



RECOMMENDATION REGARDING THE “SUPPLY OF SEAFARERS” IN THE MARITIME SECTOR AND PREDICTING POTENTIAL SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC OUTCOMES

Turkey has a surplus of qualified seafarers. The 8th Transportation Specialised Commission Report - (maritime transportation sub-commission report) “Seafaring Supply” which lays out the 5 year development plan prepared by the Turkish State Planning Organization in 2001, points out that Turkey has great potential to “export” these Seafarers. The same report states that, although the Philippines lead the world in “exporting” their seafarers, Turkey has a similar level of potential and marine workforce as they do. Tapping into this market could provide as much income to Turkey as tourism but the subsequent commission report also indicates that there has not yet been an attempt or discussion about taking advantage of this potential. A further detailed study has to be prepared considering the facts of 2013/2014 and give updated recommendations for action in this area.

Seafaring is a professional field which requires specialist qualifications. The Maritime Community is internationally regulated under the umbrella of International Maritime Organisation (IMO). Under the IMO seafarers have the platform to undertake their duties without discrimination based on nationality, religion or language. It is necessary that Seafarers who are at sea possess practical intelligence as well as their specialist qualifications. It is also important that they feel a sense of ownership of the ship they serve on; the feeling that the vessel they are serving is their own. Today shipping companies still look for “Well-Qualified” seafarers, however the majority of the current marine workforce is being provided by countries which do not meet the expected quality standards of industry requires and causes extra costs with poor practices.

The definition of a “Well-Qualified” seafarer can be identified as one who has the understanding that he/she adds value to the vessel. He/she approaches problems proactively, and thinks and acts responsibly in all situations and is aware of the hierarchic system on-board ship. However those countries which supply the most seafarers tend to supply seafarers which provide substandard work, and possess a point of view which seems unconcerned. However, it is important to note that because of cultural reasons, seafarers from these countries are usually extremely respectful to authority figures on board ship.

By examining both the Turkish and Global seafarer workforces we can build up a profile of the Turkish marine workforce and match this against the profile of the Global marine workforce. This allows Turkey to see where and how the Turkish seafarers can fit into the wider Global seafarer marine workforce. In doing this we can see that Turkey is uniquely placed to provide types of seafarers that the world is currently in need of. This is a great opportunity for Turkey to “export” these Seafarers providing not only Income and job opportunities but also opportunities to raise the International profile of Turkey as a country that provides "Well Qualified" seafarers worldwide.

In the past, Turkey did not make a significant progress to become the main supplier of "Well Qualified" seafarers worldwide hence have not been successful. One of the reasons for this could be that the responsible authorities do not seem to have a team and vision to deal with this subject. So in order to supply "Well Qualified" seafarers worldwide Turkey first needs to review and revise its employment policy and maritime education and training practices in order to ensure the standard of Turkish seafarers increases across the board in the coming years. One method of accomplishing this could be to remove the responsibility from ISKUR (Turkish National Employment Association) and instead more directly engage the industry.

Today, one of the leading countries in the Maritime world is the United Kingdom. Like Turkey the UK is a country surrounded by sea, and the quality of UK Seafarers is acknowledged around the



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world. The UK is a leader in the field of MET research and development benefiting not only themselves but the International community as well. Neighbouring countries to Turkey have agreements in place with countries like the UK for the mutual recognition of each other's qualifications; this allows seafarers from both nationalities to serve on-board each other's ships leading to more job opportunities and mobility for their seafarers. Turkey however has no such mutual recognition agreement with a country like the UK which materially affects the ability of Turkey to supply its seafarers to the rest of the world.

If Turkey were to examine its employment and MET policies, includes a possible mutual recognition agreement with the UK then this would open to door for the Turkey to supply the "Well Qualified" seafarers of tomorrow to the rest of the world. One area which Turkey could supply seafarers to is the yachting industry. With ever more expensive and expansive Mega yachts being built for the wealthy the crewing/manpower needs of this sector grow. Currently there is an obligation for many yacht owners to have UK qualified seafarers on-board due to pressure from insurance companies which all accept UK qualifications as a reference, this makes it almost impossible for a regular Turkish seafarer to work into this sector of the Maritime world. Therefore if Turkey worked with the UK on a mutual recognition agreement it would unlock this whole new job sector for Turkish seafarers.

In a nutshell, Turkey should continue to build on its recent successes and developments in MET, as well as looking to formalise its cooperation with the UK through mutual recognition of qualifications. There has already been a dramatic increase in the quality of young Turkish seafarers, and if Turkey continues to work systematically there is no reason why it couldn't be supplying the "Well Qualified" seafarers of tomorrow.

REMEMBER! A GOOD SEAFEAR IS AN AMBASSADOR FOR TOURISM.

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