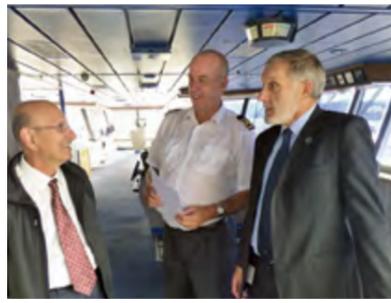




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**NAUTILUS**  
Federation

A Federation of Maritime Professionals

# the global seafarer

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## Caution urged on smart ships

Nautilus Federation policy paper addresses autonomous vessel development

→ The Nautilus Federation now numbers 18 unions representing almost 85,000 maritime professionals and, at a meeting in London last month, members agreed on proposals to improve the representation of masters and officers at the International Transport Workers' Federation and the International Maritime Organisation.

The Federation — which aims to unite like-minded progressive unions around the world — recently launched the Joint Assistance & Support Network (JASON) to provide a

network delivering mutual advice and protection to members of the 18 unions if they are involved in an accident or incident.

Nautilus general secretary Mark Dickinson said the Federation is getting bigger and stronger, with member unions in the UK, Netherlands, Switzerland, Croatia, Sweden, Australia, Hong Kong, Singapore, New Zealand, France and Denmark and interest being expressed from unions in half a dozen other countries.

He said the Federation aims to strengthen the ITF and its voice at the IMO, feeding into high-level discussions on issues such

as piracy, the next revision of the STCW Convention and the process of amending the Maritime Labour Convention.

The Federation has already identified a number of core priority topics at the IMO — including passengers safety, low flashpoint fuels, eNavigation and operational manning. The agenda is now concentrating on such key subjects as fatigue, ballast water management and automation.

The meeting agreed a motion to go to the ITF fair practices committee in June calling for the organisation to become actively involved in developing criteria for

an accreditation scheme to promote decent work and continuous improvement in the shipping industry.

The motion urges the ITF to build on the findings of the 'Goodship' report which recommended the development of such a scheme to raise public awareness of the vital role of seafarers in delivering the world's goods and to support the continuous improvement of their living and working conditions.

The meeting also agreed a Nautilus Federation policy document on autonomous or 'smart' ships.

The document recognises



Representatives from some of the 18 Nautilus Federation member unions at the meeting in London last month

the rapid advances being made in shipboard technology and shore-based support systems, but stresses the need to ensure that developments are 'human-centred' and that proper attention is paid to issues such as ergonomics, equipment design, training, over-reliance on automated systems and distractions from 'information overload'.

Economics should not be the core criteria driving the adoption of autonomous systems, the document argues, and safety and the protection of the marine environment should be at the top of the agenda.

The policy paper stresses the need for a wide range of pressing safety issues to be addressed — including the extent of shore-based control and direction, system resilience, software quality, the reliability of communications and data links, and cyber security.

It also highlights the need to properly consider the legal and liability implications of autonomous ships, the regulatory regime and the future role of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, the SOLAS Convention and the collision prevention regulations.

## Call for IMO to get tough on polluters

Current regulatory framework is failing to prevent deliberate discharges, green group warns

→ The International Maritime Organisation (IMO) is being urged to introduce a set of tough new measures to crackdown on deliberate waste dumping by cruiseships.

The environmental group Friends of the Earth International (FoEI) has tabled proposals to the IMO's marine environment protection committee meeting, warning that the existing regulatory framework is failing to prevent illicit discharges.

The green group has produced its recommendations following a series of cases, which culminated with a US court imposing a \$40m criminal penalty on Princess Cruises in April after an investigation revealed a series of oily bilge discharges, 'magic pipe' use and falsified oil record books between 2005 and 2013.

FoEI says the Princess case forms part of a 'disturbing pat-

tern' of oily waste disposal by cruiseships — and especially by those within the Carnival group. It contends that evidence presented to the court showed 'deficient management and a feeble stewardship culture'.

Its paper to the IMO describes 'unsound and irresponsible' cost-cutting pressures within the Princess fleet and warns that the \$40m fine and five-year probation imposed on the company — a record penalty — is unlikely to stop such practices. Carnival was already under probation when the Princess dumping began in 2005, it points out.

Noting that Carnival's profits totalled \$2.78bn last year, FoEI argues that the fine will do little to affect the group's bottom line and is unlikely to be sufficient to change corporate culture within the sector. 'Rather, it appears Princess's prosecution and attendant

penalties could be considered as little more than the cost of doing business,' it adds.

Had it not been for a whistleblower, the Princess ships could still be making illegal discharges, the paper suggests. It highlights the importance of crew coming forward to alert regulators about such practices, but cautions that the 'financial draw' of whistleblower rewards from the US Coast Guard may be over-stated as there is no guarantee of payments being made — despite the risk that seafarers who tip-off the authorities may never be able to work in shipping again.

FoEI says fines need to be much greater — running into hundreds of millions of dollars — if corporate cultures are to be changed.

It says the shipping industry needs to modernise its waste treatment control systems so that shore-based management and

regulators are able to monitor waste generation and discharge in real time.

And it urges the IMO to consider the introduction of onboard independent inspectors, along the lines of the Ocean Rangers programme introduced for cruiseships in Alaska. FoEI says a global system could be funded through a small passenger levy.

The paper also notes that it is usually engineer officers who are prosecuted as a result of deliberate oil pollution when the fundamental problem is one of operational practices within shipping companies that undervalue environmental compliance — and it calls for a radical change of approach to make management liable.

'Criminally indicting corporate executives and pursuing prison sentences is more equitable than targeting crew members

and will result in swifter and more thorough changes to corporate culture regarding vessel environmental compliance,' it adds.

FoEI says its proposals are particularly relevant for cruiseships, as they operate in some of the most environmentally sensitive areas of the world, but it suggests that many of its recommendations could be applied to the shipping industry in general.

Nautilus senior national secretary Allan Graveson welcomed the paper: 'This catalogues the failing of an industry sector that has yet to understand safety, including the environment.'

'Maritime authorities need to be proactive in ensuring regulations are not only transcribed into national legislation, but are also enforced by the deployment of adequate resources,' Mr Graveson said. 'Flag states should not abrogate responsibility to port states.'

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## HEALTH &amp; SAFETY

# Fatal blast leads to call for checks

Industry warned over corrosion risks on lifeboat launching gas cylinders

→ Shipping companies have been recommended to conduct urgent safety checks after a cruiseship crew member died after a corroded high-pressure nitrogen cylinder burst during maintenance work in the New Zealand port of Dunedin.

The engineroom fitter was killed in February this year onboard the 113,561gt Emerald Princess while a block of cylinders which formed part of the lifeboat

launching system were being repressurised after checks had been carried out for leaks.

An interim report on the accident published by the NZ Transport Accident Investigation Commission (TAIC) raises questions over the adequacy of the inspection regime and warns that corroded cylinders could pose 'a significant danger to seafarers and passengers'.

The TAIC found that there were 104 nitrogen cylinders onboard the Bermuda-flagged Emerald

Princess — 96 of which had been manufactured in 2006 and supplied when the ship was built.

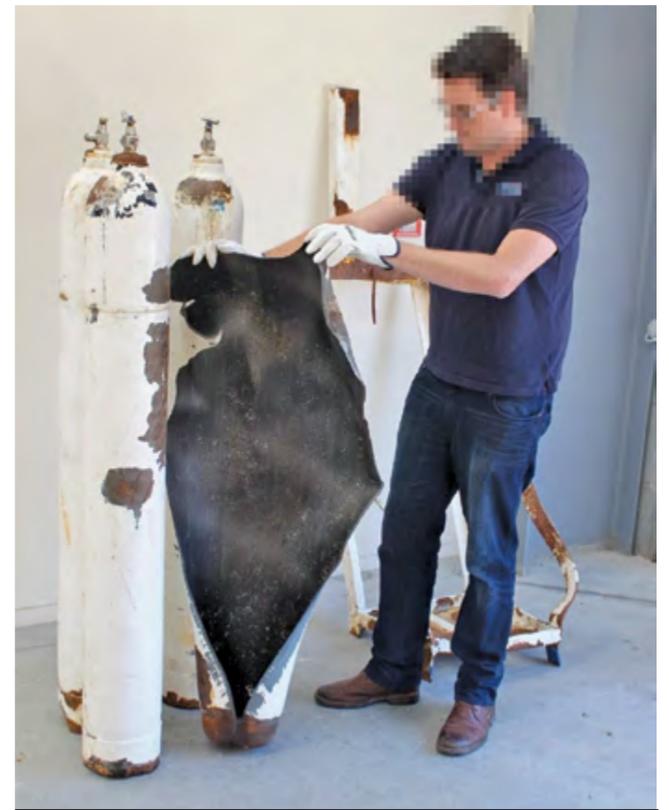
The report notes that the banks of cylinders were stowed on a covered but open deck and were exposed to salt spray and sea air. Investigators found that Bermuda regulations required the cylinders to be internally inspected and tested every 10 years.

Tests after the accident showed that corrosion had reduced the thickness of the burst cylinder by about 75% at the point of fail-

ure, from 6mm to just 1.5mm. Similar corrosion-related damage was found on other cylinders onboard the ship, as well as significant corrosion damage on the accumulator.

The cylinders were inspected annually by the manufacturer's authorised representative and were found to be in satisfactory working condition at the last inspection, two weeks before the fatal accident.

'The circumstances of this accident raise the question of



The burst high-pressure gas cylinder on Emerald Princess Picture: TAIC

whether the current inspection requirements for a competent person are adequate for a pressure vessel stored in a harsh marine environment,' the report states.

'The Commission is concerned that there might be other pressure vessels as part of the same system or similar systems that could pose a significant danger to seafarers and passengers,' it adds.

TAIC has issued a series of recommendations to the manufacturer, the International Asso-

ciation of Classification Societies and the Cruise Lines International Association, calling for checks to be carried out to ensure there is no significant corrosion damage to such systems.

Nautilus senior national secretary Allan Graveson commented: 'This really should not happen. It is, sadly, another failure of the regulatory system — another needless death.'

## Investigators stress need to consider high windage risks

→ Australian safety experts have stressed the need for ships — especially those with high windage — to beware of the risks of sudden squalls and thunderstorms.

The warning comes after an investigation into an incident last year in which the 29,338gt ro-ro ferry Spirit of Tasmania was blown off the wharf at the port of Melbourne, causing extensive damage to shoreside infrastructure.

All but two of Spirit of Tasmania's 10 mooring lines broke when severe thunderstorms passed over the port, with winds gusting up to 65 knots and increasing the wind loading on the vessel's side by almost six times. Crew members managed to control the ferry's movement using thrusters and main propulsion until, with tug assistance, it was returned to the wharf.

A report from the Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) concludes: 'It is possible that the breakaway might have been prevented had the precautions for adverse weather been more carefully considered.'

Investigators said that the port VTS procedures for adverse weather were only partially effective — meaning that the ferry did not receive advance warning of the storm force winds. Although poor conditions had been forecast, the report notes



Spirit of Tasmania was blown off its berth in the port of Melbourne by a sudden squall Picture: ATSB

that the specific prediction of the thunderstorm was not made until 15 minutes before the incident, leaving the crew little time to respond.

The ATSB said the standard mooring line pattern for ships at the wharf had been used successfully for many years, but the breakaway had shown that the risk could have been reduced 'to better prepare for such

unusual circumstances'.

The report notes that the ferry's owners, TT-Line, had ordered an in-depth analysis of mooring conditions and arrangements in response to the incident, as well as making changes to weather monitoring and notification arrangements.

'All ships, especially those with

high windage, are prone to breaking away from moorings during short-term events such as thunderstorms and squalls,' the ATSB pointed out. 'The risks this presents to ships with large numbers of people onboard mean that weather monitoring, mooring systems and procedures need to be regularly checked and verified for changing weather conditions.'

## US warns on laser attacks

→ The US Coast Guard (USCG) has launched a series of investigations into multiple laser strikes aimed at merchant ships transiting the Chesapeake Bay.

Vessels targeted have included the cruiseship Carnival Pride, the car carriers Hoegh Osaka and Salome, the containership Maersk Kolkata, and the bulk carriers AM Annaba and Bulk Spain.

A pilot boat was also attacked, and crew members involved in all the incidents described the laser light as steady, powerful and somewhat painful to the eyes. The USCG warns of the risk that such attacks could cause a collision or other serious accident and said the anyone caught shining lasers at vessels could face up to 10 years in prison and a fine of up to US\$2,500.

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# Collision sparks anchorage alert

Investigators warn over seamanship after accident outside Rotterdam

→ Dutch accident investigators have stressed the need for ships to exercise good seamanship while in anchorages, following a collision between two vessels outside the port of Rotterdam.

The Dutch-flagged general cargohip *Arklow Rambler* and the Hong Kong-registered tanker *Atlantic Jupiter* both suffered extensive damage in the incident, which occurred after their anchors dragged in adverse conditions in February 2016.

Investigators said the 2,999gt *Arklow Rambler* had anchored some 0.8nm away from *Atlantic Jupiter* when it had been forced to move within the anchorage area after being blown into a nearby shipping lane in the force 8 and near spring tide conditions.

The wind and the tide meant both ships were unable to maintain their position, and as the distance between the two reduced, the tanker's master decided to raise the anchor and sail south of the anchorage until conditions improved.

But the Dutch Safety Board



The view from *Arklow Rambler's* bridge seconds before the collision with *Atlantic Jupiter* Picture: Onderzoeksraad

investigation concluded that he had under-estimated the effects of the wind and current on his 36,677dwt ship after hoisting the anchor. *Atlantic Jupiter* was sitting high in the water with no cargo onboard, and it was blown towards *Arklow Rambler* before the crew had sufficient control of the vessel. The tanker almost collided with another ship a few minutes after striking *Arklow Rambler*, the report notes.

Investigators said *Atlantic*

*Jupiter's* master was aware of the reducing distance between his vessel and *Arklow Rambler*, but had expected VTS to intervene. However, the report points out, the anchorage is not an official VTS area.

'Even if the anchorage area were to fall under the jurisdiction of Maas approach VTS, it is still the responsibility of the ships themselves to maintain an appropriate distance,' it adds.

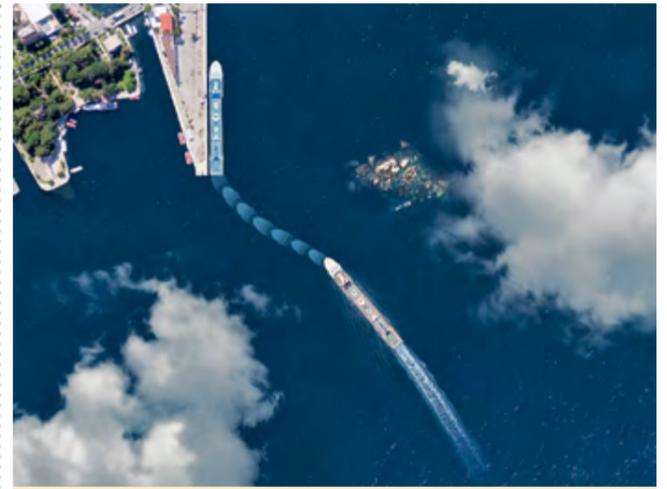
The safety board said com-

munications between the two vessels had been unclear, both before and after the accident. Neither ship had used Standard Marine Communications Phrases and this meant that VTS were not aware of the collision until 36 minutes after it had occurred.

No one was injured in the accident, but both ships were badly damaged. The report expresses concern that *Atlantic Jupiter* 'took a risk' by remaining at sea in bad conditions for a further nine-and-a-half hours with a 15m hole above the waterline.

The safety board highlighted the need for prudent precautions to be taken at anchorage. 'Given the complex situation, it is not possible for everything to be regulated by rules, and good seamanship is required,' the report states.

'Factors such as the weather and the load of the ship have to be taken into account. Sufficient distance means that a ship is capable of anticipating unexpected situations and the movements of other ships.'



## Predictive system to help manoeuvring

→ The technology group Wärtsilä has launched a new system that aims to improve the safety of vessel manoeuvring and berthing.

Developed by the company's Dynamic Positioning unit, the SmartPredict system displays the vessel's predicted future position and heading, and uses proven DP analysis algorithms to evaluate forces affecting the vessel, thereby providing advanced motion prediction.

The SmartPredict software module also features a configurable prediction time display and utilises all the parameters used for automated control by the DP, adjusting them for the motion characteristics of the specific vessel.

The system will also assess the manual commands from the coordinated control joystick, and environmental input from the onboard wind sensor(s).

These factors are all continuously evaluated to provide a constant updating of the ship's path.

'Allowing the operator to see into the future enables smarter and safer ship handling decisions to be made, thus lowering the risk of accidents occurring,' said Wärtsilä Marine Solutions director Maik Stoevhave. 'We see SmartPredict as being an important step towards more automated procedures, such as docking, and eventually fully autonomous vessel manoeuvring.'

Fully compatible with the ECDIS overlay function, SmartPredict will provide clear indications of potential dangers during ship manoeuvring, with an interface that enables officers to toggle on or off the 'ghost ship' indicators for predicted positions.

The display also allows the user to configure the time steps for the predictions.

# 'Improved lights may cut fatigue'

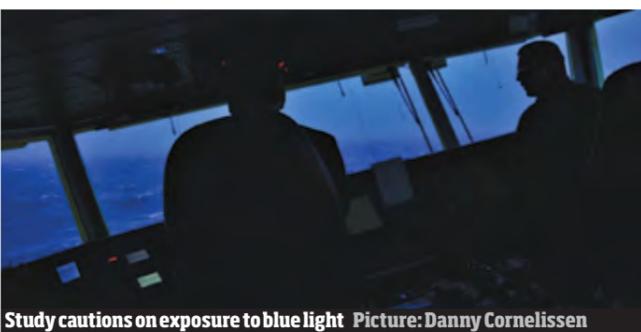
Report calls for owners to improve the quality of illumination onboard ships

→ Better use of lighting systems onboard ships will help to combat fatigue and improve the health and safety of seafarers, a new report has concluded.

The study, published by the Swedish maritime organisation SSPA, urges the industry to consider improvements to artificial lighting systems and to control exposure to blue light, to prevent sleep patterns from being disrupted.

The report notes the evidence showing how seafarers often suffer from broken sleep as a result of their watchkeeping patterns. 'Sleep is probably more important for our long-term well-being than we previously thought and research in this area is ongoing,' it adds. 'What is well documented is the importance of good sleep to be alert and perform the work safely.'

Researchers said that seafarers' sleep quality and adaptation



Study cautions on exposure to blue light Picture: Danny Cornelissen

to night working can be improved with a 'suitable' lighting environment on their ship and the report describes how 'a good daily rhythm of light exposure' can help crew members to get adequate rest.

The report urges owners to take relatively cheap and simple measures to improve light quality on their vessels — including adjustments to the strength and direction of artificial light sources in cabins and social areas, and to consider which areas onboard

should have full spectrum light sources.

It is 'particularly appropriate' for companies to consider areas in which seafarers are working for long periods — including machinery control rooms and galleys, the report argues.

Researchers said it is also especially important to get exposure to blue light at the right time, as this regulates the production of hormones throughout the day — including the stress hormone cortisol and the sleep hormone

melatonin — having a big impact of the state of alertness.

The report suggests that crew could 'strategically' use light management techniques to better adjust to night work and notes that going outside into daylight can be beneficial.

'People exposed to night work must have the opportunity to see daylight or strong artificial light of at least 1,000 lux from the time they wake up until their night shift begins again,' the study stresses. 'Exposure to daylight is a key factor to adapt the biological clock to a schedule for good sleep that allows adequate alertness during shifts.'

Nautilus senior national secretary Allan Graveson commented: 'Seafarers are human beings, and this valued research makes some important recommendations that owners would be wise to implement, to both reduce risk of a human factors incident and unnecessary litigation.'

## Cruiseship caused \$2m damage in US port

→ US accident investigators have blamed the staff captain of a cruiseship for an accident which caused more than \$2m worth of damage in the port of Baltimore last year.

The Panama-flagged passenger vessel *Carnival Pride* struck a pier, fendering and an elevated passenger walkway while attempting to dock at the Maryland cruise terminal in May 2016.

A National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigation concluded that the 85,920gt ship was approaching the berth too fast and at too steep an angle while under the con of the staff captain.

The ship's voyage data recorder revealed that the pilot had advised the staff captain to slow down as the vessel neared the pier at a speed of 5.3 knots, with the bow about half a ship's length from the dock.

The staff captain 'lost valuable time' as he made repeated

unsuccessful attempts to transfer from the joystick to manual control at the bridge wing console before the master took the con and regained full control of the azipods and thrusters — too late to prevent the ship striking the pier and the walkway.

'The staff captain allowed the vessel to approach the pier too fast and at an angle too steep because he misjudged the power available in the joystick mode for correcting the manoeuvre,' the report notes. 'In the seconds it took him to assess that the joystick control would not be enough, in his opinion, to slow the ship, he lost valuable time in shifting to manual control.'

The NTSB said it was unable to determine why the officer had failed to transfer control from the joystick mode to the manual mode and it concluded that the ship's master had failed to exercise sufficient oversight during the manoeuvre.

## INTERNATIONAL

## shortreports

**ENGLISH COURSE:** the Italian Merchant Marine Academy Foundation and the Ignazio Messina Group have successfully concluded their first joint course on maritime English in Genoa. The classes have been launched to provide basic English language skills for the crews of the company's Italian-flagged ships, something especially needed in emergency situations.

**RUSSIAN CRUISES:** the Russian firm Black Sea Cruises has bought the historic French passenger ship Azur to operate cruises from Sochi and Novorossiysk on the Black Sea to the Crimean ports of Yalta and Sevastopol. The ship — which operated between 1975 and 1986 in the Croisières Paquet fleet — has been re-named Knyaz Vladimir and switched to the Russian flag.

**DRUGS BUST:** three people, including the master and chief engineer of the Liberian-flagged bulk carrier Mount Faber, were arrested after 108kg of cocaine was discovered onboard by police in Gibraltar. The drugs — which had an estimated street value of £6.5m — had been concealed in a container attached to exterior of the hull under the waterline.

**SEISMIC ALARM:** French seafaring unions have expressed concern that their country will no longer have a national-flagged seismic research fleet following a financial restructuring agreement between the French operator CGG and its Norwegian partner Eidesvik in which Eidesvik would take ownership of seven CGG vessels.

**BOXSHIP GROUNDS:** the 13,296TEU containership UMM Salal was refloated with the aid of a local tug after running aground shortly after leaving Malaysia's Port Klang last month. The UASC ship was cleared to continue its voyage to Khor Fakkan after a survey showed no signs of damage.

**GAS GROWTH:** the global LNG carrier fleet has increased from 193 to 479 ships between January 2006 and March 2017. Total capacity of the LNG fleet has tripled to 70.2m cu.m over the same period and is expected to grow by up to 2% a year over the next two decades as global demand for LNG increases.

**SPANISH SERVICE:** Africa Morocco Link (AML) has put a second ferry onto its service between Tangiers and the Spanish port of Algeciras. AML — a joint venture between the Greek firm Attica Holdings and the BMCE Bank of Africa group — aims to have a fleet of six ferries by 2020.

**PORT UPGRADE:** the French port of Le Havre has launched a €10m-plus project to update its cruise terminal facilities. The port is set to have a total of 140 cruiseship calls involving 400,000 passengers this year, up from 50 visits and 78,000 passengers a decade ago.

**COLLISION PROBE:** an investigation has been launched into the cause of a collision between the Hong Kong-flagged containership Maersk Genoa and the Danish-registered general cargo vessel Dan Fighter in the Westerschelde, off the port of Antwerp last month.

## Seafarers consulted on ship tunnel plans



Simulator tests of the proposed world-first ship tunnel, which could open in 2023. Picture: NCA

Seafarers in Norway are being consulted on plans to build a 1.7km tunnel for ships to improve safety in the notorious Stadhavet Sea — described by the Norwegian Coastal Administration (NCA) as 'the most exposed and dangerous area along the coast of Norway'.

Terje Hernes Pettersen, head of the maritime unions' joint secretariat, said the waters around the Stad Peninsula are extremely difficult to navigate and there have been many accidents over the years. 'The tunnel will make it safer to navigate the area, both for seafarers and passengers,' he added.

The NSOF officers' union is asking its members to respond to a NCA questionnaire asking how navigation would change once a tunnel is built.

# Norway's unions warn of FoC risk

Minister seeks to defuse concerns over ferries using international register

by Andrew Draper

Norway's shipping minister Monica Mæland has assured seafarer unions that she will not allow the country's international ship register, NIS, to become a flag of convenience.

But after a meeting with the minister and shipowners, unions warned that the NIS register is at risk of turning into an FoC because of operators' pressure to open up the international flag to ferries.

The unions told Ms Mæland that no other Nordic country allows internationally hired crews for local ferry operations. The Nordic Transport Workers' Federation warned that liberalising the NIS register would result in a domino

effect where Nordic governments would seek to outdo each other, with seafarers losing out.

Unions fear that Denmark's Fjordline ferry company would flag to NIS to enable it to pay crews at international rates of around \$4 an hour, compared to \$19 in Norway.

Although the courts have rejected the unions' case that Norwegian rules must apply to all vessels operating in domestic waters, the unions believe there is still some 'wiggle room'.

The Norwegian Shipowners' Association argues that changes to the NIS rules have helped to reverse a decline in the flag — with more than 100 ships switching to the register last year, bringing the total to 582 vessels.

The Norwegian parliament has passed a bill to bring the

country's net salary scheme for seafarers into law. The move has been welcomed by unions, who want the arrangements to be extended to cover crews working on deepsea ships operating on the NIS register. The owners hope the tax breaks will make the industry more competitive and help to safeguard domestic maritime skills.

More than 200 Spanish seafarers who served onboard Norwegian ships several decades ago are suing Norway's government in a bid to get pension benefits.

During the 1960s Spanish seafarers were the most common foreign crews on Norwegian-flagged ships and an estimated 12,000 worked in the Norwegian fleet between the 1950s and the 1990s.

Although they paid taxes to Norway, they were not granted membership of the Norwegian pension system. And as they were not working in Spain, they did not get pension rights in their home country — meaning that many are now retired and living in poverty.

Øyvind Østberg, a Norwegian lawyer representing the 212 seafarers, said they had filed the suit on the basis they should have been made members of the Norwegian pension system like their Norwegian colleagues automatically were.

'It's clear that reasonable and fair treatment under the law should have included all those who worked onboard Norwegian ships and paid taxes to Norway in the Norwegian pension system,' he added.

## New Zealand ferry is the first to be awarded MLC certification

The Cook Strait passenger ferry Straitsman is the first New Zealand ship to gain Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) certification. Pictured right on the bridge of the vessel as the certificate was presented are Bureau Veritas marine manager Sam Nariman, Straitsman's master Captain Stephen Hoedemaekers, and Maritime NZ director Keith Manch.

The 13,906gt ferry is operated by Strait Shipping, which is New Zealand's first commercial operator of vessels of 200gt or more to comply with the MLC, which came into force in the country on 9 March this year.

'We're very pleased to see the first New Zealand ship certified under this convention,' said Mr Manch. 'While New Zealand has aligned itself to the MLC convention, NZ labour standards on our vessels are already good. The MLC is aimed



at raising standards on vessels where the living and working conditions for seafarers are poor.'

Maritime NZ is expanding its port state control functions to ensure that around 900 foreign ships visiting New Zealand each year are

in compliance with the applicable provisions of the MLC. A total of 22 New Zealand ships — including Cook Strait ferries, coastal tankers and cement vessels — will be required to comply if they operate beyond the country's inshore limits.

## Swedish deal over use of foreign crew

Swedish seafarers' union SEKO has reached an agreement with the country's shipowners on new arrangements for employing foreign crews in the national fleet.

The TAP agreement allows foreign ship crews to be hired on a temporary basis at international pay rates, and the new deal will allow up to 75% of crews on Swedish vessels to be made up of TAP seafarers — up from 50%.

Owners had wanted to have the right to 100% TAP crewing, but this was resisted by unions. SEKO says the new deal will not make much difference, as almost all owners already have local agreements allowing up to 75% TAP crews.

The agreement only applies to new recruits and owners have promised not to sack existing crews and replace them with new ones. SEKO expects the new arrangements will prevent further flagging out and some owners may even flag back to Sweden, it says.

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## shortreports



**Pictured above after being floated out of the covered building dock at the Meyer Werft yard in Germany is the new Norwegian Cruise Lines vessel Norwegian Joy. The 168,750gt vessel is the first NCL vessel to be custom designed**

**for the Chinese cruise market and is due to be deployed this summer, with home ports in Shanghai and Beijing (Tianjin). Capable of carrying up to 3,850 passengers and 1,700 crew, Norwegian Joy — which is the second ship in NCL's Breakaway class**

**— has been put under the Bahamas flag and began sea trials in the North Sea last month. Powered by five MAN main engines with total output of 102,900hp, the ship has two ABB Azipod XO units with total power of 40MW, providing a service speed of**

**22.5 knots. All the engines will be equipped with emission scrubbers. Special features include a two-level electric go-cart track and an open-air laser tag course, both on the top deck, as well as a virtual-reality gaming centre and an open-air park to practice tai-chi.**

# No time to drop our guard

A new report has warned of the growing kidnap and ransom threat to seafarers in West Africa and the Far East, as well as the risk of a resurgence of attacks off Somalia. **ANDREW LININGTON** heard the authors present their findings last month...

Piracy has leapt back up the agenda with a flurry of fresh activity off the coast of Somalia and increasing threats to seafarers in the Gulf of Guinea and SE Asia — prompting experts to warn the industry of a need to redouble its efforts to guard against attacks.

Presenting the annual Oceans Beyond Piracy (OBP) report in London last month, Admiral Sir James Burnell-Nugent highlighted the underlying risk to supply chains and described the lack of awareness about the threat to seafarers as 'an extraordinary state of affairs'.

Dirk Siebels, the report's lead author, said there had been a disturbing increase in the number of seafarer kidnap and ransom cases last year — most notably in West Africa and the Sulu and Celebes Seas in SE Asia.

'One of the reasons we are observing increased incidents of kidnap for ransom is that the model offers financial gain with less risk to the perpetrators than hijacking for cargo theft,' added co-author Maisie Pigeon. 'Unfortunately, these kinds of attacks appear to have continued into 2017.'

The report — which analyses the human and economic impact of piracy — makes for worrying reading, and it stresses the way in which 'decreased vigilance and deterrence in high-risk areas is providing pirate networks with the opportunity to attack vulnerable vessels, especially off the Horn of Africa'.

Mr Siebels said West Africa is a particular worry, with the total number of incidents almost doubling over the past year. More than 1,900 seafarers were affected by often violent attacks, and an

increasing shift to the 'kidnap and ransom model' — with 96 crew taken hostage in the area last year — is posing a growing problem for local law enforcement, he added.

'These kidnap and ransom attacks are very complicated to deal with for navies and law enforcement agencies in Nigeria. There's only very, very limited response time; you only need a very limited time on the ship to kidnap crew members,' he pointed out.

Richard Neylon, a lawyer with Holman Fenwick Willan who specialises in shipping, said the prospect of \$10m ransom demands in Nigeria 'is a frightening concept' and warned that it may become more and more difficult for the industry to resolve the increasing frequency and complexity of kidnap cases.

While attacks in Asia fell by just over one-third overall during 2016, the OBP cautioned about the growth of kidnap and ransom cases in the waters between the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia last year — many carried out by groups linked to the terrorist organisation Abu Sayyaf.

And while no ships were hijacked off Somalia last year, the report warned that the 'capability and intent of pirate groups remain' — and that all the factors which allowed piracy in the area to flourish have not gone away, with poverty, poor governance and an unstable security situation providing the breeding grounds for further attacks on shipping.

Colonel Richard Cantrill, chief of staff of the EU Naval Force, said it was clear that Somali pirates have been seeking to exploit declining vigilance by the shipping community and reductions in naval patrols in the area.

And John Steed, OBP programme director, added: 'The original investors are testing the waters and testing the industry's resolve to see if they can get away with resuming their activities.'

The NATO counter-piracy operations in the area ended early last year, and the EU Navfor mandate is due to finish at the end of 2018. The OBP report also notes that coalition forces have switched ships to other areas — including the Mediterranean.

'Coalition forces have generally been responsible for deterring and disrupting pirate activity, as well as escorting humanitarian aid actors, whereas independent deployers have traditionally focused on protecting commercial traffic moving through the Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor,' the report points out. 'As a result, independent deployments alone may well not be enough to provide adequate deterrence and interdiction with relation to piracy and armed robbery at sea.'

OBP's research also warns that, alongside naval forces in the region being reduced, shipping companies have been scaling down shipboard security teams. The number of ships carrying embarked armed guards fell by 12.5% during 2016, with private security teams on just over one-third of all vessels going through the high-risk area.

The report also reveals an increase in the number of ships using three-men security teams instead of four as a cost-saving measure, and OBP said it had received anecdotal evidence that some flag states have even allowed the use of two-person teams, in direct conflict with the

BIMCO Guardcon contract and others.

OBP estimated that the economic cost of Somali piracy increased to \$1.7bn in 2016, from \$1.3bn in 2015. This total includes costs paid by shipping operators for increased insurance, labour, armed guards and other protection measures, as well as ransoms paid by insurers and the costs of naval deployments. The cost had been trending downwards from \$7bn since 2010 as a result of the naval deployments and counter-piracy measures adopted by shipowners.

With concerns about a resurgence of Somali piracy, Mr Steed said there is a lot of debate in Brussels about the future after the EU Navfor mandate comes to an end. 'No one wants to see the success of Operation Atalanta being lost,' he added. 'The advice going into Brussels is clear on the importance of some sort of role for the EU in the future.'

**TAX WIN:** seafaring unions in India have welcomed a ruling which protects the income tax concessions for crew members who serve on foreign ships in deepsea trades. The Central Board of Direct Taxes overturned a judgement by the Kolkata tax tribunal that seafarers' foreign earnings were taxable. National Union of Seamen of India general secretary Abdulgani Serang described the decision as 'great news' and said it was the result of intense lobbying by maritime unions and their members.

**CHINESE CREWING:** Anglo-Eastern Shipmanagement has launched a joint venture with one of China's largest crewing companies in a bid to meet what it describes as growing demand for the country's seafarers. Its partnership with Shanghai-based Sinoship Seafarer Management aims to become the leading seafarer management company in China.

**ICEBREAKER COLLISION:** the Panama-flagged bulk carrier Nordic Barents collided with the nuclear-powered icebreaker Vaygach while transiting the Northern Sea Route last month. Authorities said the 43,782dwt bulker was damaged in the incident, but there were no injuries and no pollution.

**NORWEGIAN REJECTION:** Norway's competition authority has rejected proposals from Icelandic shipowner Eimskip to take over the Norwegian firm Nor Lines, on the grounds that the deal would reduce competition in the transport of frozen fish from northern Norway to northern Europe.

**MAERSK DEAL:** the European Commission has cleared Maersk Line's proposed acquisition of Hamburg Süd's 130-ship fleet, on condition that the German carrier withdraws from liner alliances on five key trade routes in which the merger would have created insufficient competition.

**VIRGIN START:** a steel cutting ceremony has been held in Genoa of the first of three new 110,000gt cruiseships Fincantieri is building for Virgin Voyages. Due for delivery in 2020, 2021 and 2022, the vessels will each have a capacity for more than 2,700 passengers and 1,150 crew.

**SAUDI SWITCH:** the state-owned Saudi Arabian tanker firm Bahri is planning to switch all its 37 VLCCs to the country's ship register. Most of its 18 vessels which are not already under the national flag are presently registered in Liberia or the Bahamas.

**ALGERIAN ADDITION:** the Algerian ferry firm ENTMV has chosen China's Guangzhou Shipyard to build its first new vessel in a decade. Due for delivery in summer 2019, the new ship will be able to carry up to 1,800 passengers and 600 vehicles.

**FATAL FALL:** a 19-year-old Indian cadet died after falling 16m from a ladder onboard the 6,266TEU containership MSC Damla at the MSC PSA European Terminal in Antwerp last month. His family have called for a full inquiry into the incident.



**Italian naval officers from the EU Naval Force visited vessels, including the cruise ship Costa Lumiosa (above) in the port of Salalah, Oman, to brief crews about security in the region**  
Pictures: EU Navfor

## INTERNATIONAL

## shortreports

**CAPSIZE INQUIRY:** South Korea's government has established a new inquiry into the causes of the capsizing of the ferry Sewol in April 2014, in which 304 people died. An initial investigation blamed the loss on modifications which had affected the ship's stability, as well as an inexperienced crew. The wreck of the vessel was raised at the end of March and new evidence about the reasons for the loss will be sought by a team of experts.

**DRINKING DETENTION:** Danish authorities sent a team of police and doctors to a Barbados-registered ship after VTS officers raised concerns that the crew sounded drunk when they were in radio contact. The 1,904gt general cargo ship Wilson Bergen was detained after tests showed that several seafarers — including the master — were over the limit.

**COBELFRET ORDERS:** the Belgian operator Cobelfret has ordered two new 8,000 lane m ro-ros from the Hyundai Mipo yard as part of a fleet expansion plan. The company already has two new ferries being built at the yard, which are set for delivery in September and December this year.

**TANKER ORDERS:** around 30 VLCC orders have already been placed so far this year — more than doubling last year's tally of 13 for the whole of 2016. Gibson Shipbrokers says that 'attractive' newbuilding prices being offered by shipyards have fuelled the increase.

**SPANISH STRIKES:** dock workers in Spain have warned of a series of strikes in protest at plans to overhaul port labour practices. The International Transport Workers' Federation condemned the move and said it showed 'a callous disregard for jobs'.

**VEHICLE SERVICE:** Greek vehicle carrier operator Neptune Lines has launched a new weekly service for the French firm Renault, linking Le Havre, Southampton, Rosslare and Santander, using the Maltese-registered vessel Neptune Dynamis.

**SUPPLY LOSSES:** the French maritime union CFDT has voiced concern over the loss of seafarer jobs as a result of a plan to switch the 9,403gt Antarctic research/supply vessel Marion Dufresne from the French flag to its RIF international register.

**GREEK GROWTH:** Greek shipowners are leading the global orderbook, by signing deals for 35 newbuildings since the start of 2017. US-based owners are in second place, followed by Singapore, Norway and the Netherlands.

**REEF DAMAGE:** the Spanish-registered LNG tanker Sevilla Knutsen is undergoing repairs in the Philippines after striking an uncharted reef south of Guam, while sailing in ballast from Japan to Australia.

**FATAL FIRE:** a seafarer died and three others were injured after a fire onboard a 5,100dwt Panama-registered tanker in the United Arab Emirates port of Hamriyah.

# US U-turn over offshore rules

Unions disappointed as plans to clamp down on foreign ships are dropped

➔ Seafaring unions and shipping companies in the United States have voiced disappointment at a decision to drop plans to reduce the number of foreign flagged vessels allowed to operate in the country's offshore sector.

The US Customs & Border Protection (CBP) announced last month that it was withdrawing a proposal to revoke the rulings that allow foreign flag vessels to transport equipment from US ports to offshore drilling rigs, particularly in the Gulf of Mexico.

Unions and owners said the plan to clamp down on the issue of waivers for foreign ships would have created around 1,000 US seafaring jobs and at least a dozen US-flagged vessels.

But the CBP said it had decided to reconsider the proposal in the light of comments received. Oil and gas companies and the International Marine Contractors Association had claimed the clampdown would add to costs and reduced production levels.

Tom Allegretti, chairman of the American Maritime Partnership, described the decision as extremely disappointing. 'This delay and the move to an extended regulatory review process will damage American mariners and the American domestic maritime industry, which is essential for US economic security and job creation,' he added.

Aaron Smith, president of the Offshore Marine Service Association, added: 'The

domestic maritime industry calls on President Trump and his administration to take immediate action to return these jobs to American mariners and this work to American companies.'

There are now so few US seafarers and US-flagged merchant ships that the country's national security is at risk, a Senate hearing was warned last month.

The head of US Transportation Command, General Darren McDew, told the Senate subcommittee on surface transportation that the US merchant fleet is so small that the country's seafaring capacity would now be compromised in the event of a conflict.

And Joel Szabat, acting head of the US Maritime Administra-

tion (MARAD), said that while US shipping could meet immediate military contingencies, there are grounds for concern that there are not enough qualified US seafarers to sustain an activation of the entire sealift fleet.

He said there are at present around 11,000 qualified mariners — 2,000 short of the number needed for an extended activation, and that one logical way to overcome that shortage would be to add around 40 ships to the US-flagged fleet.

This could be done through an extension of the support programme for strategically useful shipping, direct subsidies or requirements for certain US exports to be carried on US-flagged ships, he added.



## Viking expands its cruise fleet

➔ Viking Ocean Cruises is set to expand its fleet further, with an agreement for the construction of two new 47,800gt vessels — and options for two more — at the Fincantieri shipyard in Italy.

Viking Ocean Cruises was launched in 2015 and the newbuilds will be based on the same design as the company's three existing vessels, Viking Star, pictured

above, Viking Sea and Viking Sky, which each have capacity for 930 passengers and 600 crew.

Viking will take delivery of the fourth ship, Viking Sun, in late 2017 and the fifth ship, Viking Spirit, in 2018.

A sixth, yet-to-be-named ship will be delivered in 2019, while the two new orders are set for delivery in 2021 and 2022. The agreement

includes an option for two other ships.

The company's founder and CEO, Torstein Hagen, commented: 'These additional ships are needed to meet the demand we are experiencing. Once only known for being the leading river cruise line, we are now equally known for upscale, inclusive ocean cruise experiences.'

Picture: Eric Hourii

## Denmark sets out shipping strategy

➔ The Danish officers' union SL has backed a government-commissioned report which sets out a series of recommendations aiming to maintain and strengthen the international competitiveness of the country's merchant fleet.

A strategy document developed by a special working group has produced 11 recommendations for keeping Denmark as a major maritime nation — including investment in new technology and digitalisation, together with a framework for testing autonomous ships and 'virtual' aids to navigation.

The package also proposes the extension of the Danish international register, DIS, to cover the offshore sector — including 'all activities of offshore ship crews to make Danish labour competitive with that of other countries'.

The union supports the proposals, but argues for a 'DIS Mark 2' to cover the offshore sector. It says this would boost Danish employment, because DIS has failed to prevent Danish jobs from going abroad.

SL also points to the need for a 'neighbour check' — and it says the UK model is better than Denmark's, in that more UK officers have been maintained in the merchant fleet than Denmark has managed, even though Denmark has more tonnage.

Training young seafarers is more of a priority in the UK, the Danish union argues, and it calls for all sides of the industry to work together with the government to increase seatime opportunities for maritime students.

## France acts on oil trades

➔ The long battle waged by the French maritime unions for a strategic national-flagged fleet has made a major step forward with the publication of a government decree that officially details the types of ships that will benefit from a new law protecting domestic oil trades.

The law — which is set to come into effect on 1 July — replaces the 1992 oil carriage act, reserving a proportion of domestic crude oil traffic to French-

flagged ships, and has been given the green light both by the operators' association, AdF, and the unions.

Jean-Philippe Chateil, general secretary of the leading merchant navy officers' union FOMM-CGT said that the decree looks likely to reserve around 20% of the country's oil shipments to French-flagged tankers under 20,000dwt.

Mr Chateil said that the figure is a major improvement on the present

situation — but less than the 35% to 40% the operators wanted and considerably less than the 50% sought by the unions at Bordeaux-based Sea Tankers, France's only tanker operator.

He said the union wants to see more details on the number or type of ships required, the size of crews, training and financing.

Following the French general election, the unions also want to know who the next shipping minister will be.

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## New Incat vessel for Danish route



**The 'new generation' fast ferry Express 3 is pictured leaving Tasmania on a delivery voyage to Denmark via the Panama Canal last month.**

**The 109m high-speed vehicle-passenger ferry will be the fourth Incat Tasmania-built vessel in the fleet of the Danish operator Molslinjen. Running between Sjealand and Jutland, Express 3 will carry as many as 1,000 passengers, up to 411 cars, or 227 cars and 610m of truck space.**

**Express 3 has been redesigned from earlier models, to increase turnround times, reduce lightship weight and improve fuel consumption. Capable of 43 knots and having a service speed of 40 knots, the vessel was designed to emit at least 10% less SOx, CO2, NOx and particulate matter than its predecessors.**

### shortreports

**PHILIPPINES CHARTER:** MPs in the Philippines have backed a proposed 'Magna Carta' for the country's seafarers, setting out rights to decent onboard living and working conditions, medical care, onboard communications, and reasonable work and rest hours. The bill also protects seafarers against gender, race, political or religious discrimination, provides legal representation to those who cannot afford it, and upholds the right to engage in collective bargaining. If approved, manning agencies will be prohibited from charging a placement fee and will need to be licensed.

**NORWEGIAN ALARM:** Norway's government has agreed to modify its controversial proposals to extend the scope of the international ship register NIS — but disappointed the unions by saying it would still allow ferry company Color Line to switch some of its ships to the flag. Unions have warned that as many as 700 Norwegian jobs could be lost if Color Line is allowed to use the international register. They have urged the coalition government to stage a public inquiry into whether Norwegian labour terms and conditions should prevail in the country's waters.

**MASTER DIES:** the Ukrainian master of a Togo-flagged general cargoship which has been detained in Romania since January died after suffering a heart attack last month. Local union officials said Captain Yuriy Tsaruk had been 'unable to cope with the hardships and psychological problems' since the 2,478gt Geo Star was detained after failing a port state control inspection. The International Transport Workers' Federation has been working to recover around US\$150,000 owed wages for the ship's 11 crew.

**PORTUGAL PROBE:** the European Commission is taking action against Portugal for failing to meet its flag state obligations to maintain a quality management system, and to monitor and report on work carried out by its recognised organisations. The Commission said the case — which will be brought before the European Court of Justice — was important because of the recent growth of the Portuguese second register in Madeira, which now has 318 ships of 10.7m gt on its books.

**GREEK STRIKE:** Greek seafaring unions staged a four-day strike last month in protest at new austerity measures tabled by the country's government. The Panhellenic Seamen's Federation said the proposals to cut pensions, salaries and social benefits would lead its members to 'destitution'.

**REEFER SINKS:** a Panama-flagged refrigerated cargoship has sunk in the South Atlantic after being holed by ice. The Falkland Islands government said the 10,629gt Uruguay Reefer had been towed out to sea after drifting into a conservation zone after the crew abandoned ship.

**JOBS WARNING:** the head of one of Italy's biggest ferry companies, Vincenzo Onorato, has criticised rival operators for exploiting non-EU seafarers — warning that the use of low-cost foreign crews is killing jobs in traditional Italian maritime communities.

# Australia urged to act on decline

Union calls for ministerial appointment to promote the national industry

→ Australia's government has been urged to appoint a shipping minister with a brief to regulate the industry and promote the national flag.

The call has come from the Australian Institute of Marine & Power Engineers (AIMPE) in response to a government consultation on reform of the country's coastal trades.

The union says it is concerned that 'the shipping industry has suffered from being overshadowed by the big spending portfolios of roads and railways' and that a ministerial appointment is required to ensure that maritime policy is given sufficient priority.

AIMPE's submission calls for a new approach to regulation of the Australian coastal trades, pointing out that other forms of transport which operate in the country are required to be registered in Australia and comply with all Australian laws.

It says the Shipping Registration Act should be amended to require that all vessels operating in Australian waters should be flagged in the country and covered by all domestic laws.

AIMPE said it rejected the policy approach for coastal shipping set out in the government's consultation paper. It warned that the approach set out by ministers would 'increase the penetration of foreign shipping into the Australian coastal trades and further reduce the Australian flag coastal shipping fleet'.

The union points out that latest information indicates that 10,000 voyages between Australian ports have been undertaken by foreign flag ships with foreign crews between July 2012 to April 2017.

Noting that the federal government is floating some ideas for supporting the training of Australian seafarers, the union cautions: 'For employers in the coastal shipping sector in

Australia to revive their training programmes, it will require a great deal more certainty about the future prospects of the sector.'

→ The Australian government has rejected a call to review maritime policy and to assess the security risks of foreign-crewed flag of convenience ships in the country's waters.

The recommendations were made in the interim report of the Senate inquiry into the increasing use of flags of convenience in the country, which was set up in response to concerns over the deaths of three seafarers on FoC ships.

But the government said it had already undertaken reviews of the Australian maritime sector and that another one 'is unlikely to change the current decline of the Australian shipping industry'.

It also rejected a call to tighten the rules covering the issue of temporary licences allowing FoC ships to operate in cabotage

trades, arguing that the current system 'provides an appropriate level of assurance'.

Opposition Senator Glenn Sterle said he was 'bitterly disappointed' with the response, arguing that the government 'has openly admitted that it does not care one iota about the future of Australian shipping'.

He said the inquiry had heard evidence about shocking standards on FoC ships around the Australian coast, as well as cases of crew abuse, stolen wages and a culture of lawlessness.

In rejecting the Senate committee's recommendations, Mr Sterle said the government had 'given the green light to the world's worst practices onboard flag of convenience vessels which involve the atrocious treatment of some of the most vulnerable and exploited workers on the planet.'

'The government should be standing up for Australian jobs, not selling them out,' he said.

## Seafarers stranded off India

→ A seafarer owed six months of wages tried to jump from his ship because of concerns that he would be unable to provide for his family.

The crewman was among 38 Indian and Pakistani seafarers stranded on two Panama-flagged tankers off the coast of Kandla, in west India. The Nautical Global VII and Nautical Global XVI were both arrested in February in a dispute between the owners and the charterers.

Seafarers on the two ships say they have not been paid for six months and provisions ran so low last month that the masters had to appeal to the Kandla port authority for food and water supplies.

Captain Suchittar Kumar Sharma, master of Nautical Global XVI, said shipmates had managed to persuade the crewman not to jump. 'The man was suffering because he talks to his daughter who is crying because there is no food to eat and he thinks, "What is the use of being alive if I can't take care of a small child?" He was ready to jump when an alarm was raised and we reached him in time to talk to him. We told him his life was more precious for his family,' he said.

'Life is hell,' Capt Sharma added. 'There is no sign of our money, our families are starving and the men want to go home.'

The crews have filed a petition on their wages in the high court and 26 of them were repatriated last month. Captain Sanat Kumar Shukla, of the Kandla mercantile marine department, said others were remaining onboard because they feared losing their wages if they left their vessel.

Joseph Chako, from the Kandla Seafarers Welfare Association, told The National newspaper: 'It was a jail-like situation on the ship, but even in jail you get food and here they were even deprived food for some time. Their welfare must be looked at because they are in a distressed state. They don't know what their future holds.'

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