

Wednesday 24 February 2021 Lloyds List

Two thirds of UK seafarer certificates held by foreigners

24 Feb 2021 David Osler

JUST over a third of holders of Maritime and Coastguard Agency seafarer certification are UK nationals, with the overall number broadly stable at 42,920, according to the latest annual statistics from the Department for Transport.

UK nationals accounted for 19% of the 86,140 seafarers active at sea working for companies within the membership of the UK Chamber of Shipping, the figures also showed.

The development sparked condemnation from ratings union RMT, which argued that this proportion is declining even as the number of jobs in the industry is increasing overall.

“This is no way to prepare for a green economic recovery and these figures do not include the near 1,000 UK ratings jobs lost in the second half of the pandemic as employers ... chose to slash local seafarers’ jobs instead of furloughing these key workers,” argued RMT general secretary Mick Cash.

The number of UK certificates of competency issued was 27,400, and the number of certificates of equivalent competency 11,200. Of these certificates, some 15,370 were held by UK nationals.

The majority held CoCs (13,270), with a further 1,710 holding yacht certificates, 300 holding tug and inshore craft certificates and 90 holding CECs.

There has been an overall downward trend in the number of UK seafarers over the past 15 years. However, between 2012 and 2020 numbers have been broadly stable.

An estimated 22,970 UK seafarers were active at sea in 2020. These included 11,050 certificated officers, 1,210 uncertificated officers and 9,060 ratings, with a further 1,660 officer cadets in training at sea in the 2019/20 financial year.

The number of non-UK nationals with valid CECs has been stable since 2018, with 11,115 of these seafarers in 2020. Together, Polish, Filipino, Ukrainian, Russian and Romanian nationals accounted for around 57% of non-UK officers holding UK CECs.

Unions call for all seafarers to be vaccinated

24 Feb 2021 Declan Bush

UNIONS have called for the worldwide vaccination of seafarers amid concerns they will miss out on coronavirus vaccines.

The Nautilus Federation of 22 unions wants an international programme to vaccinate seafarers and inland waterway crews to ensure they do not miss out on vaccines while travelling for work.

“Maritime and shipping professionals require an international solution to ensure they can access vaccines while at sea,” said federation director Mark Dickinson. “Governments and global organisations must recognise this urgent and growing need.”

The unions said vaccine policies differed and some countries did not consider certain vaccines suitable.

Nautilus wants those seafarers vaccinated outside their home country to be given only vaccines authorised by their home country, with information on those vaccines in English as well as their own language.

It said seafarers must get their required doses within the World Health Organization's recommended timescales.

It also called for free travel for seafarers who had not yet been vaccinated, and an education programme for them to counter anti-vaccination propaganda.

The International Maritime Employers' Council is also lobbying governments not to impose mandatory vaccination as a condition for entry.

Francesco Gargiulo, its chief executive, told Lloyd's List seafarers from poor countries were unlikely to be vaccinated as fast as those in richer ones, and imposing rules too soon would worsen the crew change crisis.

Mr Gargiulo said he understood health workers getting vaccination priority, "but you can't put a stop to people travelling for work — particularly because these guys are essential to world trade".

"I don't hear too many countries thinking about doing this, but there's always going to be the outlier," he said, adding that countries like Australia and New Zealand had become almost Covid-free "by trampling all over the rights of seafarers".

Israeli oil-spill ship shortlist narrows

24 Feb 2021 Michelle Wiese Bockmann Nigel Lowry

AGENCIÉS have identified the time and location of the spill likely responsible for dumping as much as 1,000 tonnes of bunker fuel on Israel's beaches, leading to widespread closures.

Vessel-tracking shows that the authorities using Automatic Identification System data can narrow their list of some nine vessels to the four or five vessels tracked around the area at the time, some 50 km (31 miles) off the port of Ashod.

Not all ships would be captured if vessel-tracking responders were switched off, and there is no suggestion that any of those seen in the area at the time are responsible.

A Malta-based emergency response agency funded by the International Maritime Organization worked with the European Maritime Safety Agency using satellite images and wave patterns.

The co-ordinates and dates provided to Lloyd's List show that the vessel responsible was likely sailing to or from Ashod around February 11.

"There were two identified spills," Malek Smaoui, from the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea, told Lloyd's List. "The potential spill is the one detected on February 11 and used by Emsa and REMPEC for respective predictions.

Israeli authorities initially had nine possible vessels to investigate based on both the first spill detected on February 5 and the second one on February 11.

Lloyd's List Intelligence data show the second spill location is regularly traversed by containerships, ro-ro vessels, bulk carriers and tankers calling at the port. At least four ships were tracked in this area some 24 hours before and after.

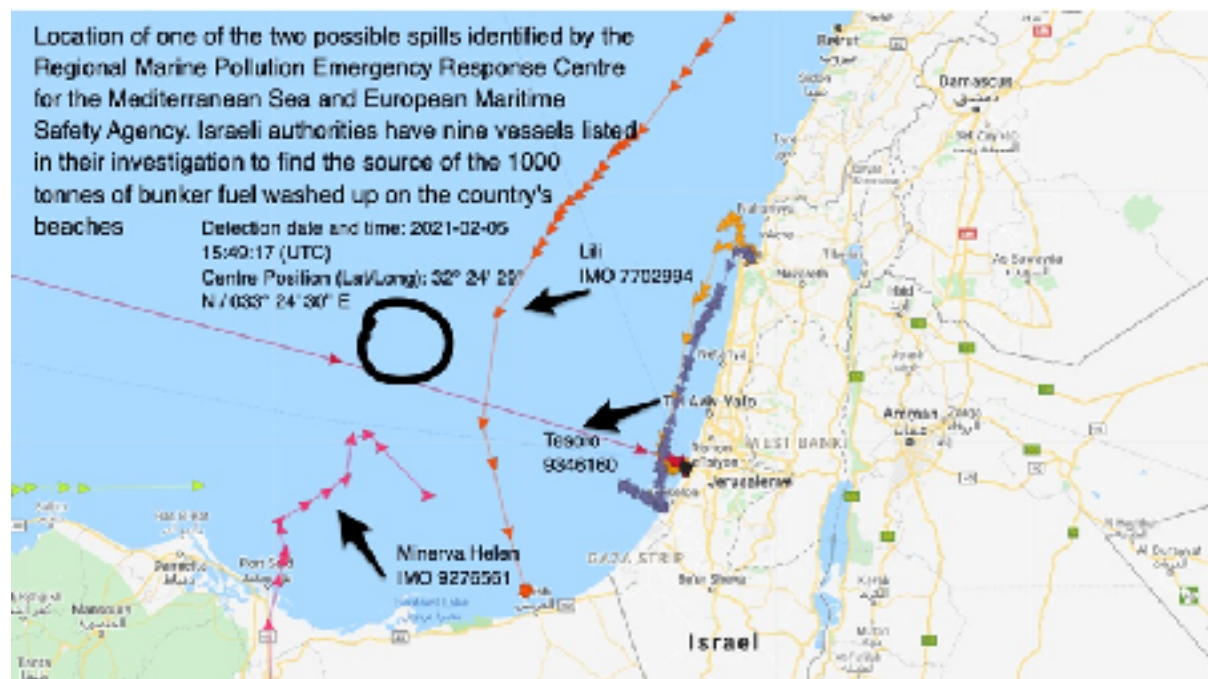
None of the ships are operated by a Greek-owned tankers outfit, Minerva Marine, that has been linked to the oil spill, which first affected Israel's Mediterranean coastline and has now reached southern Lebanon.

Israeli public and private media reports said the hunt for the source of the spill had allegedly focused on 17-year-old aframax *Minerva Helen* (IMO: 9276561).

Minerva Marine, a longstanding player in the sector with a current fleet including 60 tankers, said in a statement that the allegations were "unfounded and inaccurate".

It also provided a timeline for the tanker's movements, countering what appears to be information stemming from the official probe that positioned the tanker as leaving Port Said in Egypt on February 11 bound for Israel and leaking oil while more than 50 miles offshore.

More than 100 miles of beaches, including sensitive ecological areas, have been affected by the spill, according to Israeli reports.



Minerva denies tanker link to Israel oil spill

24 Feb 2021 Nigel Lowry

A LEADING Greece-based tanker company has dismissed claims linking one of its vessels with an oil spill that tarred much of Israel's Mediterranean coastline and reached southern Lebanon.

Some reports have attributed the pollution last week to as much as 1,000 tonnes of bunker fuel.

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According to Minerva, the tanker was drifting as a matter of routine commercial practice off Port Said, awaiting orders with no cargo on board, for a whole week up to February 11.

On that date, the vessel shifted to Port Said anchorage and remained there until February 13 when it embarked for Sidi Kerir, where it loaded cargo the following day.

On February 15, the tanker sailed to the Spanish port of Cartagena.

“During the period that the vessel was drifting offshore Port Said awaiting her next employment, the vessel was not involved in any operation nor in any other activity that could be connected to an oil discharge at sea,” Minerva said.

The ABS-classed vessel was “well-maintained without any structural or other defects that could cause an oil pollution incident”, it said.

The statement also noted that earlier this week *Minerva Helen* was inspected in Cartagena by Spanish Port State Control and was “determined to be without any deficiencies or observations”.

The inspection “confirmed that the vessel was in a satisfactory maintenance and operational condition without any defect”.

More than 100 miles of beaches, including sensitive ecological areas, have been affected by the spill, according to Israeli reports.

Initially, nine ships were said to be in an area, pinpointed by satellite imagery and wave models, that investigators believed could be isolated as the site of the spill at sea.

Minerva has said that it will co-operate with “any relevant authority” in connection with the probe.

Grimaldi orders \$500m con-ro ships at Hyundai Mipo

23 Feb 2021 Cichen Shen

NAPLES-BASED Grimaldi Group has announced a deal worth more than \$500m to build six con-ro vessels at South Korea’s Hyundai Mipo Dockyard.

These so-called G5-class hybrid vessels will have a capacity of 4,700 linear metres of rolling freight, being able to carry up to 2,500 car equivalent units and 2,000 teu of containers.

Delivery is scheduled from the first half of 2023 till the end of 2024.

The newbuildings will replace old tonnage that will have reached 25 years of age by then. They will be deployed on trades between northern Europe and West Africa.

The shipping group's president Gianluca Grimaldi said: "The new series of ro-ro multipurpose G5-class ships was designed to respond even more efficiently to the demand for quality transport services on deepsea routes, reconciling the needs related to international freight traffic with that of protecting the environment."

Hyundai Mipo's parent company, Korea Shipbuilding & Offshore Engineering, revealed the deal in a separate release. The sextet of newbuildings cost Won570bn (\$513m) in total, it said.

Grimaldi last month took delivery of the first of three ro-ro newbuildings scheduled to join its fleet.

'There is no longer piracy in Southeast Asia,' says analyst

24 Feb 2021 Declan Bush

PIRACY has dwindled in Southeast Asia with no recent kidnappings from merchant ships, a security consultant says.

"There is no longer piracy in Southeast Asia," said Risk Intelligence analyst Thomas Timlen, citing the UN Convention on Law of the Sea definition for piracy as relating specifically to crime in international waters.

"We no longer see hijackings taking place and few of the incidents that we do have today take place in international waters."

About half of incidents were simple thefts from vessels at anchor or underway, with items like smartphones, watches or cash stolen. There were some armed robberies, but few injuries and no recent deaths, Mr Timlen told a webinar.

Robbers often carried knives but tended not to use them, he added.

There were also more failed attempts at boardings, suggesting crew were more alert and better prepared. Risk Intelligence saw a decrease in reporting-related vessel delays, which meant companies should be more willing to report incidents.

"We've also seen in recent times that when incidents are reported, there is a very quick response time," Mr Timlen said.

Southeast Asia piracy watchdog ReCAAP ISC reported most of the 95 piracy and armed robbery incidents last year were of the less severe Category 3 and 4 type. Category 1 incidents were at a 14-year low, its 2020 annual report said, with just one kidnapping, from a fishing trawler, last year.

Mr Timlen said the Islamist militant Abu Sayyaf Group, which has kidnapped seafarers around the Philippines for years, has seen its membership dwindle from 300-400 in 2017 to fewer than 100 now after the archipelago nation cracked down on the group. ASG is still active on land but its threat to shipping has been suppressed.

Mr Timlen said many ASG members were killed or captured fighting the Philippines armed forces, while others had surrendered and undergone deradicalisation programmes. The last kidnapping from a merchant ship was in 2017.

He said the last time the group attempted a kidnap at sea "they were blown out of the water" with the militants killed and their craft "cut in half and sank".

Mr Timlen said the causes of piracy would remain, with more people unemployed because of coronavirus. Criminals crossing the Malacca and Singapore straits could easily prey on ships to supplement their income, he said.

Smuggling was still common, but there were no stowaway boardings. Increases to war-risk insurance premiums were unlikely.

Mr Timlen urged shipping companies to remain cautious and for crews not to confront boarders.

“It’s not worth being injured simply to avoid a can of paint or a breathing apparatus being stolen,” he said.

ReCAAP has said that the risk of crew abduction in the Philippines’ Sulu-Celebes Seas, and waters off Eastern Sabah, Malaysia, remained high and masters should be extra vigilant in the area.

India’s ship recycling can help reduce carbon footprint of steel

23 Feb 2021 Inderpreet Walia

THE carbon footprint from steel retrieved from ship recycling in India is nearly four times less than the carbon footprint of the world’s best steel production from iron ore, a new study reveals.

Increased levels of greenhouse gas emissions pose a great threat to the environment through global climate change and global warming.

For developing countries like India, steel is essential for growth and infrastructure development and ship recycling can be one of the sustainable ways to get steel without exploiting natural resources, according to Anand Hiremath, lead co-ordinator for cash buyer GMS’s sustainable ship and offshore recycling programme.

Ships typically contain more than 90% steel content and it has been recognised that sheet metal and metal scrap as well as engines, power generators, winches, workshop equipment can all be recycled.

The synergy between ship recycling yards and steel re-rolling mills in Alang in India and the benefit to the sector on account of their geographical proximity is corroborated by the low estimates of GHG emissions for transportation-related activities.

The study says that between April 1, 2011 and March 31, 2012, the period when the highest number of ships was recycled in India, total GHG emissions were estimated at 1,287,141 metric tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent. This is the carbon footprint of ship recycling, starting from the beaching of the ship to recycling of steel and other objects obtained from the obsolete ship.

The 415 ships recycled this financial year, which added up to a total of 3,847,000 lightweight displacement, generated around 2.5m tonnes of steel bars and 379,199 tonnes of steel ingots.

The GHG emissions per metric tonne of steel retrieved are estimated to be less than 0.44 metric tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent, while the carbon footprint of steel production worldwide was reportedly estimated to be in the range of 1.6-2.8 metric tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent per metric tonne of steel produced.

This carbon footprint happens to be nearly four times smaller than the carbon footprint of the world's best steel production from iron ore, Mr Hiremath estimates.

Therefore, the effort to double the capacity of ship recycling by the Indian government by the year 2024 not only provide more employment and economic advantages, but it also helps the country to fight against climate change and to achieve global warming mitigation and prevention targets, the research finds.

Australia sets new safety checks for livestock carriers

23 Feb 2021 Declan Bush

AUSTRALIA has announced new safety inspections for livestock carriers, saying more scrutiny is needed following recent casualties.

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority said a six-month "focused inspection campaign" will assess the level of compliance with international conventions and the familiarity of masters and officers with checking their ships' stability in differing conditions.

It comes after Amsa imposed a two-year ban on the livestock carrier *Barkly Pearl* (IMO: 9042295) for sailing off Western Australia with a large hole in its hull. It found the owners were negligent and put lives and the environment at risk.

In September 2020 *Gulf Livestock 1* (IMO: 9262883) sank in a typhoon off Japan, with 40 crew and 5,800 dairy cows missing and presumed dead.

"We need to know if these were isolated incidents or indicative of more systemic issues with ship maintenance and stability," said Amsa general manager of operations Allan Schwartz.

Every ship carrying livestock as cargo from Australia from March 1 to August 31 will be inspected in conjunction with other port state control checks, a statement said.

Livestock carriers have been the subject of major casualties. Their older average age, conversions from other vessel types, the presence of animal workers less experienced in seafaring, and stability problems caused by moving animals have been cited as possible contributing factors.

The 1980-built, converted livestock carrier *Queen Hind* (IMO: 7920675) capsized off Romania in November 2019, drowning 14,000 sheep, while a decade earlier 18 crew were killed and 25 recorded missing when the 33-year-old *Danny F II* (IMO: 7359462) sank off Lebanon.

Last year, British newspaper The Guardian reported livestock carriers were at least twice as likely to suffer a total loss from sinking or grounding as standard cargo vessels.

The *Gulf Livestock 1*'s owner, United Arab Emirates-based Gulf Navigation Holding, last week posted a Dirham61m (\$16.6m) net loss for 2020 after losing the vessel.

It is negotiating an insurance payout for the loss and said it would disclose the outcome of negotiations "very soon".

Large ship *Taharoa Eos* anchors in Tasman Bay to undergo repairs

Feb 24 2021 Stuff NZ

Repairs are set to begin on Wednesday to a large ship anchored in Tasman Bay and visible from the Nelson-Tasman shoreline.

The 290m-long, 91,300 gross tonnage, 2015-built Singapore-registered iron sand carrier *Taharoa Eos* came into the bay on Tuesday after permission was granted by Tasman harbourmaster Dan Cairney following a series of independent checks to ensure it was safe.

“I wanted to be very, very sure the people of Tasman could be reassured it [repairs] could be done safely,” Cairney said.

A team from Nelson marine engineering company Aimex Service Group is to be flown to and from the ship each day for about a week to complete the work.

Aimex managing director and founder Steve Sullivan said the ship had a crack on its hull plating into a ballast tank.

The crack was about 5.8m below the laden waterline. However, once the water was pumped out of the tank, it should be about 1.5m above the waterline. If required, the ship could also be tilted a little to provide access for the team to make a permanent repair to the ship.

Sullivan said it was not an unusual job for Aimex.

“It is unusual in that it’s a large ship,” he said, pointing out it was too big to come into Port Nelson.

The *Taharoa Eos* was on its way, unladen, from Singapore to load iron sands off Waikato's west coast when the need for repairs arose. The ship's master made the decision to go into sheltered waters to have them done.

Cairney said he was informed about the ship on Sunday and made the call to hold it outside of Tasman territorial waters “until we knew the ship was going to be safe”.

An independent class surveyor and engineers were flown by helicopter to the *Taharoa Eos* to make an assessment of its structural integrity.

“While we have a responsibility to assist a ship in need, we were very conscious of the responsibility to ensure it did not in any way pose a risk to our environment, either while anchored or through the repairs that needed to be made,” Cairney said. “The vessel sat outside the 12 nautical mile limit until the necessary checks were made and only when the necessary reports were made by independent experts did we feel comfortable letting her in.”

The crew of about 25 would remain on board during the ship's stay in Tasman Bay.

Due to its size, the *Taharoa Eos* would be visible from shore, which might entice people to take a closer look. However, a navigation notice prohibited vessels getting closer than 500 metres to the ship.

“The navigation notice will also alert other vessels of the *Taharoa's* location while at anchor, perhaps a little redundant as she will be seen by all from shore in Tasman and Nelson,” Cairney said.