

the global

SEAFARER

Wherever you are, so are we

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OPINION

Working with Europe to build economic and social resilience



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Front cover image: Offshore windfarm worker
Credit: Getty Images

One of the forums in which I represent our members is the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF) Executive Committee. With the work of the ETF covering the entirety of the continent, it is an important forum at which we want to ensure maritime professionals have a strong presence.

The most recent meeting of the Committee received a presentation from the EU's director-general responsible for transport and mobility, Magda Kopczynska. She said that the broad theme around which the transport unions and the European Commission would need to work in the short to medium term is security, economic and social resilience.

It is certain for Nautilus that those are important topics. Security is wider than defence and the military response to escalating geopolitical instability. It also relates to environmental sustainability. The growing number of extreme weather events being seen in Europe and further afield can cause operations and working patterns to change, not

to mention posing increased risks to maritime professionals whilst at work.

Economic and social resilience is a further important topic. Maritime must be prepared for the challenges we face now and in the future, including the difficulties in recruiting and retaining people in the industry. The current workforce, and those joining the industry, must have the knowledge and skills to be able to enjoy long and successful careers, whilst having clear career pathways available to them. This is particularly important in the context of the industry's move to net zero and alternative fuels, and forms part of the work our unions are doing on the Just Transition.

Ms Kopczynska said that, without transport, the European economy will not survive. She is right about that, and it is important that shipowners, employers and others recognise the importance of seafarers in keeping the world moving. Representing maritime professionals at European and global forums ensures that your voice is heard.

● If you would like to find out more, please contact me via dmcgowan@nautilusint.org



CREDIT: Nautilus International

New crewing standards could be introduced on European inland waterways such as the Rhine

Change ahead for inland waterway crewing rules

Nautilus has welcomed a public consultation on European inland waterways which could lead to new EU legislation on crewing rules. Currently there are no EU rules on crewing requirements for inland waterway transport. Crewing standards often date back almost 30 years and differ between member states and river basins.

This new initiative aims to introduce easy-to-use crewing rules at EU level that are easy to enforce, as well as digital tools for inland waterway transport.

Nautilus took part in the initial evidence gathering phase of the consultation, which involved interested nautical industry bodies. The Union broadly agreed with the proposed new composition of

crews and new crewing regime proposed by the European Transport Workers' Federation and the Dutch government. Nautilus International pointed out in its evidence that it is of 'paramount importance that the industry can operate safely under the new manning regime and that government agencies can adequately monitor compliance with this regime'.

MM&P brings charges against APL

On 6 August, Nautilus Federation union the International Organization of Masters Mates & Pilots (MM&P) filed an unfair labour practice charge with the United States National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), challenging APL's alleged violations of Federal labour law.

The charge alleges that APL has failed to bargain in good faith by requiring employees to sign a new confidentiality

agreement; adding new surveillance cameras in the work area; expressly refusing to bargain over the decision; and dealing with employees directly in these matters while shutting out labour representatives.

The charge further contends that APL, by this conduct and prior conduct alleged in other unfair labour practice charges pending at the NLRB, has engaged in a pattern of conduct that

constitutes overall bad faith and/or repudiation of the bargaining relationship. MM&P has asked the NLRB to seek an injunction in Federal Court to force APL to cease violating Federal labour law.

'APL continues to disregard members' contractual and legal rights by making unilateral changes to their working conditions,' said MM&P president Captain Don Marcus.

WHO challenges myths around pandemic treaty that supports seafarers

Nautilus has welcomed action by the World Health Organization (WHO) to scotch misinformation about a treaty that would protect seafarers' rights in a future pandemic.

WHO has spoken out against some British politicians who lobbied the former Conservative UK government to block the deal on the grounds that it gives away national sovereignty.

The UN body said: 'Claims that the draft agreement

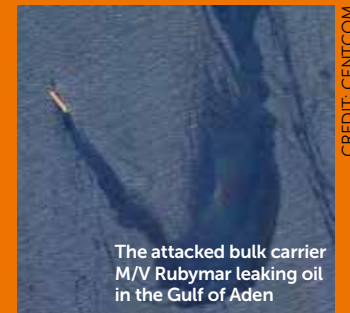
will cede sovereignty to WHO and will give the WHO secretariat power to impose lockdowns or vaccine mandates on countries are false and have never been requested nor proposed. This agreement will not, and cannot, grant sovereignty to WHO.'

The aim of the treaty is to shore up cooperation between WHO member states if a pandemic arises again, increase sharing of data, and promote fair

access to vaccines.

'Working with our international partners, we have also managed to get a clause into the treaty that acknowledges seafarers and their essential role,' said Nautilus general secretary Mark Dickinson. 'It commits parties to implementing policies and measures for the safety and protection of seafarers and to facilitate their transit and transfer as well as access to medical care.'

IMO commemorates seafarers killed amid ongoing Houthi attacks



The attacked bulk carrier M/V Rubymar leaking oil in the Gulf of Aden

CREDIT: CENTCOM

In a video message for the International Day of the Seafarer, IMO secretary general Arsenio Dominguez commemorated those who have lost their lives in Houthi attacks on Red Sea shipping.

At least four people have been killed in strikes on shipping by Yemen's Houthi movement since December 2023. Most recently, one person died in an attack on the Liberia-flagged bulk carrier MV Tutor on 12 June 2024.

The International Transport Workers' Federation, speaking on behalf of seafarers' unions globally, is now urging flag states, which are responsible for assuring a safe working environment for seafarers on their vessels, to instruct companies to divert their ships from the region.

Nautilus International head of professional and technical David Appleton said: 'Nautilus continues to liaise closely with shipowners to keep the situation under review.'

Raising the alarm: 'fake' deep sea pilots putting lives at risk

Captain Henk Eijkenaar has flagged concerns over the lack of checks carried out on individuals practising pilotage in European waters. **Helen Kelly** reports



CREDIT: Brad Wakefield

Licensed deep sea pilot
Captain Henk Eijkenaar

Ship's captains, responsible for the safety of crew and cargo, face daily challenges navigating increasingly congested sea lanes in the North Sea. However, one invisible hazard has for too long evaded the radar – the proliferation of unqualified individuals masquerading as deep sea pilots.

Speaking to one licensed pilot with over four years' experience, it is clear this threat is more than theoretical.

Captain Henk Eijkenaar, a pilot and an ambassador for the confidential safety at sea reporting service CHIRP, estimates 'fake' pilots have plagued Northern European waters for decades due to a lack of proper vetting and qualifications verification.

While the International Maritime Organization (IMO) provides a regulatory framework, flag states are failing to enforce minimum training standards for those assuming pilotage duties.

Some nations no longer maintain education programmes, leaving the door open for improvised solutions that compromise safety, Capt Eijkenaar notes. Without six months of specialised instruction covering local conditions, regulations and emergency procedures, fake pilots simply lack the competencies expected of their role.

Placing navigation in unqualified hands puts lives at risk from a single error in tightly coordinated shipping lanes. Many crew currently do

little, if anything, to validate a pilot's credentials upon boarding, as Capt Eijkenaar's experience highlights – his credentials have never been requested on embarkation of a vessel in the four years he has been working as a pilot. This allows fake pilots posing as 'nautical advisors' to operate unchecked.

Due to assumptions around state oversight, fake pilots have had free rein to operate for years without detection. This is unacceptable for those entrusting a vessel and crew into another's care. While individual reporting helps, a systemic solution is needed.

Through the European Maritime Pilots Association (EMPA), licensed pilots are lobbying national authorities and the IMO to acknowledge this growing crisis and strengthen oversight mechanisms. Key asks include verifying pilot qualifications as part of port state control inspections, and holding licensing bodies properly accountable.

They are also encouraging masters to refuse services from unverified individuals and report any fakes encountered. Masters must also be empowered to refuse pilotage from unverified individuals without professional repercussions, Capt Eijkenaar says.

But political will has been lacking – and Capt Eijkenaar worries that a serious accident could occur before we see the regulatory changes that are so urgently required.

Lives are in the balance, and the clock is ticking on this preventable threat.



Watch Helen Kelly's video interview with Capt Henk Eijkenaar at: www.youtube.com/@nautilusint

EU maritime safety event highlights Just Transition training needs

A document just released by the European Commission shows industry-wide agreement that major changes to maritime training will be needed to keep seafarers safe in the shift to decarbonisation and digitalisation.

No single body can be responsible for these changes, so the Commission has been facilitating joint working and partnerships – notably at a high-level seafarer safety workshop earlier this year.

Titled **The impact on maritime safety of seafarers' living and working conditions, education and training**, the Brussels-based event drew delegates from across the industry, with strong input from the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF), of which Nautilus is an affiliate union. Employers were represented by the ETF's social partner ECSA (European Community Shipowners' Associations).

The newly-available conclusions document from the workshop stresses that the industry must work as one to develop training

for seafarers and port workers while new, greener fuels are being introduced.

'Collaboration among industry stakeholders, regulatory bodies, and maritime education institutions is crucial in developing global training frameworks and certification standards that address the evolving needs of the maritime workforce,' the document points out.

Looking at digitalisation and automation, the document says: 'Digital technologies offer significant potential to streamline administrative tasks and enhance safety measures in vessel management.' However, 'comprehensive changes' will be needed in maritime education and training for both seafarers and shore personnel.

Other areas of concern to the workshop included social security. The conclusions document states: 'Strengthened enforcement, awareness campaigns, and coordinated efforts among EU member states are crucial to ensure effective implementation and enforcement of seafarers' social security rights.'



CREDIT: ETF Flickr

ETF general secretary Livia Spera spoke at the European Commission workshop

Delegates agreed that a dedicated forum should be established for collaboration and information exchange.

Seafarer wellbeing was also discussed, with delegates addressing familiar issues such as fatigue, crewing levels, bullying and harassment, and internet safety.

The workshop's conclusions will now feed into the work of the European Commission's Directorate General for Mobility and Transport, as well as other industry partnerships.

IMO secretary-general
Arsenio Dominguez,
who has been
in the top job since
1 January 2024

IMO chief stresses safety first for seafarers

Helen Kelly sat down with International Maritime Organization secretary-general Arsenio Dominguez to discuss the importance of a just and equitable transition to a decarbonised maritime industry – with crew training and safety at the top of the agenda

Helen Kelly: Last year the International Maritime Organization (IMO) agreed a revised greenhouse gas (GHG) strategy which is widely considered to be very ambitious in its targets. Given that the shipping industry is sometimes known to be slow to adopt, are you confident to hit these targets?

Arsenio Dominguez: The quick answer is yes. I'm very confident. And the reason why I say that is because all the years that we have been working to get to where we are right now: there's a lot of investigations, a lot of analysis, a lot of information that has been put forward to the organisation through several meetings, in order to achieve the outcome, which is the 2023 IMO GHG strategy.

There are challenges, we know that this is a transition, but we must contribute. This is not just IMO and shipping. This is a global solution.

HK: What challenges do you foresee in meeting those ambitious goals?

AD: The main challenge is that we don't control all the factors that will play a part in decarbonisation. I'll give you one

example, which is the new alternative fuels that will be required. We don't control the energy sector, we don't regulate the energy sector, we need their support and their assistance.

This is where the member states play a particular role in their national strategies to make sure that those fuels that we will be transporting for other sectors – that also need to decarbonise – are scaled up and at a price that is competitive to conventional fuels.

Another challenge is that new technologies will be used alongside the new fuels, and we need to address the safety aspect, because that's paramount for IMO.

We were born as a safety organisation, and we need to remember that. So, the safety of the seafarers is the primary concern. In parallel, as we've been developing the environmental regulations, we are also carrying out the necessary analysis, research and development programmes, training in general, to get to the level where it is safe to move ahead.

HK: One of the objectives of the GHG strategy is for the IMO to reduce emissions whilst promoting a just and

We were born as a safety organisation, and we need to remember that. So, the safety of the seafarers is the primary concern



equitable transition. What does that mean to you?

AD: It means that we're all part of the solution. And this is why, before we finalise the measures, we are carrying out an impact assessment on the fleet, on trade, on countries. Because we need to make sure that, as the statement of the UN, that we are leaving no one behind.

For me it is the actions that we take to make sure that this is just an equitable transition. That countries are not going to be penalised, trade is not going to be penalised, and it's not going to make things more difficult or expensive.

We must all contribute to decarbonisation and support what is the global approach of sustainability of the planet and conservation of the planet.

HK: How does that trickle down to the maritime workforce? What needs to happen to ensure, for them, it is a just and equitable transition?

If we want to attract and retain seafarers, we need to treat them with respect, we need to provide them better conditions

AD: Within the strategy, there's a particular reference to seafarers and the support that they require. For me, it's how we're going to support that transition for them when it comes to the new skills, the new training requirements that they require, and how we can support that through our technical measures and our economic measures.

We continue to carry out research and developments in relation to the training requirements for the seafarers to make sure that the technologies and the alternative fuels are safe. We're not starting from zero, we have transported some of these raw materials and fuels as cargo. It is now about the handling, and of course the port operations in relation to the ship as well the ship to port interface.

HK: The Maritime Just Transition Task Force report found that 800,000 seafarers will need to be retrained on new fuels by the mid-2030s to hit the net zero by 2050 scenario. It's a huge undertaking within a relatively short period of time, so how can administrations and employers ensure that target is hit?

AD: There are administrations that are already carrying out evaluations, assessment and training in this respect. There are manufacturers that are already carrying out their own development of the recorded training for the operation of new engines.

Within the IMO, we're also going into the requirements through the STCW convention review.

So even though it's a big number



Screenshot from the NautilusTV video interview with Arsenio Dominguez at www.youtube.com/@nautilusint



This is an edited transcript of a video interview with IMO secretary-general Arsenio Dominguez

Watch the full interview at NautilusTV: www.youtube.com/@nautilusint

AD: The best answer is that the rules organisations are not there to reduce the standards of their effectiveness, only to improve it. That's based on experience, as well as all the data that we gathered from the information.

We started by talking about how IMO was born on safety. Yes, we are hugely involved in protecting the environment, but safety is paramount. I need to keep repeating that. We will revise all the safety aspects, and we will provide the necessary requirements to handle it.

This is a transition. This is not happening overnight. The goal for 2030 is an uptake of 5%, aiming at 10% of alternative fuels. So, we have the time to roll out the process in relation to how we're going to provide that assistance for training, but we're not going to just rush into something that is not safe.

HK: What steps is the IMO taking to ensure that the rights of seafarers are protected, particularly around fair treatment and wages and working conditions?

AD: I think we can do better. I'm going to be very honest on that. We need to continue to pay attention to what are the needs of the seafarers.

There are several regulations that we are developing right now to protect seafarers onboard, mostly in relation to sexual harassment, sexual assault, or harassment and assault, and protecting seafarers in cases of criminalisation.

If we want to attract and retain seafarers, we need to treat them with respect, we need to provide them better conditions.

There's a lot that we can do, that the industry can do, that doesn't cost that much, but will demonstrate that we know how important seafarers are. And we are listening.

Further damning findings on seafarer fatigue

A new report from World Maritime University, funded by the ITF Seafarers' Trust, has once again demonstrated the terrible working hours and fatigue that seafarers are subjected to by their employers. **Rob Coston** spoke to seafarer welfare champion Katie Higginbottom about the results



CREDIT: ITF

The World Maritime University report **Quantifying an Inconvenient Truth** is a much-needed

follow up to the 2021 study **A Culture of Adjustment** – a document that was controversial with industry because it revealed how much shipping companies depend upon seafarers working excessive hours, enduring fatigue and falsifying their hours of work and rests to function.

'Back in 2021, we commissioned World Maritime University to do a kind of pilot study on fatigue with the aim of trying to address the thorny issue of minimum safe manning,' says Katie Higginbottom, head of the ITF Seafarers' Trust. 'Previously we had never really got anywhere, as there's always complete resistance to even looking at formulations of manning, let alone the revolutionary idea of having more people onboard.'

'This study was then published as the **Culture of Adjustment** report, which we thought was a really strong piece of academic research as part of our remit to address seafarer welfare.'

What did the original report show? 'The fact that the whole industry conspires to adjust records in order to comply with hours of work and hours of rest, and everyone kind of knows it –



LONG HOURS
11.5 hrs
out of
24 hrs



Key findings of the WMU work and rest research

LONG HOURS

The average working hours for respondents was **11.5 hours out of 24 hours**

Only 7.3% worked for **8 hours or less**

8.5% of respondents reported working **beyond 14 hours**

LACK OF SLEEP

Seafarers reported **7 hours** of sleep per 24-hour period on average, but **37.5%** indicating sleeping **6 hours or less**

NO REST

Only **10.4%** of respondents reported having a **full day off each week while onboard**

28.1% of respondents indicated resting **less than 10 hours per day** contravening rest hours regulations outlined in MLC, 2006

EXCESSIVE WORK

Seafarers ranked **workload** as the most serious cause of fatigue

88.3% admitted to exceeding the working time limits at least once a month

16.5% of respondents reported exceeding limits more than ten times per month

ADJUSTING RECORDS

64.3% reported adjusting their work/rest records

80.2% said adjustments were to avoid any findings during inspections

75% said adjustments were made to avoid problems with the shipping company

50.3% reported notifying their company of non-compliance with work and rest hours. However, **46.7%** of these seafarers received no response

LACK OF FAITH

93.4% agreed that fatigue is the most common safety-related challenge onboard

Nearly half of seafarers questioned the effectiveness of the current regulations in addressing fatigue



the seafarers know it because they have to do it, the industry knows, port state control knows. But nobody's completely responsible for it and there are built-in incentives for people to go along with this culture, because the consequences of not going along with it are much more onerous and difficult than just sort of adjusting things, especially for the seafarers.'

'However, although that piece of research was really strong, it had a lot of pushback from those in the industry who said, "Well, it's not a sufficient sample, there's not enough data there to go on." So **Quantifying an Inconvenient Truth** is a three-year project which provides the quantitative ballast to back up the findings of **A Culture of Adjustment**.'

Damning evidence

The results of the new report are hard to dispute. Rather than being interview-based like the previous study, it is survey-based, with over 9,000 responses, over 6,000 of which contain validated and usable data. 'Relative to the size of the sector, it's much more than is required for serious research. It's solid and pretty representative,' says Ms Higginbottom. The respondents came from a good range of nationalities, ranks, experience levels and ship types.

'The headline findings are shocking, but utterly unsurprising,' she continues. 'The average working week of a seafarer is about 75 hours and that's been completely normalised in the shipping industry. Almost 90% have no weekly day off. Seafarers are telling us about the kind of adjustments they are having to make.'

NO REST
Only 10.4%
of respondents had a
full day off
each week while
onboard

'The other thing that's interesting about the report is that – alongside the new data collected through the surveys – the researchers have put extracts from previous research to show that this is just reaffirming what's been said over the decades, and that nothing's happened. We've allowed it to become normal, that seafarers have to work excessively long hours, and that's just an operational aspect of being at sea – but the majority of the population that benefits from seafarers working invisibly wouldn't accept those kind of working hours. We need to get serious about it.'

Futuristic fix?

Addressing this issue will require a collaborative effort from all stakeholders, according to Ms Higginbottom. 'What we really want is for the industry to recognise that it is an issue, that it isn't acceptable, and then I think we need stakeholder collaboration and cooperation to look at practical approaches to enforcing the existing regulations. We need to be working together with the P&I clubs, with the industry, with port state control, with all of the groups that have a role to play,' she said, emphasising that while many in the industry have been concerned for years about fatigue, no institution acting alone has the power to fix a culture that is so embedded across the entire industry.

Seafarers may also begin to have more leverage on this issue, as the industry grapples with a mounting recruitment and retention crisis. Companies may need to address seafarer welfare and working

'The whole industry conspires to adjust records in order to comply with hours of work and hours of rest, and everyone kind of knows'



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Read the full report at
[commons.wmu.se/
lib_reports/80](https://commons.wmu.se/lib_reports/80)

CREDIT: Getty Images

LACK OF SLEEP
37.5%
indicating sleeping
6 hours
or less

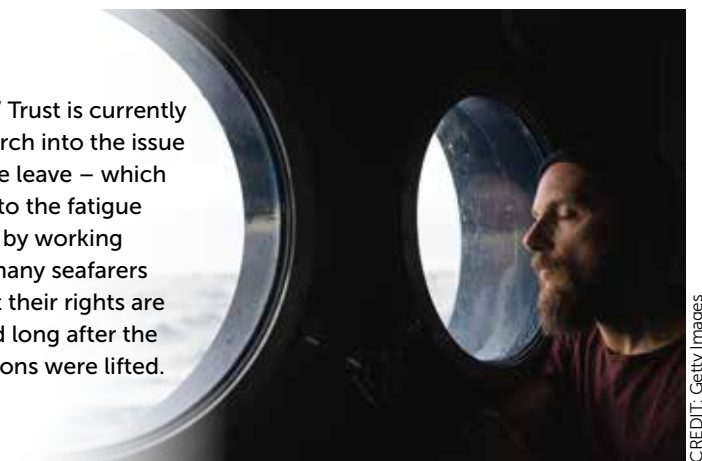
conditions to attract seafarers as cheap labour begins to dry up – with respondents to the survey also largely agreeing that the root of the problem is low crewing levels. Having more seafarers onboard would go a long way towards fixing things, alongside better regulation, work from companies to address seafarer concerns on hours of work and rest, and proper enforcement by authorities.

In addition, new technology and greater automation presents a potential solution but also a threat, unless it is used properly – something that Nautilus will be campaigning on over the next four years as part of its work towards a Just Transition for members as the industry decarbonises. Respondents to the surveys thought that technological changes in the industry so far have largely made the problem worse.

'There's a lot of conversations at the moment around the kinds of digital changes coming in, and if they're going to save workload,' Ms Higginbottom says. 'Maybe that can be part of the answer, if it's thought about in the right way that makes automation a tool for those operating vessels rather than an excuse to get rid of seafarers.'

Research into restricted shore leave

The ITF Seafarers' Trust is currently conducting research into the issue of restricted shore leave – which is closely related to the fatigue problems caused by working long hours – as many seafarers are reporting that their rights are still being ignored long after the Covid-19 restrictions were lifted.



CREDIT: Getty Images

OPINION

Welcome progress on pilot ladder safety



Head of professional and technical
David Appleton
protech@nautilusint.org

Like enclosed spaces, the rigging of pilot ladders seems to be one of those issues where lives continue to be put at risk by unsafe practices – despite numerous awareness campaigns.

The results of the International Maritime Pilots' Association's (IMPA) 2023 safety campaign showed that non-compliance with existing requirements is widespread, with 16% of pilot transfer arrangements found to be defective. Of these, 50% of reported defects were related to the rigging of pilot ladders.

Research carried out by the UK Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) found that, of the 96,000 pilot transfers reported by the UK's Competent Harbour Authorities in 2022, there were over 400 incidents or accidents.

No deaths were reported amongst these incidents; however, in January the following year, Francesco Galia, a pilot with more than 20 years' experience, was killed while transferring from a pilot boat to the Finnlines vessel Finnhawk in the Humber Estuary. The case is still under investigation by the MAIB, with the pilot ladder arrangements being one of the aspects under consideration.

Against this background, Nautilus has welcomed progress made at the International Maritime Organization (IMO) towards improving the safety of

pilot transfer arrangements. In June, the IMO Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue completed a comprehensive review of the requirements related to pilot ladders which has resulted in amendments to the international Convention on the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS).

The amendments to SOLAS aim to improve compliance and address inconsistencies and ambiguities in existing regulations. The Sub-Committee also finalised a draft MSC resolution on performance standards for pilot transfer arrangements, including detailed requirements for design, manufacture, construction, rigging, installation of pilot ladder winch reels, operational readiness, onboard inspection and maintenance, familiarisation and approval, in relation to pilot transfer arrangements required under SOLAS regulation V/23.

These amendments were hailed by IMPA as a 'significant step forward for the safety of pilots and other personnel using pilot transfer arrangements' – a sentiment which is shared by Nautilus. However, it should be noted that these new requirements do not enter into force until 2028. Until such time, if unnecessary accidents are to be avoided, it is vital that there continues to be proper compliance with and enforcement of the existing requirements.

MAPPING OUR MARITIME FUTURE

International cooperation between maritime unions has led to an exceptional piece of research, says Mark Dickinson, director of the Nautilus Federation

Climate change is a real and present threat to our way of life, of that there is no dispute. There is an imperative on all sectors of our economy to lower, and eventually phase out, carbon emissions. That is why Nautilus supports efforts to decarbonise shipping.

However, the technological and fuel changes required cannot be to the detriment of our maritime professionals; in fact, while our industry experiences this transition, we should use this opportunity to address long-standing injustices and agree a new social contract for seafarers.

This is why all the affiliate unions of the Nautilus Federation are committed to the principles of the 'Just Transition' – in which no seafarer is disadvantaged or put at risk during the major changes to come.

As trade unionists, we always say 'a union is its members', so it is important for us to find out directly from individual members what they want from a Just Transition. And in a global industry, we need to hear the voices of seafarers around the world. So what better organisation to carry out this research than the Nautilus Federation?

With over 20 affiliate unions in countries as far apart as Finland, Panama and Australia, we knew that a survey run by the Federation would result in research findings that would be respected and used throughout the industry, and I am happy to say that our research project **Mapping Our Maritime Future** has exceeded our expectations.

Over the next few pages, you will read more about how the research came into



Nautilus Federation
director Mark Dickinson

CREDIT: Brad Wakefield

being and how it was carried out, and then we will highlight the main findings of the report for you. But we also encourage you to read the full report, which is available for free download in the Resources sections of the Nautilus Federation website www.nautilusfederation.org and the Nautilus International website www.nautilusint.org/resources.

I would like to thank all the

members of Nautilus Federation unions who took part in the research, and I commend the **Mapping Our Maritime Future** research to you and to every member of our international union family. It is thanks to you that your unions will now be able to campaign for the Just Transition that you want, underpinned by the information you have provided.

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The **Mapping Our Maritime Future** full report is available for free download from: www.nautilusint.org/resources

NAUTILUS
FEDERATION

Cover image from the Nautilus Federation report **Mapping Our Maritime Future**

The Just Transition: reasons for research

In September 2024, the Nautilus Federation is launching the findings of a major research project on seafarers' views around decarbonisation and automation. **Sarah Robinson** hears how the study was developed and what it was aiming to discover

In a global industry like shipping, international cooperation is essential to stand up for seafarers' rights, and cooperation doesn't come much better than the Nautilus Federation. A group of 22 like-minded maritime unions – including Nautilus International – the Federation runs the joint legal support scheme JASON to help seafarers get justice around the world, and has carried out valuable research on automation and criminalisation.

Recently, the Federation has turned its attention to the issue of the 'Just Transition' – the concept of ensuring seafarers get a fair deal on safety and training as shipping switches to new, greener fuels.

A research project that was to become **Mapping Our Maritime Future** was agreed in October 2023 at the Federation's board meeting in Liverpool, says Danny McGowan, coordinator of the Nautilus Federation.

HOW THE RESEARCH CAME ABOUT

'We had been speaking about the Just Transition for quite a period,' Mr McGowan recalls, 'and we knew that the industry had been doing a fair bit of work on alternative fuels and new energy sources. And then we were looking at it from our perspective as unions



Danny McGowan

representing maritime professionals to say, well, where's our voice in this? And where are the voices of seafarers?

'This is pretty much a new industrial revolution for our industry. We need to be sure that our members don't just have this happening around them, but are part of this change, and are considered from the very beginning, right through to the very end of this transition.'

'So we decided at the Nautilus Federation meeting to undertake this piece of research, to get the views of our members and influence the work that we do in this area in the coming months and years.'

DEVELOPING THE SURVEY

Nautilus International's communications campaigns organiser Robert Murtagh then became involved in the project, working with colleagues to shape the research questions and set up and publicise an online survey for members of Nautilus Federation affiliate unions.

'One of the more existential questions we had was, do our members know what the Just Transition is?' he notes. 'Are they aware of the concept? And if they are aware, what is their understanding? And so the survey was created with those questions in mind, as we're really keen to make sure we're not talking about it in a vacuum.'

Another important question was whether participants thought the



International Maritime Organization's 2050 decarbonisation goals are realistic, adds Mr McGowan. 'Did they think it's something that can actually happen in the next 20 or 30 years? We also asked some questions on automation and technological change. We asked about participants' desires for the future and the skills and training that would be needed – and who should be paying for this.'

TAKING PART IN THE SURVEY

Once the questions had been agreed, the online survey was then publicised via email to members of all Nautilus Federation unions. The message to participants, says Mr McGowan, was: 'We want to hear from you. Tell us what your views are, tell us what you know. And then we will act on that and advocate that on your behalf.'

Nearly 1,000 maritime professionals from around the world ended up taking part in the research, giving their opinions on the roles of seafarers, employers and governments in the decarbonisation of the industry.

THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

The analysis of the data gathered in the survey was carried out during the summer of 2024, and is now being published in the Nautilus Federation report **Mapping Our Maritime Future**, which is available for free download in the Resources sections of the Nautilus International and Nautilus Federation websites.

The feature on *pages 22-28* of this *Global Seafarer* gives a round-up of the findings, but for Danny McGowan, there were some particular highlights. 'One thing that really stood out for me is that the survey respondents didn't think that net zero by 2050 was an achievable goal. The people on the ground, the people that are keeping the ships going, the masters on the bridge, the officers, the engineers, they're not seeing the goals translated into action. If the people who are at the coalface aren't buying into this target, then non-achievement could become a self-fulfilling prophecy.'

'And then the wider question comes of what we as unions should be doing to make sure that companies that are

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Watch Sarah Robinson's video interview with Danny McGowan and Robert Murtagh on Nautilus TV: www.youtube.com/@nautilusint

decarbonising are communicating with their workforce, that seafarers and those working on the vessels are part of these plans to decarbonise – because there are going to be impacts on their working lives.'

Mr McGowan believes the other key findings were around skills and training. 'What we can see from the survey is that this issue is absolutely at the heart of the of the decarbonisation agenda, which is making sure that our members have the skills to meet the needs of the industry of the future. I think there was 40% of respondents who said they didn't feel they had enough information to understand the industry's transition to alternative fuels and technology. So there's some really stark data points coming out of that.'

NEXT STEPS

The **Mapping Our Maritime Future** report was officially launched via a webinar on 18 September 2024, and all members of Nautilus Federation affiliate unions were invited. 'We continue to ask members to share the report as widely as possible, in order to provide much-needed evidence to underpin decarbonisation initiatives,' notes Mr McGowan.

'We have shared it with the International Transport Workers' Federation, who are doing some work on this subject, and we hope the report will support them in their efforts as well.'

'It's important for people to see that the report doesn't just contain invaluable data, but also recommendations. So at Nautilus International and other Nautilus Federation unions, we will all be working hard with employers, governments and international regulatory bodies to get those recommendations put into action.'

● Turn to *page 22* for a round-up of the findings of **Mapping Our Maritime Future**

The message to participants was: **'We want to hear from you. Tell us what your views are, tell us what you know. And then we will action that and advocate that on your behalf'**

CREDIT: ITF Seafarers Trust, Life at Sea 2023, Christian C Panotes

Your views shaping your future

A significant new piece of research from the Nautilus Federation sheds critical light on the attitudes and experiences of maritime professionals to the challenges of decarbonisation and automation in the industry.

Helen Kelly distils the key findings of the **Mapping Our Maritime Future** report and explores their implications for the maritime sector

Climate change is an undeniable threat that calls for urgent action across all sectors, including maritime. The shipping industry, responsible for a significant portion of global emissions, is under pressure to reduce its carbon footprint and achieve 'net zero' emissions by 2050.

The Nautilus Federation supports this goal, recognising the necessity of technological and fuel changes. However, these changes must not come at the expense of maritime professionals. The Federation therefore recently carried out a survey of around 1,000 members of affiliated maritime unions around the world, to gather seafarers'

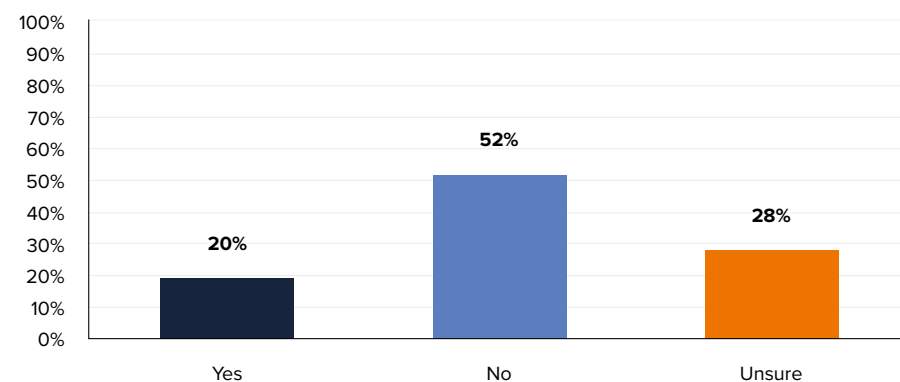
experiences of the changes to date and hear their opinions on what should happen next.

THE VOICE OF MARITIME PROFESSIONALS

The maritime industry's transition to 'net zero' greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 is underway and is set to have a huge impact on the working lives of seafarers. Yet only one in five (20%) of the maritime professionals who responded to the survey believe this goal is achievable.

It is a stark figure that indicates a disconnect between policymakers and those who must implement the measures necessary for the global maritime industry to reduce its impact on the environment.

Do you believe achieving net zero around 2050 is achievable for the maritime industry?



ENVIRONMENTAL JARGON-BUSTER

JUST TRANSITION is defined by the International Labour Organization as 'greening the economy in a way that is as fair and inclusive as possible to everyone concerned, creating decent work opportunities and leaving no one behind'. In maritime, we would add that a Just Transition means a fair deal for seafarers who will be expected to operate vessels powered by new, 'greener' fuels. There must be high safety standards to protect these seafarers from the dangers of explosive fuels such as hydrogen, and there must be effective training in place, paid for by employers and governments, not individuals.

NET ZERO is defined by the United Nations' climate action website as 'cutting carbon emissions to a small amount of residual emissions that can be absorbed and durably stored by nature and other

carbon dioxide removal measures, leaving zero in the atmosphere.'

DECARBONISATION is defined by the Cambridge Dictionary as 'the process of stopping or reducing carbon gases, especially carbon dioxide, being released into the atmosphere as the result of a process, for example the burning of fossil fuels.'

FOSSIL FUELS are carbon based fuels such as coal, oil (in the form of heavy fuel oil or diesel for shipping), petroleum gas and natural gas. All of these fuels release carbon dioxide and/or methane into the atmosphere when burned in engines, but natural gas is felt to be less polluting than other maritime fossil fuels, and is therefore likely to be used as part of the industry's reduction process until the switch to non-carbon alternatives is complete.

The figure also highlights why this survey and its results are so important: if the maritime industry is to oversee a 'Just Transition' to net zero, the voice of seafarers must be heard.

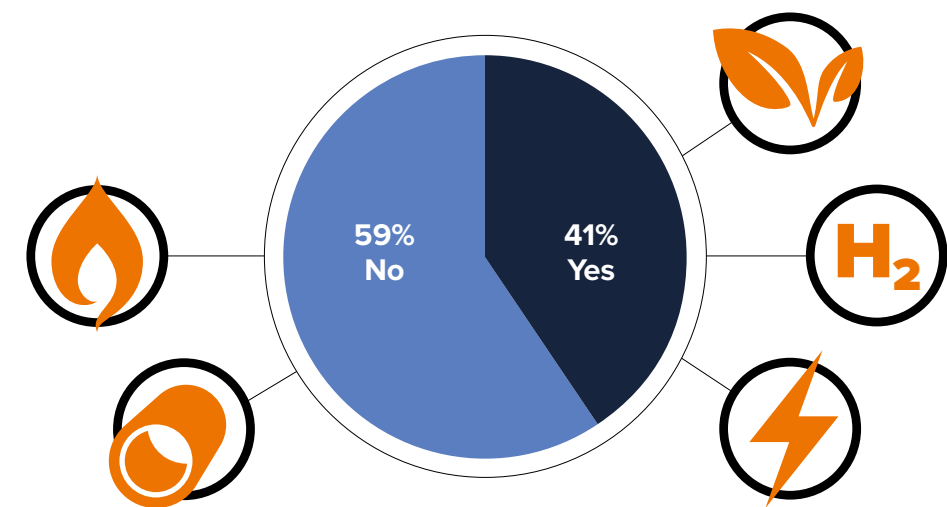
However, this is not the reality for many maritime professionals, with almost 60% reporting that their employer has not communicated its decarbonisation strategy to them*. Of those who have seen a strategy, more than 80% say they have not been consulted about the company's decisions.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS AUTOMATION

Automation and artificial intelligence (AI) are playing a crucial role in shaping the future of the maritime industry. From optimising vessel routes and engine performance to reduce fuel consumption and cut emissions, to improving safe operations to reduce oil spills, and responding to emergencies faster to prevent potential environmental disasters.

Almost three quarters of survey respondents (72%) have seen an increase in automation onboard in the past decade – and while 61% agree or strongly agree that this is a good thing, a significant

Has your company communicated with you its decarbonisation strategy?*



*Such as the plan to move to liquefied natural gas (LNG), piped natural gas (PNG), bio-methane, hydrogen or electric

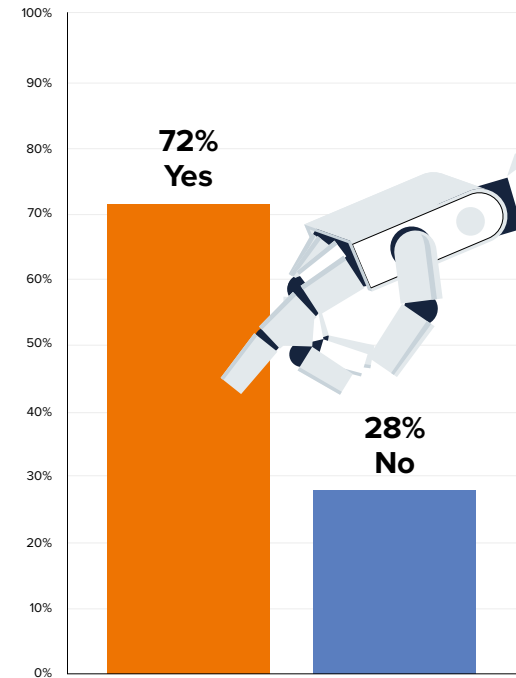
proportion (47%) view it as a threat. Where automation is seen as a threat by seafarers, fears over job security and skill erosion rank highly. Some fear it could lead to significant job losses, leaving many seafarers unemployed, or too few crew onboard ships. Others fear that their skills will become obsolete or less valued.

Where automation is widely supported is when it is deployed to reduce workloads, not crew numbers, with 72% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that it should be used to reduce long working hours.

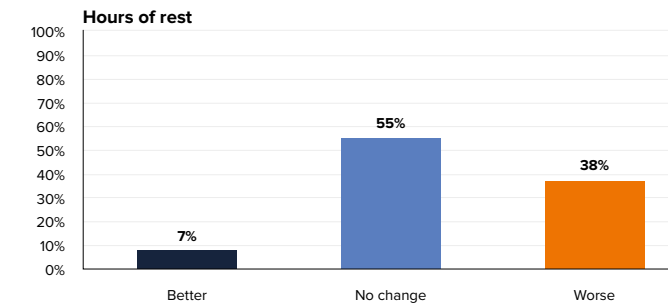
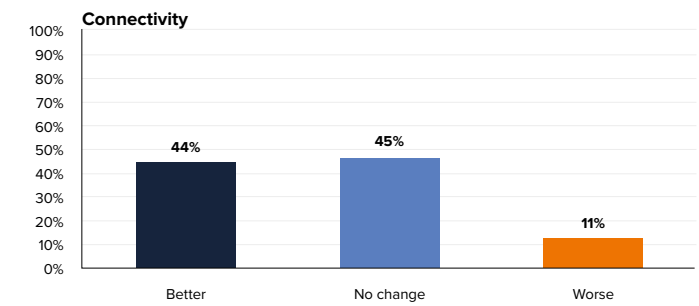
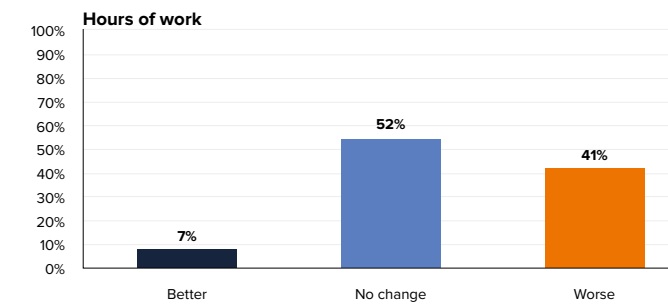
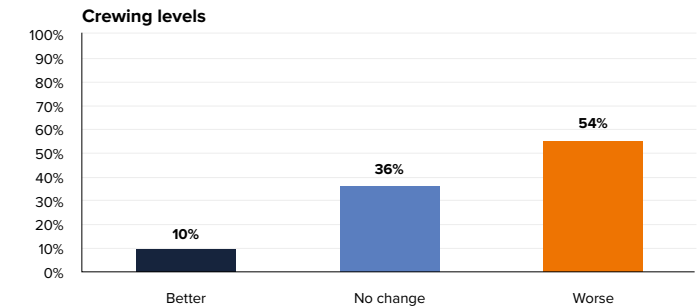
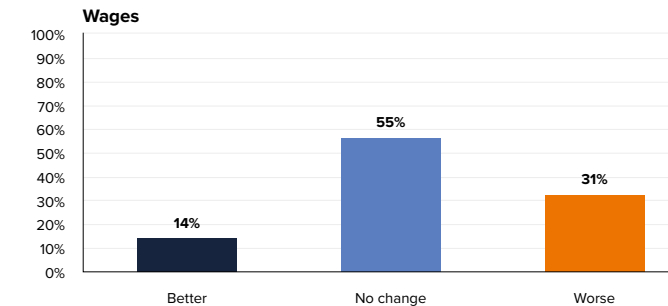
Automation could also contribute to safer working conditions onboard ships. Long working hours lead to fatigue, which can compromise a seafarer's ability to perform tasks safely and effectively.

By taking over routine tasks, automation can reduce the risk of human error, a common factor in maritime accidents. Moreover, automated systems can perform tasks in hazardous

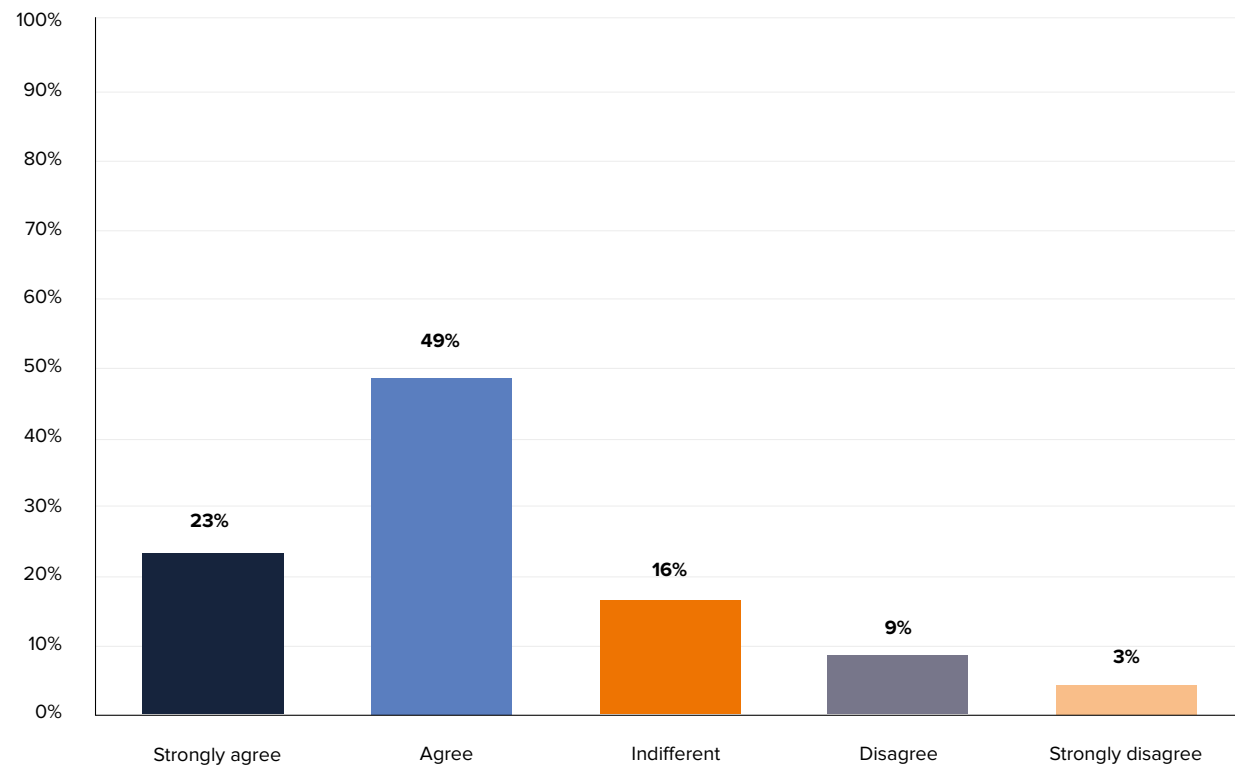
Have you seen increased automation onboard in the last decade?



Aside from the positive environmental impact of the move towards net-zero, how do you think these topics will be affected?



To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: 'Automation should be used to reduce long working hours'?



conditions where human safety would be at risk.

DECARBONISATION AND WORKING CONDITIONS

The **Mapping Our Maritime Future** report highlights concerns about the potential impact of technological change on working conditions aboard ships. Most respondents fear that these conditions will either remain stagnant or worsen, posing a significant challenge for an industry already facing difficulties in retaining skilled crew members.

When asked to rank the current issues that respondents believe need addressing most urgently across the industry, pay, job security, and workload and retention are the top three concerns, followed by

training, mental wellbeing, and bullying and harassment.

It is clear from responses to this survey that many maritime professionals are deeply cynical about decarbonisation of the sector. Typical responses include: 'Jobs will obtain lower status/pay compared to shore' to the 'usual smokescreen to reduce manpower and introduce cheap substandard labour'.

Respondents feel that only one aspect of their working conditions will get better: connectivity.

Nautilus Federation affiliates believe that collective bargaining is one of the key mechanisms to support social and employment rights, and that governments must, where possible, support collective bargaining, recognising it as central to ensuring the 'just' in Just Transition.

MARITIME PROFESSIONALS ARE LOOKING FOR NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Despite obvious cynicism about environmental jargon and enforced changes voiced by Nautilus Federation members, nearly half (48%) say they would consider changing jobs to be part of a new

and emerging sector such as offshore wind – more than a third (35%) of these say this is because renewable energy is the future, and they want to be part of that change.

Of the maritime professionals willing to move to an emerging sector, reasons include a belief that there are more jobs and opportunities for progression, the likelihood of modern ships and security, and benefiting from transferable skills.

Others are looking for more time at home with family and friends, flexibility, and better pay and conditions.

MORE TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE NEEDED ON ALTERNATIVE FUELS

It is clear from the survey results that more work needs to be done to educate and inform seafarers about the industry's transition to net zero, with 51% of respondents reporting that they either do not have enough information to understand alternative fuels and new

technologies, or are unsure about their knowledge base.

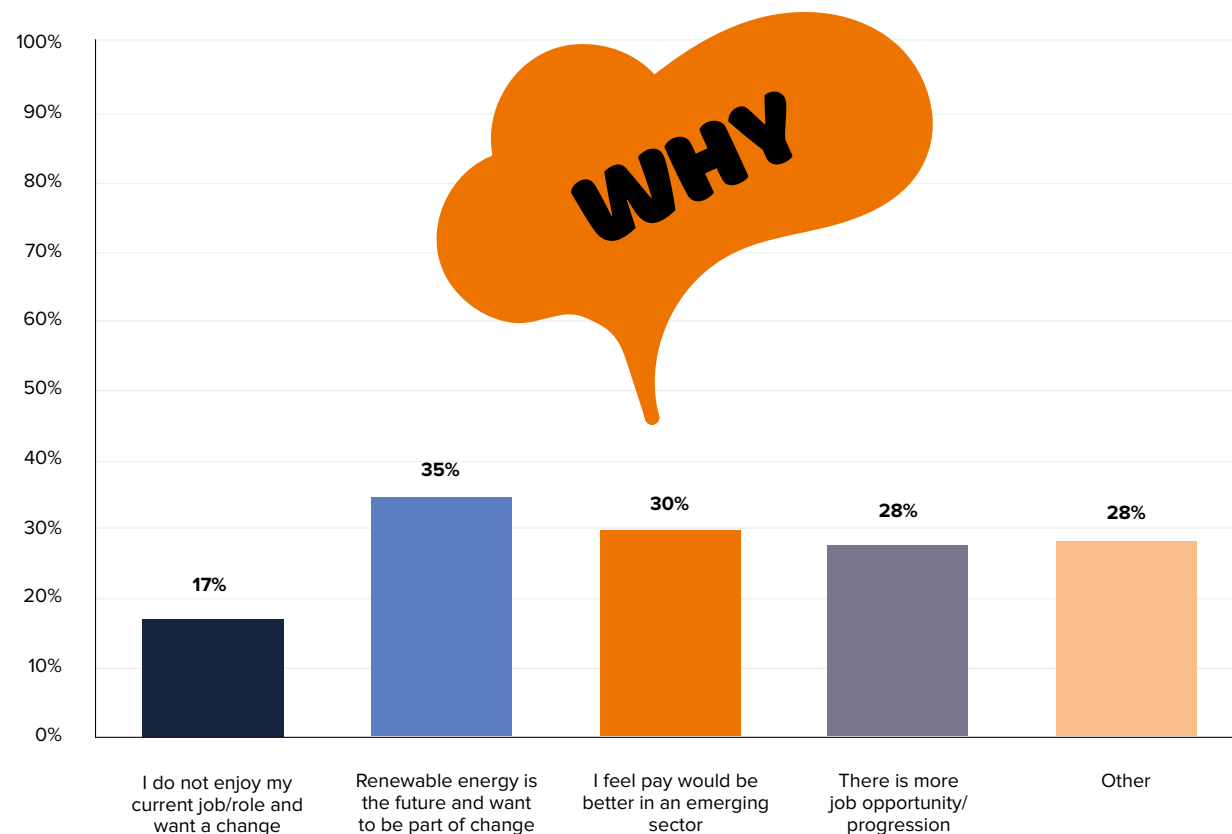
This is perhaps not surprising, given that only 16% of respondents to the survey have worked on a vessel powered by an alternative fuel such as liquefied natural gas (LNG), biofuels, methanol, ammonia, hydrogen, or electric – and, of these, only 60% have received training from their company (so less than 9% overall).

COST OF TRAINING SHOULD BE BORNE BY THE EMPLOYER

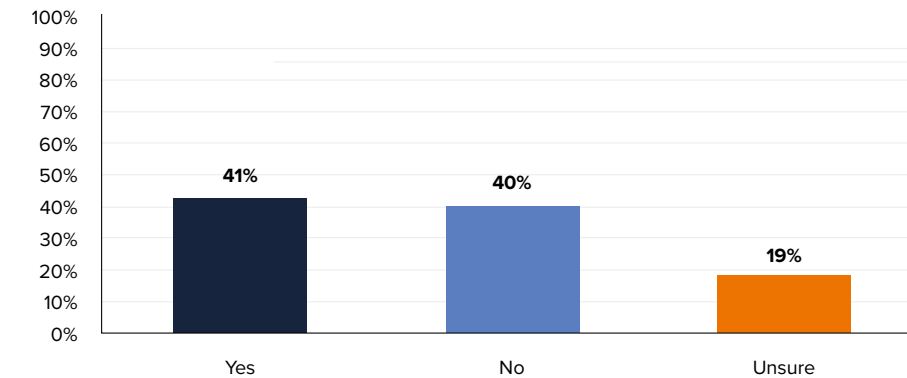
Access to training on new fuels and technologies is clearly crucial for achieving environmental goals. The vast majority (81%) of respondents to the survey believe the cost of upskilling and retraining should be paid for by the employer, with another 17% believing that governments should help fund this training.

Furthermore, respondents believe that employers must give their maritime

Why would you consider changing jobs into a new and emerging sector (e.g. renewable energy, such as offshore wind)?

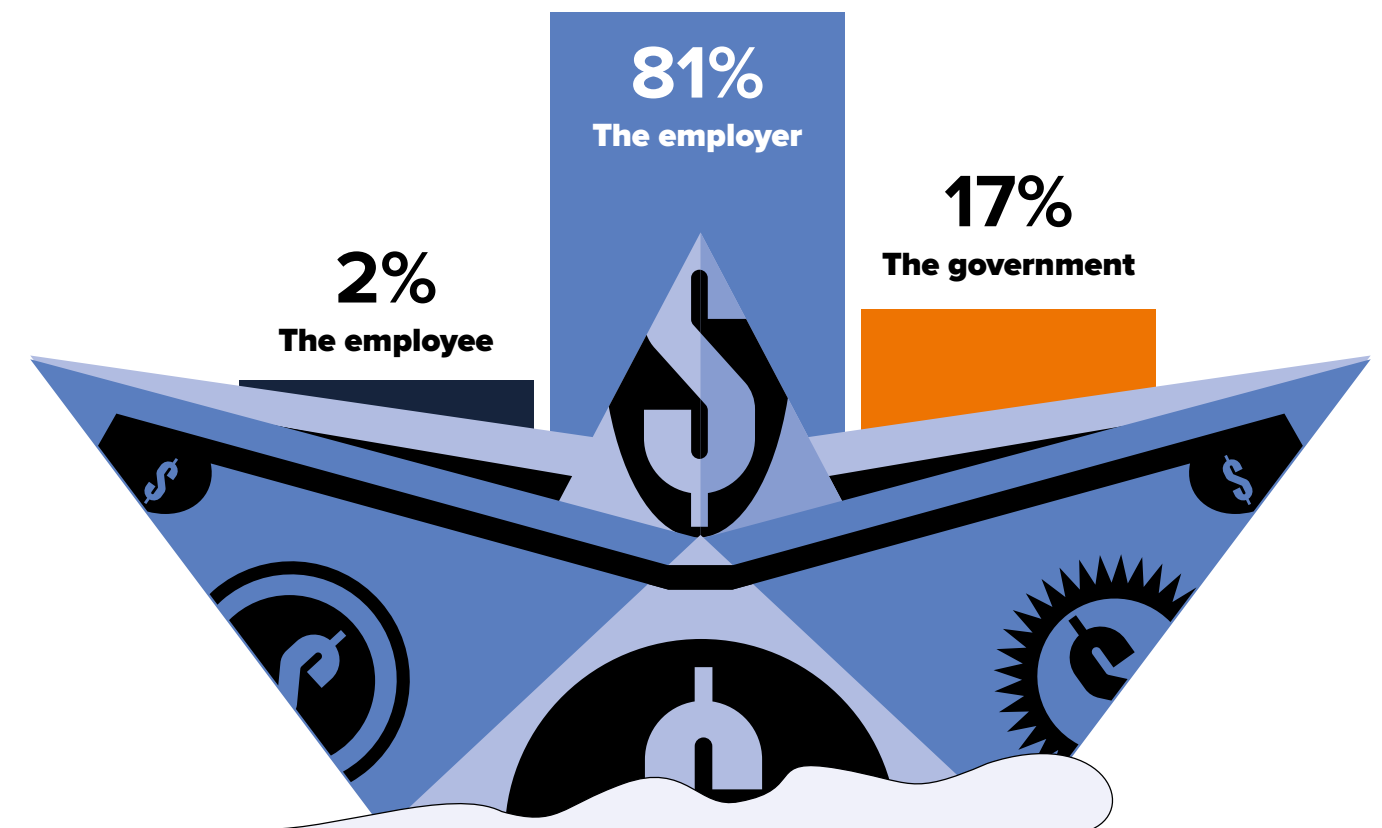


Do you feel you have enough information to understand the industry's transition to alternative fuels and new technologies?



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Read the full Mapping Our Maritime Future survey report at: www.nautilusfederation.org

As and when companies move to alternative fuels, if retraining and reskilling is required, who should pay for it?



professionals adequate time to participate in training, and that this should not be done during hours of rest or shore leave.

At present, nearly 40% of respondents report that training took place in their own time or during rest hours onboard or ashore, which research from the World Maritime University has shown can lead to fatigue and unsafe working practices.

NO ONE SHOULD BE LEFT BEHIND

A comprehensive review into the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW) is underway at the IMO, and national governments must play an active role to ensure technological change does not outpace minimum training standards.

Nautilus Federation unions believe that there must also be a recognition that, as with any major change, there will be some individuals who cannot make the transition. More than 70% of respondents agree that national governments should set up a fund to support those seafarers who cannot retrain or upskill.

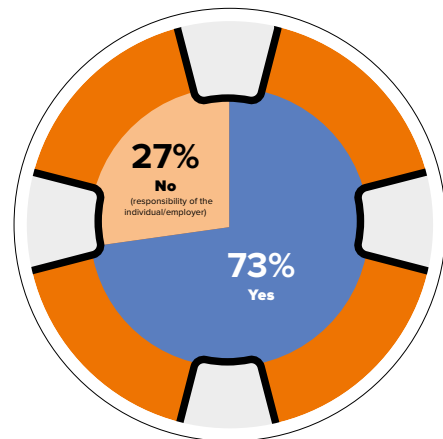
Governments must support those workers by assisting them in finding new careers or to enter retirement. The Kolenfonds in the Netherlands is a good example of how governments can support maritime professionals who may otherwise be left behind as the industry transitions.

THE ROAD AHEAD

The **Mapping Our Maritime Future** report indicates that the maritime industry stands at a crossroads. By listening to the voices of maritime professionals and committing to a Just Transition, the industry can ensure that the path to decarbonisation is both sustainable and equitable.

The Nautilus Federation, with the support of nearly one thousand members who participated in the survey, is poised to lead the charge in shaping a future that honours the hard work and dedication of seafarers around the globe.

Should national governments create a fund to support those who cannot retrain or upskill?



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The survey was launched at the Nautilus Federation board meeting in October 2023. Participants were self-selected members of the Federation's affiliate unions, and participated via an online questionnaire.

The survey consisted of 39 questions on decarbonisation, net zero, pay and conditions, and training and skills and automation. It received 878 responses.

DEMOGRAPHICS

AGE	SECTOR	EXPERIENCE
7% Aged 65+	21% Deep sea cargo	81% Have worked in the maritime industry for more than 10 years
44% Aged 50-65	12% Ferries	9% Have worked in the maritime industry for 5-10 years
28% Aged 36-49	10% Cruise	8% Have worked in the maritime industry for 1-5 years
16% Aged 26-35	9% Offshore oil and gas	3% Have worked in the maritime industry for 1-5 years
5% Aged 18-25	8% Superyachts	2% Have worked in the maritime industry for less than 1 year
92% Male	5% Dredging	
7% Female	3% Offshore renewables	
1% Preferred not to answer	3% Inland waterways	
	3% Shore-based	
	2% Pilot	
	13% Other	

Criminalisation is one of the most serious problems facing seafarers today. When there has been a maritime accident or a pollution infringement, seafarers have often been detained and denied access to normal rules of fair play and justice with which to defend themselves against criminal charges.

In recent years seafarers have also increasingly been detained as suspects of maritime crimes, such as smuggling illicit cargo, or anchoring illegally whilst awaiting clearance for port entry.

What is the ITF doing?

The ITF has released a helpful guide in electronic PDF format that gives an overview of the criminalisation issue.

This guide details the problem, explains how the ITF is campaigning against it at an international level, and provides copies of the protections that are currently in place.

It includes a range of examples where the ITF has been involved in liberating seafarers, including the cases of MSC Capucine R (imprisonment without

charge) and the Wakashio (detention without trial).

It also provides guidelines for seafarers when facing an investigation, including:

- when statements are made to a port, coastal or flag state investigation these may potentially be used in a criminal investigation
- you may need to receive legal advice prior to such statements, have access to interpretation services, and be aware of your right not to self-incriminate

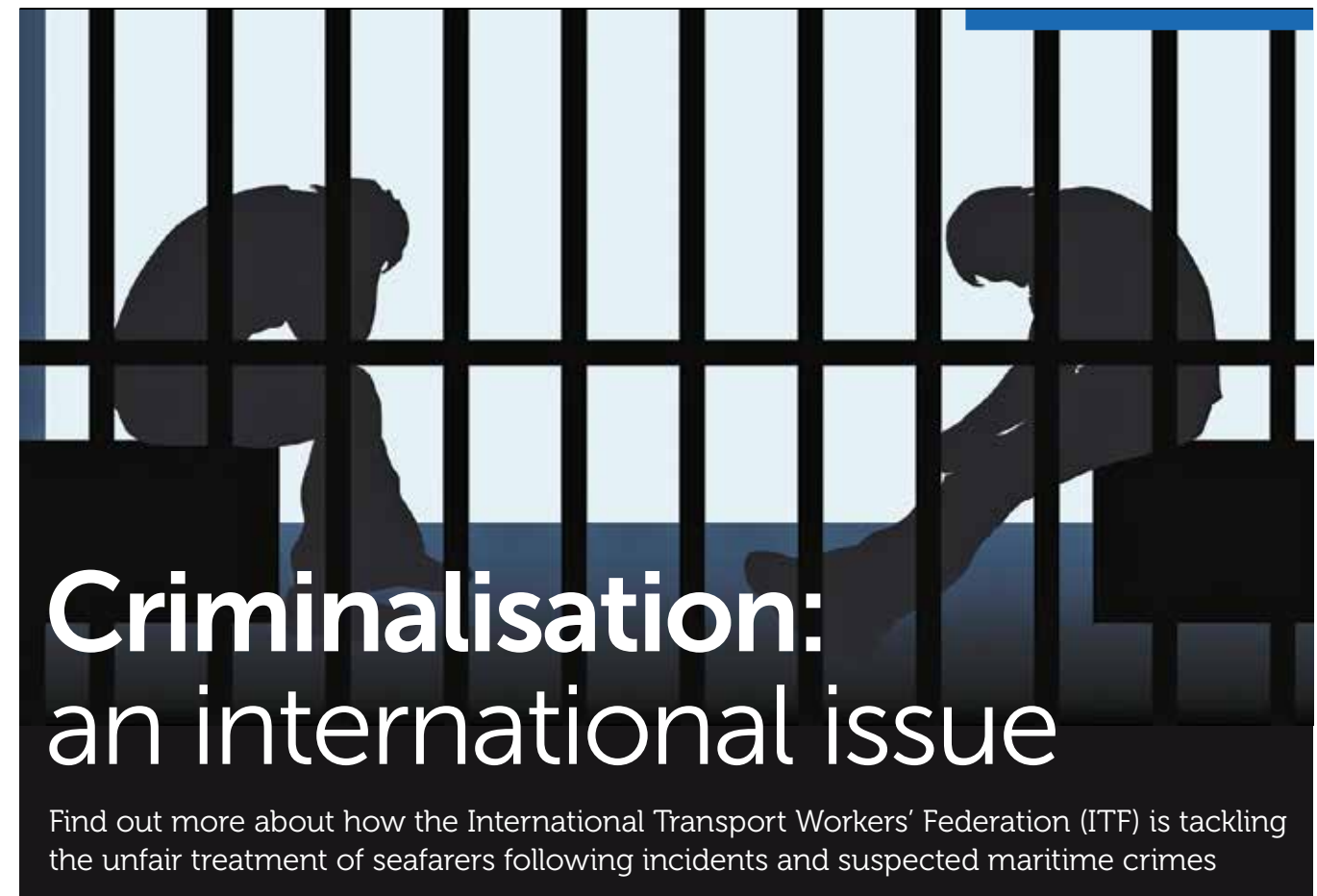
What should I do?

Before you go to sea, download the Nautilus Fair Treatment App, on which you can record incidents at sea. Available in either iTunes or Android Playstore.

If you face an investigation or some other interaction with the authorities, the best thing to do is contact Nautilus as soon as possible.

Wherever you are in the world, the Union can arrange representation during interviews with investigation authorities, police and other organisations, as well as at subsequent official inquiries.

- You can contact us via email, phone or chat at www.nautilusfederation.org/en/Nautilus-247/



CREDIT: iStock photo

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Download the full ITF document at bit.ly/ITF_decrim_toolkit

Federation: A historic global vision

Andrew Linington's history of Nautilus International looks at early examples of international solidarity and collaboration for maritime professionals

Shipping is an inherently international industry, and the need for global cooperation has run strongly through the work of the maritime unions. British seafarers' complaints about being undercut by lower-cost foreign labour stretch back more than 200 years, and they accelerated sharply in 1849, when requirements for three-quarters of a British ship's crew to be British were abolished.

In 1896 the International Federation of Ship, Dock and River Workers was created, changing its name just two years later to the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF). Its founders had the stated aim to 'establish, so far as may be possible, a uniform rate of pay for the same class of worker in all ports and to establish a recognised working day and other regulations in the ports of the world'. They wanted to see 'a steady levelling

British seafarers' complaints about being undercut by lower-cost foreign labour stretch back more than 200 years

up' of pay, in part to address shipowners' complaints that British workers were paid well in excess of those on the Continent.

International bodies

Conscious of the owners' abilities to play off one national group against another, seafarers' organisations had been seeking for some time to secure international machinery to govern maritime labour issues. The creation of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 1919 offered just such an opportunity – and in some dedicated maritime sessions of its International Labour Conference, seafarers were successful in making the case for 'the very special questions concerning the minimum conditions to be accorded to seamen' to be dealt with on a

separate basis; in 1920 the International Labour Office agreed to the creation of a maritime section and a Joint Maritime Commission (JMC), consisting of equal numbers of seafarer and shipowner representatives.

Before the ILO had held that first conference in Washington in autumn 1919, UK seafaring unions including the Mercantile Marine Service Association (MMSA) presented the British government's delegate to the meeting with a programme of demands including a minimum wage, working hours, manning scales, and better food. They also participated in international maritime union conferences which sought to shape the ILO agenda alongside delegates from countries including the UK, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, Norway, Spain and Sweden.

UK union delegates attended the ILO meeting in the role of technical advisers. The conference came painfully close to agreement on a convention to limit working hours in line with the unions' demands – it took until 1936 for international regulation of working time to be eventually agreed. However, in 1928 the unions – who had been making the case for an International Seamen's Code, to provide a 'uniform law' for the world's seafarers – were successful in securing the adoption of three conventions, covering the establishment of facilities for finding employment for seamen; the fixing of the minimum age for admission of children to employment at sea; and the provision of unemployment indemnity in case of loss or foundering of the ship.



Andrew Linington, author of the Nautilus history book *Pulling Together*

CREDIT: Brad Wakefield

Imperial and global

The sheer scale of the British Empire meant that British masters and officers worked across the globe, and from an early stage UK unions had strong relationships with such organisations as the Australian Merchant Service Guild and the China Coast Officers' Guild

The Officers' (MN) Federation was established by Captain William Coombs to represent members across the Commonwealth, and in December 1938 he visited India in an attempt to improve conditions for officers serving on the Indian coast and to explore the possibility of opening an NEOU office in the country. However, this failed to get off the ground because of differences over the gap between pay rates for British and Indian officers.

In January 1936 the Officers' Federation affiliated with the International Mercantile Marine Officers' Association (IMMOA), which had been established in 1925 by Dutch, Belgian, French and Scandinavian officers to 'defend and safeguard the interests of mercantile marine officers, and to foster the ties of friendship and cooperation between organisations of mercantile marine officers of all nations'. IMMOA's core aim was to provide an effective voice for officers at the ILO, and in 1932 discussions about the possible affiliation of the Officers' Federation had begun against a background of fears that European shipowners were making concerted attempts to cut the pay of officers.

The federation rapidly became an active member of the IMMOA, with Captain Coombs elected to the post of president in 1937. He soon gave particularly strong support to its efforts to secure a global

agreement to reduce the threat of criminalisation by reserving criminal jurisdiction in collision cases to the country of the vessel's flag. Stressing the importance of such work, Capt Coombs told NEOU members: 'We have long recognised that your wellbeing is inseparably linked up with the wellbeing of ships' officers the world over and that we cannot do our job on your behalf properly if we fail to realise that shipping is essentially an international industry.'

In October 1936, the NEOU took part in the ILO's Joint Maritime Conference in Geneva, which discussed proposals for six new conventions – including hours and manning, holidays with pay, minimum professional qualifications and sickness insurance – as well as a recommendation on seafarers' welfare in ports. The union lobbied strongly for the UK to implement these measures, and former ILO director Sir Harold Butler wrote in 1939 that 'it is curious to note that Great Britain is behind countries like Australia, Belgium, Sweden and the United States in adopting the international standard of hours and manning at a time when complaints are constantly heard that enough men cannot be induced to go to sea'.

GET THE BOOK

Buy *Pulling Together: The Making of a Global Maritime Trade Union* by Andrew Linington online for £19.99 from the Nautilus Bookshop by scanning the QR code or navigating to: www.marinesocietyshop.org/nautilus-bookshop



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