



Increasing the attractiveness of maritime careers in Europe

MariFuture has warned the shipping community worldwide of ship officer shortages in several occasions. In a proposal to the EU, MariFuture, gave detail account the situation – see for instance ATTRACT-ME. Although ATTRACT-ME scored a high grade for funding and given assurances that it will be funded, the EU changed its stance and decided not to fund the project. The decision by the EU was regrettable!

BIMCO/ISF reports of 2005 and 2010 also clearly predicted officer shortages in the world giving similar reasons to the ATTRACT-ME proposal for the shortages.

In recent years, MarEdu (www.maredu.co.uk), and since 2010 MariFuture, have been working on several projects trying to reduce the impact of the ship officer shortages and improve the quality of seafarers already working in the industry – See MarEdu and MariFuture projects in the **Project** section of the websites.

ECSCA in its recent report states that in the last decade the shipping industry has on several occasions warned against an impending shortage of qualified labour on board EU-flagged ships. The relative attractiveness of the seafaring profession has steadily decreased over the years, partly due to the specificities of the profession itself (such as long periods of time away from home) and partly due to common misperceptions and a general lack of information. The following is the reminder of the ECSCA notice:

To address this downward trend, the European Community Shipowners' Association (ECSCA) and the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF) have jointly produced a study, funded by the European Commission, which maps the various available career paths in the seafaring profession.

The overall objectives of this project are to increase the attractiveness of maritime careers as well as to provide possible tools to seafarers to facilitate their career progression at sea and from sea to shore.

“ECSCA welcomes the final report, whose findings and recommendations will undoubtedly be a fruitful basis for further consideration by EU-decision-makers as well as the social partners for maritime transport” said Patrick Verhoeven, Secretary General of ECSCA during the final conference of the project in Brussels on 30 January.

This study updates a similar 2004 study and provides updated career path maps for several EU Member States. It identifies the reasons why people have chosen a seafaring career, the expectations they have from it, the reasons why they decide to switch to a land-based career and the type of career they will opt for when transferring to shore.

More importantly, the new report identifies barriers that limit mobility and career progression at sea and between sea and shore jobs, for all seafarers. The project however goes further than that and proposes practical measures to address these barriers.

The study is available [here](#).

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News

MariFuture recent projects directly helping to improve the situation regarding the ship officer shortages and also improving the quality of seafarers:

MariFuture platform in the recent years have studied the problem of shortage of seafarers and attempted to attract youngsters to join seafaring profession. A number of project/proposals have been initiated over the years to bring solutions. Two of them are explained below:

1. **Safety on Sea (SOS) Project** (www.maredu.co.uk): The SOS project is a European partnership project to harmonise education and training of merchant navy officer and to address various deficiencies and problems in current requirements and practices in (predominately) European Union countries in the maritime sector.
2. **Sail Ahead – Onshore Career Guidance Tool** (www.sailahead.eu): The SAIL AHEAD project considers the reports by the European Commission about an estimated lack of tens of thousands of European naval officers. The SAIL AHEAD will help reduce the shortage of seafarers in Europe by providing more choice to women and men engaged in the profession, and promoting the possibilities for a more varied career.

For further information please refer to **Papers, Articles** and **Development Papers** in the MariFuture website.