatory leniencies, tax benefits, and operational advantages. On the other hand, it becomes a focal point of critical scrutiny, particularly in terms of environmental impacts, labor rights, and ethical considerations. Vessels under this flag must strike a balance between leveraging the advantages offered and ensuring adherence to international standards. As the maritime world continues to evolve, the Marshall Islands and its flag's role will remain a significant, albeit contested, aspect, highlighting the intricate dance between economic aspirations and broader societal responsibilities in global shipping.

Another factor that influences the seafarers' wages and working conditions is the type of the vessel. *At this point, it should be noted that all the wages of the sailors used in this research are approximate based on the research we conducted, and they do not necessarily apply, as the final amount is at the discretion of each employer.* Between a tanker, a cargo and an LNG vessel we noticed that seafarers working on LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas) vessels typically receive higher compensation than those on cargo or tanker vessels due to several compelling reasons. LNG vessels transport a highly volatile and sensitive cargo, necessitating specialized knowledge and stringent safety protocols. The complexities of handling, transporting, and managing LNG require specialized training and expertise, which is not as prevalent as the skills required for general cargo vessels. Additionally, the potential risks and hazards associated with LNG operations demand a higher degree of vigilance and responsibility, justifying the increased remuneration. Furthermore, the LNG shipping market is specialized and has witnessed significant growth, leading to a greater demand for trained professionals in this niche area. Thus, the combination of specialized skills, increased responsibilities, and the inherent risks associated with transporting LNG contribute to the higher wages for seafarers aboard LNG vessels compared to those on general cargo ships.

We also noticed that seafarers working on tanker vessels are often compensated at a higher rate than those on cargo vessels due to several distinct reasons. Tanker vessels, given their role in transporting potentially hazardous liquid cargoes like oil, chemicals, or gas, require crews with specialized training and expertise in handling such sensitive materials. The risks

associated with spills, fires, or explosions on tankers are significantly higher, demanding a heightened sense of responsibility and vigilance from the crew. This elevated risk, combined with the need for strict adherence to international safety and environmental protocols, justifies the increased remuneration. Moreover, the specialized nature of the tanker shipping market, with its unique challenges and operational complexities, creates a demand for a skilled workforce adept at managing the intricacies of liquid cargo transport. Thus, the combination of specialized skills, increased responsibilities, and the inherent risks of transporting liquid cargo leads to higher wages for seafarers on tanker vessels compared to those on general cargo ships.

An additional factor that affected the seafarers' wages is their nationality. Those who stand up are Filipino, Ukrainian and Russian seafarers. Filipino seafarers play an indispensable role in the global maritime landscape, distinguished by their high-quality training, proficiency in English, and exemplary work ethic. This reputation is built upon the Philippines' rigorous maritime educational system and international standard adherence. However, these seafarers grapple with challenges related to health, safety, and fair employment conditions, especially amidst global crises like the COVID-19 pandemic. Their significance extends beyond maritime contributions, as they provide crucial economic support to the Philippine economy through remittances. Organizations and regulatory bodies within the Philippines continuously strive to balance the economic imperatives with the welfare and rights of the seafarers. Their experiences, both professional and personal, contribute uniquely to the maritime sector and influence the socio-economic fabric of the Philippines. As the maritime realm progresses and transforms, it becomes vital to ensure that Filipino seafarers remain at the forefront, equipped with the latest skills and knowledge, and are supported holistically, reflecting their vital role in the maritime and Philippine socio-economic sectors. As concerned as Ukrainian seafarers, they stand as a testament to the nation's strong maritime education and training, contributing significantly to the global maritime sector with their unparalleled skills, professionalism, and expertise. While they face numerous challenges ranging from securing fair wages to managing the emotional and psychological strains of seafaring, their dedication and resilience remain unwavering. Their pivotal role extends beyond the maritime arena, injecting crucial remittances into the Ukrainian economy and supporting families back home. As the maritime domain continuously evolves, Ukrainian seafarers must adapt, upskill, and maintain their competitive edge. Their consistent contributions, driven by their rigorous training and commendable work ethic, have solidified their position as a sought-after workforce in the international shipping industry, reflected in their competitive compensation structures. The future trajectory for Ukrainian seafarers' rests on leveraging their strengths while simultaneously addressing their challenges, ensuring their continued significance in the ever-changing maritime landscape. As concerned as Russian seafarers, they represent a legacy of maritime excellence rooted in Russia's extensive naval history and strengthened by its rigorous maritime education system. The versatility of their training enables them to navigate the challenges and complexities of various maritime sectors globally. While their employment conditions and wages are influenced by an intricate web of domestic and international factors, their representation through unions ensures protection against exploitation and promotes adherence to global standards. Their unwavering commitment to safety, adherence to international regulations, and the continuous upgradation of skills make them indispensable assets to the international maritime community. The resilience, skills, and

professionalism exhibited by Russian seafarers cement their standing as invaluable contributors to the maritime industry worldwide.

In the end, we definitely need to mention Greek seafarers as well. Greek seafarers are emblematic of the nation's enduring maritime legacy, reflecting centuries of deep-seated connection to the sea. Backed by a solid educational foundation and real-world training experiences, they uphold the highest standards of professionalism and dedication in their field. With a wage structure influenced by various factors, it is the collective efforts of unions and the maritime community that ensure their rights, welfare, and fair compensation. Beyond their professional excellence, the sense of unity and community among Greek seafarers underscores their resilience in the face of maritime challenges. Their valuable contributions, both at sea and ashore, reiterate Greece's pivotal role in shaping the global maritime narrative.

In conclusion, we should once again emphasize the importance of the maritime profession not only in Greece but globally.

As I bring this paper to a close, it is evident that the world of shipping holds a vital and enduring significance. The maritime industry, with its crucial role in global trade, the economy, and the lives of seafarers, continues to be an integral part of our interconnected world. Its importance remains steadfast, reminding us of the vast oceans that connect nations, cultures, and economies, and the maritime professionals who navigate these waters, ensuring the flow of goods and the exchange of ideas. As we look to the future, let us not forget the timeless significance of this profession, for it is upon the silent toil of seafarers that the rhythm of the world beats.

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