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**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL AND THE
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT**

on the training and recruitment of seafarers

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Introduction

The last two decades have seen a sharp decline in the supply of well-trained seafarers, especially officers. A recent study¹ in this field revealed a current world-wide shortage of officers corresponding to 4% of the total workforce (16 000 officers) and predicted a 12% shortfall (46 000 officers) by the year 2010. The European Union faces the same problem but to an even more serious extent, with an estimated shortage of some 13 000 officers in 2001, rising to around 36 000 officers in 2006.²

Since the early 1980s both the overall EU fleet and the number of EU seafarers have declined.³ The total number of EU nationals employed on board EU-flagged vessels now stands at some 120 000, a drop of 40% compared with 1985, while the number of non-EU nationals employed on board EU vessels has increased since 1983 from around 29 000 to some 34 500 today.⁴ The scheduled passenger and ferry industry in the EU is an exception to this trend: this market is still served mainly by EU-flagged vessels crewed predominantly by EU nationals, and it employs almost 50% of the EU Member States' seafaring personnel (20% in intra-EU services and 30% in cabotage). Some 30 300 seafarers are employed in the intra-EU sector, with only 651 job positions occupied by non-EU nationals.

The industry, the Member States and the Commission have already addressed the issue of the declining number of EU seafarers and the shortage of well qualified seafarers on several occasions, and have agreed on the need to identify measures to tackle the problem. In 1996 the Commission presented an analysis in its Communication "Towards a new maritime strategy",⁵ identifying the need to place greater emphasis on promoting employment of EU seafarers in connection with the competitiveness of EU registers and the safe operation of ships. In its Resolution of 24 March 1997 on a new strategy to increase the competitiveness of Community shipping,⁶ the Council of Ministers of the European Union endorsed the Commission's Communication and *inter alia* recognised that positive measures were needed to foster the employment of Community seafarers. In particular, the Council agreed that action should be undertaken to help Community shipping continue to strive for high quality and become more competitive. This is to be achieved by, *inter alia*, ensuring the continued high-quality training of Community seafarers of all ranks and of shore-based personnel by making optimum use of the resources of the Member States and of Community instruments.

In December 1996 the European Commission and the Irish Presidency of the EU Council of Ministers organised an international Conference in Dublin under the title "Is the European Union Seafarer an endangered species?". The purpose of the Conference was to contribute to the discussion on the Commission's Communication "Towards a new maritime strategy" by

¹ BIMCO (Baltic and International Maritime Council)/ISF (International Shipping Federation) 2000 Manpower Update – The World-wide Demand for and Supply of Seafarers – April 2000 (hereinafter "BIMCO/ISF 2000 Manpower update").

² Source: Joint Study of the Federation of Transport Workers' Unions in the European Union (FST) and of the European Community Shipowners' Association (ECSA): "Improving the Employment Opportunities for EU Seafarers: An Investigation to Identify Seafarers Training and Education Priorities" (1998) (hereinafter "FST/ECSA Joint Study").

³ For the purposes of this document, an EU seafarer is a national of an EU Member State employed as a seafarer.

⁴ Based on the FST/ECSA Joint Study (see footnote 2).

⁵ COM(96) 81 final "Towards a new maritime strategy", 13.3.1996.

⁶ OJ C 109, 8.4.1997, p. 1.

analysing the employment situation for Community seafarers, studying the causes and economic consequences of their disappearance and finding solutions to that problem. The Conference expressed a common acknowledgement that European seafarers are vital to the proper functioning of Europe's maritime industry and stressed the need for action to re-establish a highly skilled pool of seafarers of all ranks. It proposed a number of practical measures and recommended that industries and administrations integrate these into their deliberations. A number of recommendations on the same subject were also adopted at the Plenary session of the Maritime Industry Forum, held in Helsinki in June 2000.

The general interest in the dramatic decline in EU seafarer numbers is also reflected in the number of studies and research projects which have been carried out in this field, including the 1996 "Study on the maritime professions in the European Union" (financed by the Commission), the 1998 FST and ECSA Joint Study⁷ and the METHAR research project⁸ (funded by the European Commission under the Transport RTD Programme of the 4th framework programme). These have all proposed possible measures to remedy the current rapid decline in EU seafarer numbers. However, only a few isolated measures have been taken by certain national associations of shipowners and by some Member States.

With the present Communication, the European Commission wishes to provide an update on the decline in the number of EU seafarers and an analysis of the reasons behind it, the possible implications for the EU shipping community and the measures necessary to reverse it. The Commission is aware that any measure affecting the human element has an impact on the competitive situation of shipowners, but considers that the evaluation of alternative solutions can no longer wait if we want to improve the present worrying situation.

Employment and training are two issues for which the Member States have prime responsibility. The Commission does not intend to replace the Member States in this field. However, it wishes to stimulate an urgent and productive discussion on this matter, involving all the actors concerned, and to facilitate and closely monitor the actual implementation of the possible remedial measures. These measures will have to be implemented at both Community and national level. As the extent of the problem varies within the EU, Member States will need to adapt the suggested initiatives to their specific needs and circumstances.

⁷ See footnote 2.

⁸ METHAR: Harmonisation of European Maritime Education and Training Schemes.

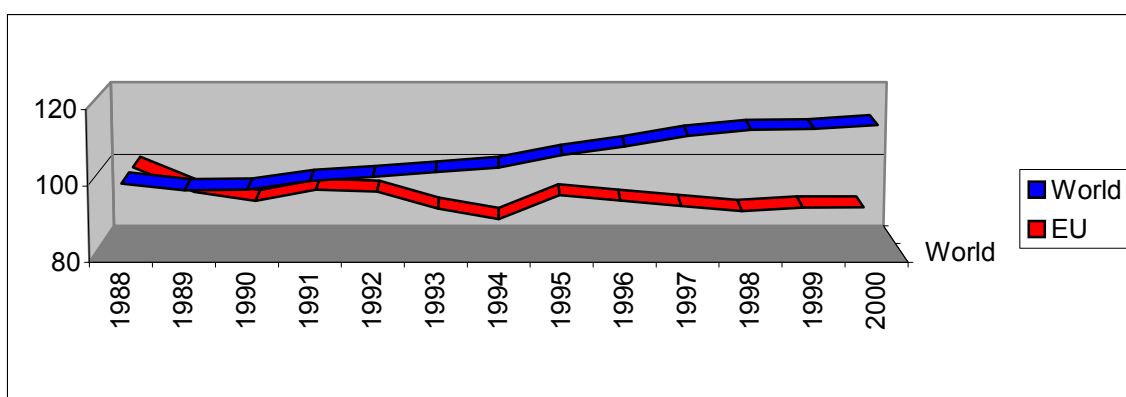
1. THE DECLINE IN THE NUMBER OF EU SEAFARERS

1.1. Data

The world fleet has expanded in recent years, and on 1 January 2000 total tonnage stood at over 506 million gross tonnes (gt).⁹ Meanwhile, a slight increase in the tonnage of the EU-registered fleet between 1998 and 1999 has not prevented the EU percentage of the world fleet declining over recent years to its current level of around 13%. Nonetheless, the proportion of ships controlled by EU interest remains substantial, estimated at around 33% of the world fleet.

World and EU merchant fleet development – Number of ships over 300 gt

Index 1988 = 100



A recent study¹⁰ estimated the world-wide supply of seafarers for 2000 to be 404 000 officers and 823 000 ratings, compared with a world-wide demand for 420 000 officers and 599 000 ratings. This appears to indicate a modest shortfall of officers required to man the world fleet (16 000, i.e. 4 % of the total workforce). The study emphasised that, in practice, this shortfall of 16 000 officers is more severe if account is taken of the obstacles which prevent the surpluses in some nationalities of seafarers from making up the shortages experienced by other countries. These obstacles include cultural and language differences, lack of international experience, and the nationality restrictions that apply to many flags.

The table below summarises the data provided above and indicates the predicted world-wide supply and demand of seafarers in the year 2010.

⁹ Source: Institute of Shipping Economics and Logistics (ISL) – Shipping Statistics and Market Review January/February 2000.

¹⁰ BIMCO/ISF 2000 Manpower Update (see footnote 1).

World-wide balance between supply and demand for seafarers¹¹

	2000	%	2010	%
Officers	- 16 000	- 4	- 46 000	- 12
Ratings	+ 224 000	+ 27	+ 255 000	+ 30

The decline in the number of EU seafarers has been sharper than the decline in the EU fleet: they currently number some 120 000, representing a fall of about 40% since the early 1980s. The following table shows clearly how the number of EU seafarers on board EU-registered ships has declined over the last fifteen years, while the number of non-EU seafarers has increased.

Number of EU and non-EU seafarers employed on board EU registered ships¹²

Year	Officers		Ratings		Total	
	EU	Non-EU	EU	Non-EU	EU	Non-EU
1985	85 140	1 144	120 496	27 781	205 637	28 926
1990					158 457	27 579
1995	52 255	2 551	76 473	30 480	128 728	33 031
1998-99					120 541 (*)	34 534 (*)

(*) 1996 figures for UK and Greece

It is estimated that the shortage of officers in the EU might reach around 13 000 in 2001, rising to some 36 000 by 2006.¹³ This dramatic situation is exacerbated by the age element: the average age of officers in the OECD¹⁴ countries is much higher than that of the Far Eastern, Eastern and Indian workforce. There are two main reasons for this: first of all, service at sea in the OECD countries is becoming shorter, with most seafarers moving to careers on shore long before they are forty; secondly, financial pressures have forced many shipping companies to take on board junior officers from third countries, as they are less expensive than their OECD counterparts. At present, most OECD officers are in the senior ranks (60% of EU officers are aged over 40), while most developing country officers are in the junior ranks. It can be expected that the senior OECD officers will, on retirement over the next few years, be replaced by nationals of less developed nations.

The clear message is that the current shortage of officers will worsen unless remedial action is taken immediately. As for the likely substantial surplus of ratings, this needs to be analysed carefully since it is doubtful that all these ratings are qualified for international service. It

¹¹ BIMCO/ISF 2000 Manpower Update (see footnote 1).

¹² Sources: Study on the maritime professions in the European Union (TecEcon, 1996) and ECSA Annual Report (1998-1999).

¹³ Source: FST/ECSA Joint Study (see footnote 2).

¹⁴ Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

should also be borne in mind that, given the appropriate training, ratings can become officers. It is therefore important to make sure that the current sufficient availability of EU ratings does not deteriorate. Member States and social partners should keep this in mind when planning action to halt the decline in the numbers of EU seafarers.

1.2. Causes

There are two sides to the general issue addressed in this Communication: demand for EU seafarers is falling, and so is the supply of trained seafarers. The main reasons for this are the financial considerations of EU shipowners, and social aspects which discourage young people from considering a career at sea.

1.2.1. The financial considerations of EU shipowners

As indicated above, the EU fleet has declined in recent years while the world fleet has expanded. This is understandable given that EU freight rates remained stagnant after the world-wide recession of the 1990s, while world freight rates recovered very quickly. In response to the financial pressure put on them by the oversupply of shipping tonnage on the world market and increasing competition from third-country vessels, a number of EU shipowners decided to reduce their costs by registering their ships under non-EU flags or under second national registers.

In so doing, these EU shipowners took the opportunity to replace seafarers from the EU with non-EU labour and consequently to lower, *inter alia*, their wage costs. The substantial wage difference between EU and non-EU seafarers is certainly a key factor in shipowners' employment policies. It is calculated that the highest EU wage for able seamen is some 15 times higher than the lowest non-EU wage (both wages including social costs) and 5.6 times higher for chief officers.¹⁵ These wage differences are even more significant if consideration is given to the fact that wage costs account for 40% of a ship's daily operating costs and represent the largest single variable cost in ship operations.

However, a distinction needs to be drawn between ratings and officers. Despite the wage difference, shipowners appear more inclined to hire EU officers for a number of reasons ranging from safety considerations, type of ship and technical standards on board (the more expensive officers tend to be better educated and trained) to cultural links.

1.2.2. The social aspects of employment as a seafarer

Despite there being a shortage of qualified seafarers, fewer and fewer European youngsters are choosing maritime careers, considering them socially and financially unattractive compared with positions on shore. Not even the high levels of youth unemployment in the EU appear to have offset this trend.

Young people are increasingly unwilling to spend long periods of time at sea, far away from their relatives, children and friends. Even the more attractive sides of the job, such as the possibility of exploring the world and visiting exotic places, seems to have disappeared as a result of modern navigational practices, whereby ships only stay in port for short periods, or remain outside the harbour for their commercial operations. Moreover, modern ships only have small crews, very often of different nationalities and speaking different languages, which can lead to social isolation.

¹⁵ Source: FST/ECSA Joint Study (see footnote 2).

An important indicator of the fact that young people do not regard seafaring jobs as an interesting occupation is the high drop-out rate from maritime education and training: the average drop-out rate in the EU is between 22% and 32%, but can be as high as 60% or 70% in some Member States.¹⁶

The Commission believes it is essential that action be taken to reverse this situation. Of all the possible solutions described below, the most urgently needed is the creation of a new image for seafaring employment in particular and for the maritime industry in general. Public authorities and social partners should work together to transform maritime employment into appealing careers and so attract young Europeans to sea.

1.3. Implications

The current lack of EU seafarers could have dramatic consequences. Well trained seafarers means safe navigation, efficient operations, good maintenance of ships and a reduction in the number of accidents and marine pollution (80% of all accidents are caused by human error). Personnel from certain labour-supplying countries outside the Community are – generally speaking – less well trained than Community personnel (e.g. seafarers holding third-country certificates which fail to meet the requirements of the IMO Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW Convention) and are not recognised by Member States). Shipping being a vital activity for the EU (90% of the Union's external trade and over 35% of its internal trade relies on maritime transport), it cannot afford to lose this basic pool of experience if it wants to avoid endangering safety and the environment and jeopardising the competitiveness of its shipping and related maritime industry. It should be emphasised that these considerations apply to both officers and ratings, since safe and efficient ship operations depend upon the technical skills and team-working ability of the entire crew, irrespective of rank.

Oil transport deserves particular consideration in this context. The Community imports 80% of its total oil requirements, almost all of it by sea. It is therefore important to ensure the independence and security of oil transportation into the EU. This strategic consideration means the competent authorities in the Community need to consider carefully the need to maintain EU maritime know-how and keep strict control of the EU oil-tanker fleet when formulating maritime policy in general and policies on maritime personnel in particular.

The shortfall of EU seafarers may also impact negatively on a whole range of related industries. A wide range of land-based employers look upon seafaring experience as an advantage or a pre-requisite when recruiting personnel. Ports, shipping companies, inspection bodies (classification societies, port State control authorities, flag administrations), insurance companies, shipbuilders and ship-repair companies, marine equipment manufacturers, etc. prefer or are obliged to recruit former seafarers. For a number of reasons ranging from cultural similarities and language to knowledge of local/national customs and regulations, positions within these companies are not easily filled by non-European former seafarers. It is therefore evident that the expected shortage of EU seafarers will lead in the longer term to a shortage of personnel for the EU's shipping-related activities. The know-how and experience gained by EU seafarers during their time at sea needs to be retained if the EU wants to avoid a loss to the shipping industry as a whole.

¹⁶ Source: FST/ECSA Joint Study (see footnote 2).

To conclude, if the present decline in EU seafarers continues, the Community could lose an important historical and professional heritage. Nautical schools might have to close and maritime know-how in the Community as a whole could disappear, with dramatic consequences for the safety of navigation, security of supply and the competitiveness of the entire shipping industry.

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMUNITY AND INTERNATIONAL *ACQUIS*

Various legislation covering persons employed on board ships already exists at **Community level**. It falls into two categories: social legislation covering all workers, and legislation specific to seafarers.

- The **first category** includes all **Directives on the health and safety of workers** (some twenty in all). These cover a whole range of areas such as the protection of workers against exposure to chemical and biological agents, carcinogens, asbestos and ionising radiation, the medicines which have to be carried on board ships and the use of personal protective equipment. A full list is given in annex, though the importance should be underlined of the framework Directive on health and safety, which, if properly applied in the workplace, provides means of preventing accidents and additional protection in the event of an accident.

The first category also includes the Directives on **equal treatment for men and women**. The employment of women on board ships is still unsatisfactory, but the existence of a legal framework to prevent discrimination can only help improve the situation.

A third group of acts deal with **social security** and **conditions of employment**. Regulation No 1408/71, which facilitates workers' mobility by guaranteeing them non-discriminatory treatment if they move from one Member State to another, applies to seafarers. As for conditions of employment, seafarers are covered by all the adopted Directives except those relating to protection of workers in the event of transfers of undertakings or collective redundancies and Directive 96/71/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 1996 concerning the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services¹⁷ (the Council of Ministers considered these acts to be unsuited to the specific features of the maritime sector). The Directive on the insolvency of employers allows Member States to exclude seafarers, and some have so done.

- The **second category** covers Directives specific to seafarers, such as those on **working time on board ships**¹⁸ and the **training of seafarers**.¹⁹ As mentioned above, 80% of maritime accidents are caused by human error. These two Directives are thus important in that they bolster the human element by preventing fatigue and ensuring that crews are properly trained. The Directive on working time is the first sectoral agreement between

¹⁷ OJ L 18, 21.1.1997, p. 1.

¹⁸ Council Directive 1999/63/EC of 21 June 1999 concerning the Agreement on the organisation of working time of seafarers concluded by the European Community Shipowners' Association (ECSA) and the Federation of Transport Workers' Unions in the European Union (FST) - Annex: European Agreement on the organisation of working time of seafarers (OJ L 167, 2.7.1999, p. 33). Directive 1999/95/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 1999 concerning the enforcement of provisions in respect of seafarers' hours of work on board ships calling at Community ports (OJ L 14, 20.1.2000, p. 29).

¹⁹ Council Directive 94/58/EC of 22 November 1994 on the minimum level of training of seafarers (OJ L 319, 12.12.1994, p. 28).

social partners based on the social chapter of the Treaty. It goes hand in hand with a Directive on its enforcement in European ports. The Directive on the training of seafarers is based on the STCW Convention; it introduced a Community procedure for recognising third country certificates and represents a major step forward in ensuring the quality of crews and rehabilitating the maritime profession.

In addition to the Directives on **protection of workers**, the Union has created an instrument geared more towards **promotion of employment**, viz. the **guidelines on State aid to maritime transport**. The first guidelines date from 1989, and were revised in 1997. They are designed to promote the competitiveness of European fleets (under serious threat from open flags offering social and fiscal conditions which do not compare to those of the Member States), while at the same time encouraging the employment of European seafarers, thus helping to preserve maritime know-how in the Union and improve safety on board ships. They lay down the conditions under which Member States may provide aid in the form of tax exemptions and aid for the employment and training of European seafarers. More specifically, they allow (a) reduced rates of contributions for the social protection of Community seafarers employed on board ships registered in a Member State and (b) reduced rates of income tax for Community seafarers on board ships registered in a Member State.

Since the revised guidelines were published, a growing number of Member States have implemented employment-related measures or introduced special training schemes. Some three years into the application of the revised guidelines, the first monitoring reports are showing these measures to be having a beneficial effect, especially in terms of a reduction in out-flagging and even a certain tendency to flag ships back towards Member States' registers. Accordingly, the Commission invites all Member States to consider how the most appropriate use can be made, at national level, of the options offered by the State aid guidelines. The Commission services will continue to monitor the results of the application of the guidelines, and will take those results into account when drafting the next revision of the guidelines, particularly in respect of measures to encourage employment.

At **international level**, two specialised UN agencies handle social matters in the broad sense: the IMO (International Maritime Organisation) deals with "safety", while the ILO (International Labour Organisation) handles the social side. The IMO adopted the above mentioned STCW Convention while the international ILO conventions relating to seafarers are listed at Annex II. The Member States of the Union have ratified all these acts, and are thus bound by them.

As far as **implementation** is concerned, the existing Community legislation applicable to ships in the field of health and safety at work has in general been correctly transposed by the Member States. However, the Commission undertakes to check whether it is being fully applied in the maritime transport sector. Such a check was specifically requested by the Council of Transport Ministers in its conclusions of 21 December 2000 on maritime safety.

The Commission will also do everything it can to ensure that the Community measures transposing the STCW Convention and the International Safety Management (ISM) Code²⁰ into Community law continue to be correctly applied by the Member States. In parallel, it will check that the third countries which provide much of the maritime industry's manpower are

²⁰ Council Directive 94/58/EC (see footnote 19) and Council Regulation (EC) N° 3051/95 of 8 December 1995 on the safety management of roll-on/roll-off passenger ferries (ro-ro ferries) (OJ L 320, 30.12.1995, p. 14).

complying with the provisions of the STCW Convention. In addition, it will work in close cooperation with the IMO, and through application of the Community Directive on Port State Control,²¹ to ensure that these instruments are applied comprehensively and effectively at world level. As far as the Directive on seafarers' hours of work is concerned, the Commission reminds Member States that its smooth implementation requires the ratification of the ILO Seafarers' Hours of Work and the Manning of Ships Convention (N° 180) and the Protocol to the ILO Merchant Shipping (Minimum Standards) Convention (N° 147).

While Port State Control will help to monitor the correct application of existing Community and international legislation, transparency will be provided through Equasis.²² Since the presence of well trained seafarers on board ships is universally recognised as a key element in ensuring safety at sea, the Supervisory Committee and the Editorial Board of Equasis have agreed that the insertion of a human element module in the database would be in line with the idea of providing information on the safety features of each individual ship. The human element module has still to be developed, but it is envisaged that it will contain information on application of the STCW Convention, fraudulent certificates, compliance with the working time and other ILO Conventions, cases of abandoned seafarers or unpaid wages, safe manning certificates, crew complaints and the existence of collective agreements.

3. PROPOSALS FOR ACTION

As mentioned in section 2, important measures to enhance health and safety at work, as well as working conditions on board ships, are already in force at Community level. Instruments to promote the employment of Community seafarers have also been adopted or are under discussion in the competent fora. The Commission takes the view that action to reverse the decline in the number of EU seafarers should not – at least for the time being – involve any further proposals for specific legislation focused on employment issues. Instead, it is correct implementation of the existing legislation and appropriate use of the relevant Community instruments which should contribute to reversing the current employment trends.

However, one issue the Commission does intend to examine to determine whether further Community legislation is necessary is that of abandoned ships. Vessels are frequently abandoned in Community ports and their crews remain on board without being paid a salary. On top of the unacceptable humanitarian consequences of these situations, abandoned ships also create problems for ports in their daily commercial activities by reducing the space available. The Commission will examine the option of proposing legislation allowing ports to sell abandoned ships. At the same time, it will examine the possibility of applying to ships the provisions of the Directive on the transfers of undertakings, businesses or parts of businesses²³ as well as the Directive on collective redundancies.²⁴ It seems only appropriate to

²¹ Council Directive 95/21/EC of 19 June 1995 concerning the enforcement, in respect of shipping using Community ports and sailing in the waters under the jurisdiction of the Member States, of international standards for ship safety, pollution prevention and shipboard living and working conditions (port State control) (OJ L 157, 7.7.1995, p. 1).

²² Equasis is a data system collecting existing safety-related information on ships from both public and private sources and making it available on the Internet (www.equasis.org). Equasis was developed by the Commission and the French Maritime Administration following a unanimous request for more transparency put forward in the framework of the Quality Shipping Campaign launched by the Commission and the United Kingdom authorities in 1997.

²³ Council Directive 77/187/EEC of 14 February 1977 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the safeguarding of employees' rights in the event of transfers of undertakings, businesses or parts of businesses (OJ L 61, 5.3.1977, p. 26).

ensure that seafarers working on board Community ships enjoy at least the same protection as other Community workers, and to prevent seafarers working on board Community ships being abandoned.

The Commission believes the Member States and the social partners – in particular through the Social Dialogue Committee on Maritime Transport – can take a number of important practical steps in this area. They all have an interest in finding a rapid solution to the shortage of EU seafarers and their efforts in this direction should be coordinated so as to achieve the best possible results. Of course, EU shipowners must be directly and fully involved in this exercise, both from the training point of view and by contributing to a re-launch of the maritime sector's image. Public authorities will need to provide all possible support to shipowners, in particular by reducing the cost disadvantages linked to the employment of EU seafarers. The maritime academies also have an important role to play by providing the best possible training and by helping to re-launch the overall image of the maritime sector.

The Commission therefore recommends to all these actors that they combine their efforts in order to tackle the current shortfall of EU seafarers and implement the priority actions listed below.

3.1. Promoting employment

3.1.1. The “manning” proposal and further social partners’ initiatives on employment issues

Scheduled passenger and ferry services within the European Union constitute a labour-intensive sector employing some 30 000 EU seafarers. At present the market is served mainly by EU-flagged vessels, crewed predominantly by EU nationals. Almost 50% of the EU Member States' seafaring personnel are employed in this sector (20% in intra-EU services and 30% in cabotage). The Commission's services believe the recent tendency to use non-EU seafarers in this sector (initially in catering, then in the officer ranks) will continue and even increase as a result of market developments and the competitive pressure on certain routes. In response to this, the Commission adopted on 29 April 1998 a Communication on a common policy on manning of regular passenger and ferry services operating in and between Member States, with two proposals attached: a proposal for a Council Regulation amending Council Regulation No 3577/92 applying the principle of freedom to provide services to maritime transport within Member States (maritime cabotage) and a proposal for a Council Directive on manning conditions for regular passenger and ferry services operating between Member States.²⁵

The proposed Directive provides that non-EU nationals employed on board regular passenger ships and ferries operating between EU ports must enjoy labour conditions comparable to those enjoyed by EU nationals. The Commission believes that by imposing EU standards for seafarers employed in this labour-intensive sector the Directive will create a level playing field and prevent social dumping and the distortion of competition brought about by the employment of third-country seafarers at non-EU wage rates. It will prevent the further replacement of EU seafarers by lower-cost non-EU nationals and will maintain employment opportunities for EU seafarers by preserving one of their last remaining significant sectors of

²⁴ Council Directive 98/59/EC of 20 July 1998 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to collective redundancies (OJ L 225, 12.8.1998, p. 16).

²⁵ OJ C 213, 9.7.1998, p. 17.

employment (particularly for ratings and catering staff). Lastly, the prospect of continuing to supply labour to this sector might boost the training of EU seafarers.

While continuing the discussions in the Council and the European Parliament, the Commission considers it would be useful to offer in parallel to the social partners the possibility of discussing among themselves the problem of EU seafarers in the scheduled passenger and ferry sector being replaced by cheaper non-EU nationals. The Commission believes the social partners might approach the problem from different angles and find different solutions to those proposed by the Commission in its Communication of 1998 (terms and conditions of employment). Given that the social partners have cooperated successfully in the past, both for the adoption of the Agreement on the organisation of working time of seafarers and in providing the Commission with a joint contribution to the drafting of this Communication, the Commission believes it might be possible to adopt a voluntary agreement on this issue as well. Furthermore, the social partners might – if they so wish – also discuss amongst themselves the possibility of extending the voluntary agreement to other issues, such as the enhancement of training (including the availability of places for training on board), the improvement of living and working conditions, the definition of career paths, and wage levels.

3.1.2. Awareness campaigns and related measures to promote employment

One of the most urgently needed actions to attract young people to the seafaring profession is a re-launch of the maritime industry's image. Of all the possible initiatives in this area, the Commission recommends the organisation of coordinated awareness campaigns, at both national and European level. Similar events have already been organised in a number of Member States and have proved valuable in showing the positive aspects of the maritime professions and giving young people the facts about the opportunities and implications of seafaring careers. Since one of the positive elements in choosing a career at sea is the wide range of employment opportunities for seafarers in a large number of maritime-related activities, awareness campaigns could provide a useful opportunity to publicise career paths for EU seafarers, from first employment on board to possible job offers ashore after a reasonable number of years at sea. Furthermore, awareness campaigns could help to attract youngsters of the right calibre to the maritime sector and to reduce the number of trainees abandoning their studies before completion. Finally, the campaigns – to be carried out in the Member States and adapted to specific circumstances – could also provide a good opportunity to promote women's access to the seafaring professions in the EU.

Seafaring has historically been a male career, and it is true that combining family life and work at sea can be more difficult for women than for men. However, there are certain occupations which women can already take up more easily, such as those on board scheduled ferry services. The social partners should make every effort to promote and facilitate women's access to the seafaring professions, especially those which may be more attractive to women. The awareness campaigns might offer a useful opportunity in this respect. The social partners should also tackle the existing unacceptable problems of discrimination and prejudice encountered by many women employed aboard EU ships.²⁶

²⁶ In a recent survey conducted by NUMAST (National Union of Marine Aviation and Shipping Transport Officers) among its female members, 76% of respondents said they had suffered sexual harassment at sea and 47% said they had experienced sexual discrimination.

Measures to promote female employment on board ships would be in line with the IMO plan for the integration of women in the maritime sector and with the STCW recommendation that special consideration be given to securing equal access by men and women in all sectors of the maritime industry, that the role of women in the seafaring profession be highlighted and that their increased participation be promoted in maritime training and at all levels in the maritime industry. All measures to promote female employment on board EU ships and to combat discrimination and prejudice against women would be also in line with the general Community policy of equal treatment for men and women. In this respect, the Commission recommends that the Member States and social partners ensure that existing legislation in the field of gender equality is properly applied and that the recently proposed legislation outlawing sexual harassment in the workplace²⁷ is adopted rapidly.

3.2. Living and working conditions

Shipowners can do a lot to make life on board ships more attractive and to show that living and working conditions have appealing aspects. Modern information technologies offer a wide range of options here. For instance, seafarers should be offered the possibility of staying in touch with their families and friends via e-mail. Consideration should be given to installing computer rooms on board ships, and computers could be provided to the seafarers' families at home. Providing ships with reading rooms, music equipment and video-recorders might be another option. Of all such measures, the most important seems to be the planning of convenient rotation times between sea and shore. Shipowners and union representatives should find a balanced compromise between seafarers' wishes to spend more time ashore and companies' financial burdens (repatriation of crews and the need to have two crews for one ship).

Consideration should also be given to improving living conditions on board by using the modern technology of long-distance medical consultation (telemedicine). Research projects financed by the Commission have shown that, to protect the health and safety of seafarers, it is possible to set up an integrated 24-hour multilingual world-wide emergency service to transfer medical expertise via satellite and ground-based ISDNs (Integrated Services Digital Networks). Requests for help at sea may be broadcast over ship-to-shore links feeding into an ISDN of health service providers and then routed to suitable specialists. Health teleconsultants will also be able to interact from afar with local multimedia medical guides to demonstrate suitable procedures to on-the-spot paramedics.

Directly related to all measures to improve living and working conditions on board are measures designed to restore the social prestige and job satisfaction once found in the seafaring professions. The social partners should determine which measures might have the desired effect and should implement them as a matter of urgency. In particular, since only a considerable difference in salary between ship and shore jobs will convince EU youngsters to go to sea and keep existing seafarers at sea, the Commission invites EU shipowners to give close consideration to the need to raise the salaries of the officers working on their ships. It is

²⁷ Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Directive 76/207/EEC of 9 February 1976 on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions (COM/2000/334 final).

worth recalling here the recent statistics issued by the International Labour Organisation showing a fall in the average rates for able EU seafarers between 1992 and 1999.²⁸

3.3. Focusing maritime education and training

3.3.1. Maritime Education and Training (MET)

The key to improving the qualifications of EU seafarers and enhancing their employability and mobility is proper maritime training. Well trained seafarers will in turn help Europe's maritime industry to become more **competitive** and achieve higher **safety and environmental protection** standards. Indeed, safety and environmental protection will be impossible in the long term without investment in quality seafarers.

The maritime institutes in the EU provide high-quality training, and EU seafarers are generally considered to be amongst the best trained in the world. However, the declining interest in seafaring careers has led to a surplus of study places in Europe's 120 or so MET institutes, whose future survival now seems uncertain. Furthermore, continual changes in the regulatory framework, modern technology and the operation of the global shipping industry mean that a tremendous effort is required to adapt to the new circumstances, and a fragmented European MET system might have difficulty coping with them.

Maritime training – like any other form of training – is an issue for which Member States have prime responsibility. Public authorities and shipowners – who in future will have to invest more in the training and long-term career development of their company staff – need to work together to preserve and improve the European MET systems. The Commission does not intend to replace the Member States or the social partners in this field. However, while respecting the subsidiarity principle, it wishes to draw the attention of all the relevant actors to a number of measures which might be taken to help the MET system as a whole meet the significant challenges facing it.

The first challenge for the MET system is to provide quality seafarers capable of working on board modern high-quality ships. To ensure that this challenge is met at Community level, it would first be necessary for the training institutes to carefully analyse and, where necessary, revise their **teaching programmes**. It is essential that teaching programmes meet the overall requirements of the shipping industry (familiarity with international legislation – particularly the provisions of the STCW Convention and the ISM Code – and with modern technology) and that they ensure a good knowledge of the English language. Equally important is **closer alignment of the existing national MET systems**, which could encourage useful cross-fertilisation and result in an overall improvement in the Member States' MET systems. Some consideration should also be given to concentrating resources in a **smaller number of MET institutes** so as to reduce costs (particularly to ensure the availability of modern equipment, such as sophisticated simulators) and at the same time raise the quality of European MET.

Any analysis of measures to ensure quality training and quality seafarers needs to include the issue of **training on board** ship, which is becoming a crucial problem in the EU maritime sector. A period of approved on-board service is an internationally recognised compulsory element of seafarers' training programmes. Places for on-board training on EU ships have

²⁸ Over the seven-year period, able seafarers' average monthly earnings fell by 53% for Germans, 51% for Belgians, 43% for Danes, 49% for the Dutch, 26% for the Portuguese and 14% for the French.

become less available in recent years, mainly because shipowners have tried to cut the costs relating to this type of training, both by offering fewer study places on board existing ships and by ordering new ships with fewer places available for cadets. Shipowners must recognise their direct responsibility in training EU seafarers and must be ready to shoulder the administrative and financial burden of offering them on-board training opportunities. The Commission would recommend, at this point, that shipowners also examine the possibility of offering on-board training to a number of cadets simultaneously, so as to reduce the sense of isolation the youngsters may feel during their first sailing experiences. Meanwhile, the public authorities need to seek all possible solutions to ease the financial burden which on-board training places on shipowners. The Community guidelines on State aid to maritime transport offer some interesting options here, and the Commission will carefully examine whether the forthcoming revision of the guidelines should include further measures related to on-board training. Finally, Member States should consider the possibility of taking joint action in the competent international bodies to ensure that it becomes an international requirement that ships be built with an adequate number of places for on-board training.

The second challenge consists in providing seafarers with the knowledge they need to increase their prospects of mobility. In this respect, the initial education must be followed by **continuous updating courses** to enable seafarers to cope with the specialisation of ships and adapt to new on-board equipment and legal requirements. Such courses would increase the mobility of EU seafarers, both between different types of specialised ships and between the deck and engine. While the first type of mobility is expressly addressed in the STCW Convention and is normally available in the European MET institutes, more effort is required to establish the criteria to be applied to dual-purpose mobility and for its practical implementation in MET institutes. **Upgrading courses** should also be provided to promote the conversion of ratings to officers, and to upgrade officers. All the many opportunities offered by long-distance training should be explored and implemented for the updating and upgrading courses.

The third challenge is to adapt to the changing pattern of the profession, i.e. to provide seafarers with the necessary tools to take up onshore occupations after a reasonable number of years at sea. To this end, it is important that initial maritime education and the abovementioned updating courses also include the commercial aspects of shipping (i.e. maritime law, economics and management) in order to provide EU seafarers with better insight into the industrial requirements and working methods of their future occupations ashore. In this respect, it would be useful for the MET institutes and the social partners to work together to define common objectives and, in particular, **career paths** for seafarers. This is even more important given the fact that the Member States' national maritime administrations will need more personnel to carry out the increasing number of tasks imposed on them by the recently adopted or proposed Community legislation on maritime safety. An increasing number of inspectors will be needed to carry out port State control activities and tasks linked to the control of navigation. It is important, then, that seafarers be given adequate training to take up these occupations, which – together with other occupations in the private maritime industry – would appear to be a natural continuation of their on-board experience.

In addition to these three major challenges, consideration should be given to the following measures, which could help tackle the shortage of EU seafarers. At the same time, they might entail changes to the current system of maritime training. The first measure would be to try – in full observance of existing international and Community law – to **lower the entry requirements for the different grades of certificates**, such as those for admission to the

courses for unlimited certificates of competency. While the above mentioned alignment of the existing national MET systems should improve the **mutual recognition of certificates of competency** by the Member States, another measure would be to remove the remaining obstacles to the employment of EU seafarers on board any EU-flagged ship. Finally, some effort should be made to **facilitate the entry to officers' positions** in the merchant navy for persons who are already pre-qualified, i.e. officers on fishery vessels and former navy officers. Ad hoc training initiatives should be defined and implemented to this end.

3.3.2. Community initiatives

Community financial support for maritime training activities is certainly an appealing possibility, but it should not be overestimated. Community funds can – and indeed should – be used to support the maritime training plans produced by Member States and shipowners, but they cannot provide all the financial support needed to implement an action such as halting the decline in the number of EU seafarers.

The Commission has previously discounted the possibility of creating a specific Community fund for maritime training, and it still believes this is not a realistic option. However, it strongly recommends that the Member States and the social partners explore and make better use of the opportunities offered by the existing Community instruments in the field of financial support for training, the European Social and Structural Funds and, in particular, the Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci programmes. Along the same lines, Member States should explore and exploit the opportunities offered in the field of human resources by Equal, a new Community initiative which will promote new means of combating all forms of discrimination and inequalities in connection with the labour market, through transnational cooperation.

The Member States and social partners are invited to give the requisite priority to maritime training, and to maritime initiatives on human resources, when planning their participation in Community programmes.

3.4. Support from the Research Programme

Notwithstanding the industry's own responsibility for tackling the decline in the number of EU seafarers, the Community can help it in its task by sponsoring a number of research projects. Areas of research of particular relevance that could be conducted within the forthcoming Sixth Framework Programme (activities in support of Community policies) include:

- Profiling of suitable candidates so as to improve the selection of trainee seafarers and potentially reduce the high drop-out rates.
- Motivational factors that encourage people to go to sea, remain at sea or take up on-shore employment.
- Present and potential future job content and career paths, both at sea and on shore, as well as the latest job design concepts.
- Possible improvements to living and working conditions on board, including the communication links between crew members and their families and friends now available thanks to modern information technologies.

- Possible approximation of the existing national MET systems and possible concentration of resources in a smaller number of MET institutes.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commission has already started to address the problem of the shortfall in the number of EU seafarers. It believes this action needs to be pursued and enhanced through joint action by all the actors concerned, in order to remedy the current worrying situation. It is for this reason that the Commission recommends that the priority actions listed below be addressed.

- Proper application of existing Community and international law on living and working conditions and the quality of shipboard operations is a fundamental tool not only for improving safety at sea and preventing pollution, but also for tackling the decline of the seafarer professions. Member States are invited to ensure that such legislation is properly applied; the Commission, for its part, will monitor this process and ensure transparency through Equasis. The Commission also invites all Member States to consider how the options for supporting the employment of EU seafarers offered by the guidelines on State aid can be best applied at national level.
- Scheduled passenger ferry services within the European Union are labour-intensive, and are served mainly by EU-flagged vessels crewed predominantly by EU nationals. EU seafarers in this sector face increasing competition from cheaper non-EU labour. The Commission proposed a solution to this problem in its Communication of 1998. While discussions on the Commission's proposals continue in the competent fora, different solutions to the same problem might be found in parallel by the social partners by way of a voluntary agreement.
- The Commission recommends that the Member States and the social partners organise coordinated awareness campaigns at national and European level to re-launch the image of the shipping industry and give young people the facts about the opportunities and implications of a maritime career. This, in turn, might help reduce the number of trainees who abandon their studies before completion. Awareness campaigns might also provide a good opportunity to promote and facilitate women's access to the seafaring professions, especially those professions they might find more attractive.
- A few simple arrangements, with the support of modern technologies, can significantly improve the living and working conditions on board ship. The Commission recommends that shipowners explore these possibilities, as well as the possibility of arranging more convenient rotation times for seafarers between sea and shore. The Commission also invites the social partners to take appropriate action to boost the social prestige and job satisfaction of the seafaring professions. The most urgent measure would be for shipowners to raise the salaries of EU officers.
- Preserving a high-quality system of maritime training in the EU is vital for the survival of EU seafarers, the competitiveness of the European maritime industry and the enhancement of safety and environmental protection. Public authorities, shipowners and maritime academies must work together to ensure that the Member States' maritime education and training systems meet all the requirements of the regulatory framework, of modern technology, and of the global shipping industry, including a good knowledge of the English language. The Commission also recommends that Member States and social partners implement urgent measures to ensure a sufficient number of study places for

cadets wishing to train on-board, provide EU seafarers with continuous updating and/or upgrading courses, and increase the mobility of EU seafarers.

- Community instruments are available for the financial support of maritime training, as are Community initiatives in the field of human resources. The Commission recommends that the Member States and the social partners explore and take advantage of the opportunities offered by these instruments. In particular, Member States are invited to give adequate priority to maritime training, and to maritime initiatives in the field of human resources, when planning their participation in Community programmes.
- The Community may support the industry's effort to reverse the present shortfall of EU seafarers by sponsoring a number of ad hoc research projects through the forthcoming Sixth Framework Programme.

ANNEX I

Community legislation adopted in the social field and applicable to ships

General social provisions	Council Directive 75/34/EEC of 17 December 1974 concerning the right of nationals of a Member State to remain in the territory of another Member State after having pursued therein an activity in a self-employed capacity (OJ L 014, 20/01/1975, p. 10)
	Council Directive 76/207/EEC of 9 February 1976 on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions (OJ L 039, 14/02/1976, p. 40)
	Council Directive 86/613/EEC of 11 December 1986 on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity, including agriculture, in a self-employed capacity, and on the protection of self-employed women during pregnancy and motherhood (OJ L 359, 19/12/1986, p. 56)
	Council Directive 97/80/EC of 15 December 1997 on the burden of proof in cases of discrimination based on sex (OJ L 014, 20/01/1998, p. 6)
Health and safety at work	Council Directive 76/579/Euratom of 1 June 1976 laying down the revised basic safety standards for the health protection of the general public and workers against the dangers of ionizing radiation (OJ L 187, 12/07/1976, p. 1)
	Council Directive 78/610/EEC of 29 June 1978 on the approximation of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the Member States on the protection of the health of workers exposed to vinyl chloride monomer (OJ L 197, 22/07/1978, p. 12)
	Council Directive 80/836/Euratom of 15 July 1980 amending the Directives laying down the basic safety standards for the health protection of the general public and workers against the dangers of ionizing radiation (OJ L 246, 17/09/1980, p. 1)
	Council Directive 82/501/EEC of 24 June 1982 on the major-accident hazards of certain industrial activities (OJ L 230, 05/08/1982, p. 1)

Health and safety at work	Council Directive 89/391/EEC of 12 June 1989 on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health of workers at work (OJ L 183, 29/06/1989, p. 1)
	Council Directive 89/655/EEC of 30 November 1989 concerning the minimum safety and health requirements for the use of work equipment by workers at work (second individual Directive within the meaning of Article 16 (1) of Directive 89/391/EEC) (OJ L 393, 30/12/1989, p. 13)
	Council Directive 89/656/EEC of 30 November 1989 on the minimum health and safety requirements for the use by workers of personal protective equipment at the workplace (third individual directive within the meaning of Article 16 (1) of Directive 89/391/EEC) (OJ L 393, 30/12/1989, p. 18)
	Council Directive 90/269/EEC of 29 May 1990 on the minimum health and safety requirements for the manual handling of loads where there is a risk particularly of back injury to workers (fourth individual Directive within the meaning of Article 16 (1) of Directive 89/391/EEC) (OJ L 156, 21/06/1990, p. 9)
	Council Directive 90/394/EEC of 28 June 1990 on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to carcinogens at work (Sixth individual Directive within the meaning of Article 16 (1) of Directive 89/391/EEC) (OJ L 196, 26/07/1990, p. 1)
	Council Directive 90/679/EEC of 26 November 1990 on the protection of workers from risks related to exposure to biological agents at work (seventh individual Directive within the meaning of Article 16 (1) of Directive 89/391/EEC) (OJ L 374, 31/12/1990, p. 1)
	Council Directive 90/641/Euratom of 4 December 1990 on the operational protection of outside workers exposed to the risk of ionizing radiation during their activities in controlled areas (OJ L 349, 13/12/1990, p. 21)
	Council Directive 92/29/EEC of 31 March 1992 on the minimum safety and health requirements for improved medical treatment on board vessels (OJ L 113, 30/04/1992, p. 19)
	Council Directive 92/57/EEC of 24 June 1992 on the implementation of minimum safety and health requirements at temporary or mobile construction sites (eighth individual Directive within the meaning of Article 16 (1) of Directive 89/391/EEC) (OJ L 245, 26/08/1992, p. 6)
	Council Directive 92/58/EEC of 24 June 1992 on the minimum requirements for the provision of safety and/or health signs at work (ninth individual Directive within the meaning of Article 16 (1) of Directive 89/391/EEC) (OJ L 245, 26/08/1992, p. 23)

Health and safety at work	Council Directive 92/85/EEC of 19 October 1992 on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding (tenth individual Directive within the meaning of Article 16 (1) of Directive 89/391/EEC) (OJ L 348, 28/11/1992, p. 1)
	Council Directive 93/103/EC of 23 November 1993 concerning the minimum safety and health requirements for work on board fishing vessels (thirteenth individual Directive within the meaning of Article 16 (1) of Directive 89/391/EEC) (OJ L 307, 13/12/1993, p. 1)
	Council Directive 96/29/Euratom of 13 May 1996 laying down basic safety standards for the protection of the health of workers and the general public against the dangers arising from ionizing radiation (OJ L 159, 29/06/1996, p. 1)
	Council Directive 96/82/EC of 9 December 1996 on the control of major-accident hazards involving dangerous substances (OJ L 010, 14/01/1997, p. 13)
	Council Directive 98/24/EC of 7 April 1998 on the protection of the health and safety of workers from the risks related to chemical agents at work (fourteenth individual Directive within the meaning of Article 16(1) of Directive 89/391/EEC) (OJ L 131, 05/05/1998, p. 11)
Working conditions	Council Directive 75/117/EEC of 10 February 1975 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the application of the principle of equal pay for men and women (OJ L 045, 19/02/1975, p. 19)
	Council Directive 80/987/EEC of 20 October 1980 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the protection of employees in the event of the insolvency of their employer (OJ L 283, 28/10/1980, p. 23)
	Council Directive 91/383/EEC of 25 June 1991 supplementing the measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health at work of workers with a fixed-duration employment relationship or a temporary employment relationship (OJ L 206, 29/07/1991, p. 19)
	Council Directive 91/533/EEC of 14 October 1991 on an employer's obligation to inform employees of the conditions applicable to the contract or employment relationship (OJ L 288, 18/10/1991, p. 32)

Working conditions	Council Directive 94/33/EC of 22 June 1994 on the protection of young people at work (OJ L 216, 20/08/1994, p. 12)
	Council Directive 94/45/EC of 22 September 1994 on the establishment of a European Works Council or a procedure in Community-scale undertakings and Community-scale groups of undertakings for the purposes of informing and consulting employees (OJ L 254, 30/09/1994, p. 64)
	Directive 96/71/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 1996 concerning the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services (OJ L 018, 21/01/1997, p. 1)
	Council Directive 96/34/EC of 3 June 1996 on the framework agreement on parental leave concluded by UNICE, CEEP and the ETUC (OJ L 145, 19/06/1996, p. 4)
	Council Directive 97/81/EC of 15 December 1997 concerning the Framework Agreement on part-time work concluded by UNICE, CEEP and the ETUC – Annex : Framework agreement on part-time work (OJ L 014, 20/01/1998, p. 9)
	Council Directive 99/63/EC of 21 June 1999 concerning the Agreement on the organisation of working time of seafarers concluded by the European Community Shipowners' Association (ECSA) and the Federation of Transport Workers' Unions in the European Union (FST) - Annex: European Agreement on the organisation of working time of seafarers (OJ L 167, 02/07/1999, p. 33)
Principles of social security	Council Directive 79/7/EEC of 19 December 1978 on the progressive implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women in matters of social security (OJ L 006, 10/01/1979, p. 24)
	Council Directive 86/378/EEC of 24 July 1986 on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women in occupational social security schemes (OJ L 225, 12/08/1986, p. 40)
	Council Directive 89/105/EEC of 21 December 1988 relating to the transparency of measures regulating the prices of medicinal products for human use and their inclusion in the scope of national health insurance systems (OJ L 040, 11/02/1989, p. 8)

Application to migrant workers	Council Directive 64/221/EEC of 25 February 1964 on the co-ordination of special measures concerning the movement and residence of foreign nationals which are justified on grounds of public policy, public security or public health (OJ 056, 04/04/1964, p. 850)
	Council Directive 98/49/EC of 29 June 1998 on safeguarding the supplementary pension rights of employed and self-employed persons moving within the Community (OJ L 209, 25/07/1998, p. 46)
	Regulation (EEC) No 1408/71 of the Council of 14 June 1971 on the application of social security schemes to employed persons and their families moving within the Community (OJ L 149, 05/07/1971, p. 2)

ANNEX II

ILO Maritime Labour Conventions and Recommendations

General	
Recommendation 9	National Seamen's Codes, 1920
Recommendation 107	Seafarers' Engagement (Foreign Vessels), 1958
Recommendation 108	Social Conditions and Safety (Seafarers), 1958
Recommendation 139	Employment of seafarers (Technical Developments), 1970
Convention 145	Continuity of Employment (Seafarers), 1976
Recommendation 154	Continuity of Employment (Seafarers), 1976
Convention 147	Merchant Shipping (Minimum Standards), 1976
Protocol (*)	Protocol of 1996 to the Merchant Shipping (Minimum Standards) Convention
Recommendation 155	Merchant Shipping (Improvement of Standards), 1976
Training and entry into employment	
Convention 9	Placing of Seamen, 1920
Convention 179	Recruitment and Placing of Seafarers, 1996
Recommendation 186	Recruitment and Placing of Seafarers, 1996
Convention 22	Seamen's Articles of Agreement, 1926
Convention 108	Seafarers' Identity Documents, 1958
Recommendation 137	Vocational Training (Seafarers), 1970
Conditions for admission to employment	
Convention 7	Minimum age (Sea), 1920
Convention 58	Minimum age (Sea) (Revised), 1936
Convention 16	Medical Examination of Young Persons (Sea), 1921
Convention 73	Medical Examination (Seafarers), 1946
Certificates of competency	
Convention 53	Officers' Competency Certificates, 1936
Convention 69	Certification of Ships' Cooks Convention, 1946
Convention 74	Certification of Able Seamen, 1946
General Conditions of employment	
Convention 180 (*)	Seafarers' Hours of Work and the Manning of Ships, 1996
Recommendation 187	Seafarers' Wages, Hours of Work and the Manning of Ships, 1996
Convention 91	Paid Vacations (Seafarers) (Revised), 1949
Convention 146	Seafarers' Annual Leave with Pay, 1976
Convention 23	Repatriation of Seamen, 1926
Recommendation 27	Repatriation (Ship Masters and Apprentices), 1926
Convention 166	Repatriation of Seafarers (Revised), 1987
Recommendation 174	Repatriation of Seafarers, 1987
Recommendation 153	Protection of Young Seafarers, 1976

Safety, health and welfare	
Convention 68	Food and Catering (Ships' Crews), 1946
Recommendation 78	Bedding, Mess Utensils and Miscellaneous Provisions (Ships' Crews), 1946
Convention 92	Accommodation of Crews (Revised), 1949
Convention 133	Accommodation of Crews (Supplementary Provisions), 1970
Recommendation 140	Crew Accommodation (Air Conditioning), 1970
Recommendation 141	Crew Accommodation (Noise Control), 1970
Convention 134	Prevention of Accidents (Seafarers), 1970
Recommendation 142	Prevention of Accidents (Seafarers), 1970
Recommendation 48	Seamen's Welfare in Ports, 1936
Recommendation 138	Seamen's Welfare, 1970
Convention 163	Seamen's Welfare, 1987
Recommendation 173	Seamen's Welfare, 1987
Convention 164	Health Protection and Medical Care (Seafarers), 1987
Recommendation 105	Ships' Medicine Chests, 1958
Recommendation 106	Medical Advice at Sea, 1958
Labour inspection	
Convention 178	Labour Inspection (Seafarers), 1996
Recommendation 185	Labour Inspection (Seafarers), 1996
Social Security	
Convention 8	Unemployment Indemnity (Shipwreck), 1920
Recommendation 10	Unemployment Insurance (Seamen), 1920
Convention 55	Shipowners' Liability (Sick and Injured Seamen), 1936
Convention 56	Sickness Insurance (Sea), 1936
Convention 165	Social Security (Seafarers) (Revised), 1987
Convention 71	Seafarers' Pensions, 1946
International labour standards applying to all workers including seafarers	
Convention 87	Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize, 1948
Convention 98	Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining, 1949
Convention 130	Medical Care and Sickness Benefits, 1969
Convention 138	Minimum Age, 1973

(*) Convention or Protocol not in force