



CESMA PARTICIPATED IN EUROPEAN MARITIME SAFETY CONFERENCE: SAFETY FIRST

The conference took place at EMSA Conference Centre on 08th of December 2025. The Executive Director of EMSA Maja Markovčić Kostelac opened the conference with welcome speech. She mentioned the challenges in the shipping industry coming from the Russian invasion in Ukraine, development in the technology, the necessity to monitor the ship operations, the role of the PSC inspections in improving the safety of navigation. Ships are aging and especially passenger ships, the average age of passenger ships in Europe is 29 years. She also noticed that 70 percent of all incidents with ships involve fishing ships thus creating the need to put more efforts in improving safety of fishing ships.

Foreword



Dear readers,

I am very proud to present you with the second edition of our European Maritime Safety Report - EMSAFE. This report is built on the integration of facts, information, and data, including from EMSA's own unique databases, to make a factual assessment of the state of maritime safety in the EU.

EMSAFE is intended to continue to be a key tool and a reference for policymakers at national and European level, maritime administrations, industry, and civil society. We already know that the first edition of the report, published in 2022, has been increasingly used in maritime universities as an initial introduction to the maritime safety framework and the different actors in the maritime industry. Likewise, it has become a key resource for researchers on topics like fleet status and performance.

Developed here at EMSA with the active involvement of stakeholders from across the maritime sector, and in close collaboration with the European Commission, EMSAFE was the subject of an open and transparent consultation process. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who took part: the European Commission, national administrations, classification societies, shipping companies, the cruise industry, trade unions, and many more. Their contribution, feedback, and insights have all helped to make this second edition of EMSAFE a truly representative document.

The comprehensive data and rigorous analysis upon which the report is built allows us to dig deep into the current challenges faced by the EU maritime sector. The flags of the EU Member States continue to excel in their performance from a safety perspective. The annual average number of incidents reported to EMCIP has significantly decreased compared to the previous edition. This clearly demonstrates the ongoing commitment of the EU maritime administrations and industry towards a safer sector.

Seafarers are at the centre of maritime safety, but their contribution to safety is not always given the recognition that it deserves. This is not the case

with EMSAFE, which underlines the role of seafarers as the most valuable resource for the shipping industry. This is why it is important to mention that this second edition finds no sign of improvement in the deficiencies related to the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC). This is particularly worrying, not just for the welfare of those who currently serve on board, but also in terms of being able to attract the seafarers of the future.

For example, EMSAFE further brings other challenges that need to be addressed, and passenger ship safety is one of them. 400 million passenger journeys are made through European ports every year. Passenger ships are, therefore, an important facilitator of the free movement of people within our European Union. They are also a lifeline for our many island communities which depend on these vessels for their very existence. But, as this second edition shows, the aging trend of the EU passenger fleet shows no sign of reversing, which brings safety concerns.

EMSAFE provides important information on fishing vessels. 68% of the EU fishing fleet is now composed of vessels measuring less than 24 metres and more than 25 years old. The vulnerability of fishing vessels to accidents cannot be overstated; they account for 17% of the total number of accidents recorded each year under the scope of applicable EU legislation, and 60% of the total number of vessels lost.

This publication comes at an important moment for the European maritime sector, which is navigating a period of profound change. The opportunities posed by new technologies, digitalisation, and alternative fuels for shipping come with safety risks, which need to be fully understood and mitigated. EMSA is providing research, tools and studies to support national administrations, industry, port authorities, regulators, and other relevant actors as they transition towards a smarter, more sustainable, and more digital future.

In EMSA, we are proud of our role as a pillar of the maritime safety framework in the EU. For nearly two and a half decades now, we have been at the side of the European Commission and Member States, making a significant contribution to safer seas in Europe, just as the legislators intended. With new tasks and an expanded mandate following the revision of our Founding Regulation in 2025 and the new maritime safety package, we will continue our voyage in support of maritime safety for the many more years to come.

Maja Markovčić Kostelac

Executive Director of the European Maritime Safety Agency

Video message: Safety as a driver of the EU's maritime competitiveness was presented by Apostolos Tzitzikostas, European Commissioner for Sustainable Transport and Tourism. He mentioned the problems of the safety created by the Russian shadow fleet in EU waters, the purpose of EU Commission and EMSA to ensure clean, safe and responsible shipping. EMSA provides member states with expertise in safety and digital tools to facilitate shipping.

Commissioner's welcome



It is my great pleasure to present the second edition of the European Maritime Safety Report, published by the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA). This report serves both as a window and a mirror for maritime safety in the European Union: a window offering a clear view of the full safety panorama across our waters, and a mirror reflecting how EU legislation continues to shape a maritime safety culture that is resilient, effective, secure, and forward-looking.

Nearly a quarter of a century has passed since EMSA was created as a cornerstone of a far-reaching and visionary package of maritime legislation aimed at strengthening safety at sea, protecting the marine environment, and applying high uniform standards across the European Union. Today, that vision is being tested by a shifting geopolitical landscape, where new security pressures, from hybrid threats to the emergence of shadow fleets, introduce fresh layers of complexity into Europe's maritime domain.

Our waters are among the busiest anywhere in the world, with close to 800.000 port calls every year. Over time, Europe has built one of the most advanced and comprehensive maritime safety systems globally: specialised regimes for vessels such as high-speed craft and ro-pax ships, a robust second line of defence through port State control, and, crucially, an ever-evolving legislative framework that supports high-quality, safe, and secure shipping.

This report clearly shows that our policies are delivering real, measurable results, thanks above all to the dedication of Member States in their

roles as coastal, flag, and port States. Particularly noteworthy is the swift and determined resumption of inspections after the pandemic, and the fact that inspection numbers now exceed pre-pandemic levels. This achievement reflects a deep and shared commitment to vigilance, responsibility, and the highest safety standards.

Such a safety culture is essential for the EU's maritime transport sector. EU Member States control roughly one-third of the global passenger ship fleet. Around a quarter of the world's gas and chemical tankers are under European ownership. Europe is also leading the uptake of alternative fuels, an evolution that demands uncompromising safety and security standards to safeguard life at sea, protect our marine environment, and defend the strategic maritime interests of the Union.

But vigilance must remain our guiding principle. The report highlights several areas of concern that require sustained attention, today and in the years ahead, and that must be addressed at EU, national, and operational levels alike. The coming years will bring new, interconnected challenges, including those linked to security, decarbonisation, and automation. These developments will reshape shipping patterns, vessel design, and maritime operations in ways that we must fully understand, anticipate, and prepare for.

This is precisely why reports like this one, grounded in reliable data, verifiable evidence, and rigorous analysis, are indispensable. They help us grasp the scale and nature of emerging challenges, whether environmental, technological, or security-related, and they equip us to design effective, forward-looking policies that keep Europe at the global forefront of maritime safety.

Apostolos Tzitzikostas

Commissioner for Sustainable Transport and Tourism

Then the conference continued with a strong message from Arsenio Dominguez Velasco, Secretary-General International Maritime Organisation Global spotlight: The international dimension of maritime safety. He started with the release of the crew of Eternity Sea as good news for the shipping industry. He mentioned the decrease in safety incidents by 20 percent and also mentioned the high risk

segment of fishing ships. In Europe there is shortage of qualified seafarers and one of the problems is the restriction in obtaining visa to enter in Europe from third countries as one of the reasons for that shortage. The green transition is going on. The automation of shipping is continued with finalization of MASS Code next year to be adopted and to enter into force 2028. The cyber security guidelines will be incorporated in the MASS Code to protect the safety of navigation.

José Manuel Fernandes, Minister for Agriculture and Maritime Affairs Portugal delivered a speech about maritime safety as a strategic asset, the Portuguese perspective. He mentioned the role of Portugal Coast Guard in improving safety.

Rikke Wetter Olufsen, Deputy-Director General Danish Maritime Authority, Denmark spoke about maritime safety in focus, the view from the Presidency of the Council of the EU. The safety in Baltic Sea is especially concerned by the danger of the shadow fleet. The priority should be given to the human factor in safety. New fuels are new challenges in shipping safety

The core part of the conference started with video presentation Key Insights from the Maritime Safety Report. Then Santiago Encabo, Head of the Safety Unit at EMSA explained the focal points of EMSAFE - the scope, main findings, key figures, and research areas of the report.



THE 2025 EUROPEAN MARITIME SAFETY REPORT

EUROPEAN MARITIME SAFETY AGENCY



The important information and conclusions of the report are:

- EU newly build ships are 1.2% less while world figures are +7.6%;
- EU fleet - 2%, world fleet +6%;
- There are 880000 port calls in EU ports in 2023, 78% EU flagged ships, 22% non EU flagged;
- 14000 PSC inspections – 56% SOLAS related deficiencies, 25% deficiencies related to the human factor, 539 detentions (30% more);

- 2685 incidents reported, 29 fatalities;
- Implemented VDES information system for exchange of safety information;
- Alternative fuels – LNG 26% of ships, first ship with ammonia set in operation, more than 1000 ships on battery in operation;
- 25% of PSC deficiencies connected to working conditions.

The key takeaways from the report are:

- (1) Aging passenger fleet;
- (2) Technological opportunities, MASS Code introduction and implementation, use of alternative fuels increase;
- (3) A lot of incidents involved fishing ships;
- (4) Human element is key factor in safety.

In the five-year period between 2019 and 2023, European shipyards were responsible for 7,6 % of newbuild activity in the world based on number of ships built, corresponding to 3,1% of the worldwide GT built in that period.

With respect to the previous Emsafe report, the global share of ships built in the EU compared to the equivalent five-year period (from 2016 to 2020) decreased by 1,2 %.

Table 5: Number of ships registered under EU Member State flags by ship type in 2023 (excluding fishing vessels) and fleet evolution over the 2019–2023 period.

Ship type	2023	2019–2023
Other work vessels	4,096	4,098
Passenger ships	2,496	2,412
Tankers	2,110	2,288
General cargo ships	1,579	1,642
Bulk carriers	1,105	1,314
Container ships	1,095	1,096
Ro-Ro cargo ships	418	394
Other cargo ships	110	89
Total	13,009	13,333

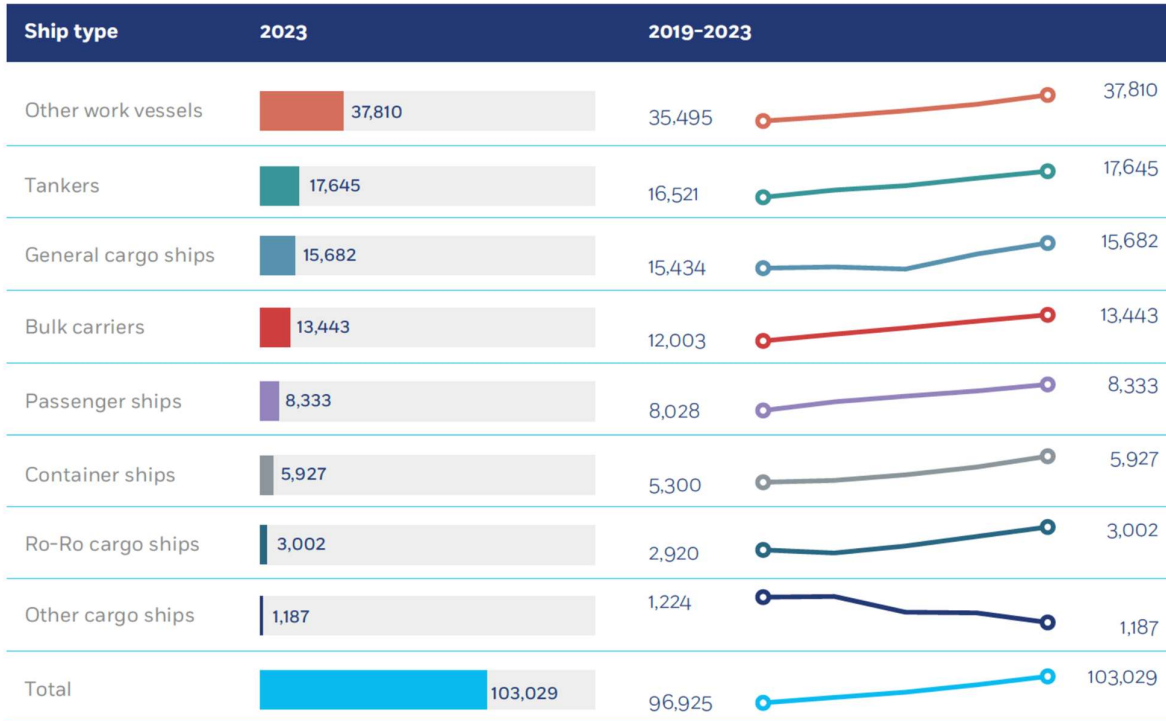
Source: EMSA services.

The 1.9 % increase in the number of passenger ships has not been accompanied by a decrease in their average age, which increased to 29 years in 2023 (see Section 2.3.4).

This means that the fleet growth is also caused by the transfer of old ships from non-EU-countries' flags (see Table 11).

This information can be analysed from a broader perspective by comparing it with the fleet evolution at the global level (see Table 6).

Table 6: Number of ships in the world by ship type in 2023 (excluding fishing vessels) and fleet evolution over the 2019–2023 period.



Source: EMSA services.

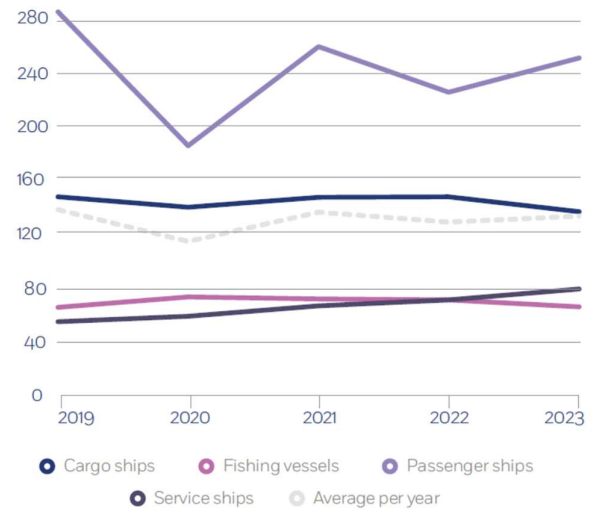
Looking closely at the passenger ships coming to EU Member States' flags, their average age at time of change was 18 years (21 years for ro-pax), and 36 % were more than 25 years old at time of flag change from a non-EU flag to that of an EU Member State.

Table 24: Occurrence indicators – number of occurrences compared to fleet size.

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Average by ship type
Cargo ships	148	141	148	148	137	145
Fishing vessels	66	74	72	71	66	70
Passenger ships	286	187	261	227	252	242
Service ships	55	59	67	71	80	67
Average per year	139	115	137	129	134	131

Source: EMCIP (EMSA, n.d.).

Figure 26: Indicator on the number of occurrences by ship type – evolution between 2019 and 2023.



Source: EMCIP (EMSA, n.d.).

Figure 28: Number of fatalities during the 2019–2023 period – breakdown of those occurring within EU waters and involving at least one EU Member State-flagged ship

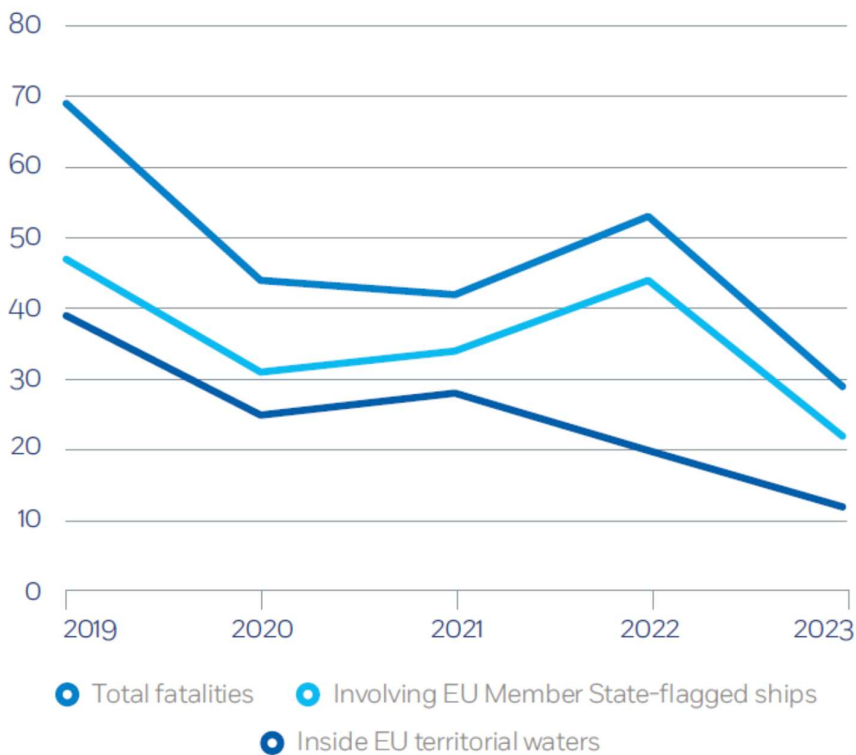


Table 38: Distribution of deficiencies found by main convention and ship type in the 2019–2023 period.

Ship type	SOLAS	MARPOL	MLC	STCW	Load lines	ISM	COLREG
General cargo/multipurpose	55%	8%	20%	4%	6%	6%	1%
Bulk carrier	52%	8%	23%	3%	7%	6%	1%
Oil tanker	55%	10%	20%	3%	6%	5%	1%
Chemical tanker	54%	10%	20%	3%	6%	6%	1%
Oil/Chemical tanker	55%	9%	20%	3%	5%	6%	1%
Container ships	55%	7%	22%	3%	6%	6%	1%
Other type of ships	54%	12%	18%	7%	5%	2%	1%
Other special activities	50%	13%	20%	7%	7%	3%	1%
Ro-Ro cargo	57%	8%	21%	3%	4%	6%	1%
Gas carrier	56%	10%	20%	4%	4%	5%	1%
Offshore supply	57%	14%	17%	4%	3%	4%	1%
Passenger ship	61%	9%	17%	4%	3%	4%	1%
Ro-Ro passenger ship	71%	5%	14%	2%	3%	4%	0%

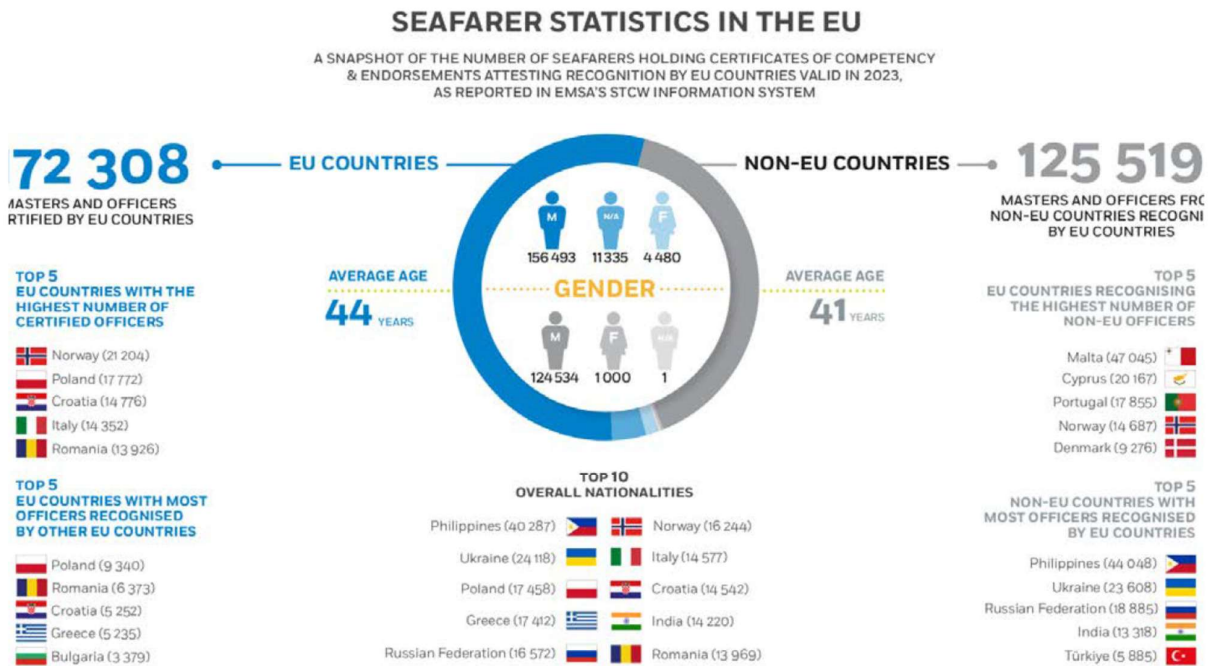
Source: Thetis (EMSA, 2023b).

Table 39: Distribution of deficiencies found by SOLAS chapter and ship type.

Ship type	Chapter II-1	Chapter II-2	Chapter III	Chapter IV	Chapter V	Other
General cargo/multipurpose	22%	27%	19%	4%	21%	5%
Bulk carrier	27%	26%	18%	3%	14%	3%
Oil tanker	26%	26%	16%	2%	13%	3%
Chemical tanker	26%	26%	19%	3%	11%	3%
Oil/Chemical tanker	26%	36%	19%	2%	13%	3%
Container ships	36%	18%	14%	3%	14%	3%
Other type of ships	18%	19%	16%	5%	34%	3%
Other special activities	19%	28%	17%	7%	28%	3%
Ro-Ro cargo	28%	26%	14%	2%	15%	3%
Gas carrier	26%	20%	19%	3%	14%	3%
Offshore supply	20%	24%	20%	4%	22%	6%
Passenger ship	24%	26%	17%	4%	17%	3%
Ro-Ro passenger ship	26%	25%	21%	2%	8%	3%

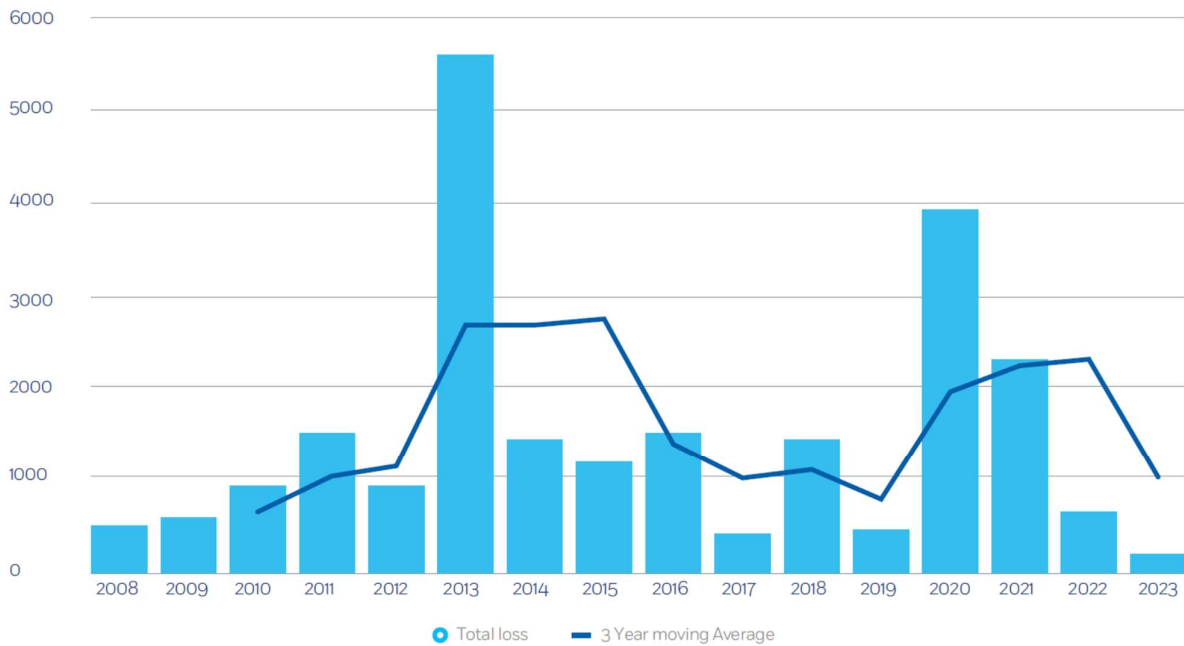
Source: Thetis (EMSA, 2023b).

Figure 113: Seafarer statistics in the EU – 2023.



Source: EMSA, STCW-IS.

Figure 118: World Shipping Council summary of containers lost at sea.



Source: World Shipping Council.

The conference continued with the round table Charting the course of the EU maritime sector with the safety at the heart. Safety is at the heart of the EU’s maritime vision and outlook, helping to shape its policies and guide its evolution. Our safety philosophy is a key element of our maritime sector, which encompasses nearly a third of the world’s fleet by GT. But elsewhere, it can be less prioritised. How to bridge maritime safety gaps is therefore a pressing challenge both here in the EU and internationally.

Key topics of this session include:

- What are our most pressing maritime safety challenges in the EU today?
- How does the EU foster maritime safety improvements at global level?
- How can digitalisation and innovation contribute to the improvement of maritime safety?

The session brings together industry leaders, policymakers, and regulators for a wide-ranging discussion on the EU maritime sector and its challenges and opportunities. The moderator was Fotini Ioannidou, Director Waterborne, Directorate General for Mobility and Transport, European Commission and Arkadiusz Marchewka, State Secretary for the Maritime Economy, Poland, Stelios Himonas, Permanent Secretary, Shipping Deputy Ministry, Cyprus, Eric Banel, Director General for Maritime Affairs, Fisheries and Aquaculture, France, Ivan Tabone, Registrar General of Shipping and Seamen & Chief Officer – Merchant Shipping Directorate, Malta, Karin Orsel, President, ECSA and Thomas A. Kazakos, Secretary General, ICS participated. Key comments:

- Importance of maritime security;
- Traffic intensity in EU waters increased;
- Infrastructure resilience;
- Shadow fleet seriously endangers the critical infrastructure;
- Digitalization of ship and crew certificates;
- Decarbonisation and digitalisation are important industry trends;
- Safety is an investment and should be considered on global basis.

The second round table Passenger ship safety - a European challenge was moderated by Dr Ilias Bissias, Assistant Professor University of the Aegean including participants Michail Valsamas, Director of Ships' Design & Construction, Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Insular Policy, Greece, Bud Darr, President and CEO, Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) and Christophe Tytgat, Secretary General, SEA Europe. Approximately 30% of the world's passenger ships, through ownership or flag, are EU Member State-based, and around 400 million passengers embark and disembark through EU ports each year. But although the EU passenger fleet is growing in numbers, and individual vessels are growing in size and capacity, it is also getting older. Key topics of this session included

- How can an aging fleet be compatible with modern safety and environmental regulations?
- What specific safety challenges are posed by larger capacity passenger vessels? How do we begin to address them?
- To what extent, and in which direction, should the EU push for further harmonisation of domestic ship safety standards? How can the role of flag states be supported? The session engages industry and administration to debate the most pressing issues in passenger ship safety today.

The comments:

- Safety is not a destination, it should be continuous journey;
- Training and reskilling of the crew is of primary importance;
- Key factors in safety – design, maintenance, operation;
- Challenges of electric car transportation.

Navigating change: future technology, future safety was the third round table. Jan Fransen, Executive Director, Green Award Foundation moderated it with participants Els Claeys, Director Safety and Environment Policy, Belgium, Sanna Sonninen, Maritime Director, Finnish Transport and Communications Agency, Robert Ashdown, Secretary General, IACS and Martin Eriksen, Head of Safety Leadership & Operations, Mærsk McKinney Møller Center for Zero Carbon Shipping. The EU's ambitious maritime decarbonisation targets are being implemented against a backdrop of profound technological change. The transition – both sustainable and digital – requires a proactive, rather than a reactive, approach to maritime safety, both at regulatory and industry level. Key topics of this session included:

- From a regulatory perspective, how do we ensure that safety standards evolve in line with technological advancements?

- As we transition to alternative fuels like ammonia and hydrogen, how does our approach to risk assessment and safety management need to evolve?
- In this framework of change, what lessons can we integrate from other high-reliability sectors to further benefit maritime safety?

The session brought together representatives of industry, regulators, and policymakers to explore the practical safety implications of the sustainable and technological shift within the maritime sector. Key remarks:

- Innovation, automation, digitalization;
- The technology is developing very fast;
- In the automation time how the conventional and autonomous ships will co-exist;
- Learn by doing;
- Goal based approach – goal based standards;
- Upskill and reskill of people to use new technologies;
- Learning from the other industries like aviation, nuclear energy industry and agriculture (fertiliser production) in safety about alternative fuels;
- Future mariners have to understand what they see on the screens;
- Paper compliances versus real situation.

The conference ended with the last but not least round table A human-centred safety culture for Europe, moderated by Katy Ware, Head of Regulatory Affairs at Zodiac Maritime and participants Elpi Petraki, President of WISTA International, Paul Meyers, Chair of Permanent Cooperation Framework for Accident Investigation, Luxembourg, Livia Spera, Secretary General, European Transport Worker's Federation, Camille Jego, Clinical Psychologist & Doctor of Psychology, Centre Ressource d'Aide Psychologique En Mer et aux Marins (CRAPEM) and Phillip Belcher, Marine Director, INTERTANKO. Over the years, the EU has built a strong and comprehensive maritime safety system that promotes quality shipping and cleaner, safer seas. To protect against both existing and emerging risks, this system must be continuously maintained and enhanced. And it must fully include the human element in shipping – the men and women who are the lifeblood of the sector. Key topics of this session include:

- How can accident investigation activity contribute to an improvement of safety culture?
- What can we learn from the real people behind the statistics?
- In the context of the challenges posed by greater automation and decarbonisation, how can the current workforce be integrated into these changes? How can we attract a more diverse workforce?

The session brought together voices from trade unions, investigators, and policymaking, together with a psychologist specialised in maritime accidents to engage with some of the key issues around current and emerging maritime safety risks. Key remarks:

- Safety culture on board and ashore to be understood;
- Safety is not only personal but it concerns all the participants in the processes;
- Happy seafarers – safer ships;
- The motto “Safety is priority” should be changed to “Safety is necessity”

Closing Remarks had been done by Maja Markovic Kostelac, Executive Director EMSA