

Welcome Aboard



Sail Training Hellas

The Greek National Member of:  **Sail Training International**

Periodical Issue of Sail Training Hellas / Issue No 3 / February 2010

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Tenacious first visit at Port of Volos

17 February 2010



Safety, Good Seamanship & Careers At Sea

IMO Secretary General commends work of Sail Training International

International Maritime Organization Secretary General Efthimios Mitropoulos commended the work of Sail Training International at a reception held last night at IMO Headquarters in London. He noted particularly the contribution of sail training to the development of maritime and personal skills in young people, and the potential of sail training to promote careers at sea in the shipping industry.

The reception, hosted jointly by Sail Training International and the UK Maritime and Coastguard Agency, was attended by flag state and sail training representatives from 20 countries, Naval Attaches, and representatives of international maritime transport industry organizations.

This year has been designated 'Year of the Seafarer' by the IMO, and Secretary General Mitropoulos said modern society owed a huge debt to the maritime transport industry and the seafaring profession. "Shipping is a genuine career choice for young people," he said. "Land-based educational establishments have a vital part to play in this ... but the role of sail training should not be underestimated." He said that sail training produced "young people that the shipping industry needs to attract: self-motivated, self-starting, team players, capable of thinking for themselves and of following instructions when necessary; people of high caliber who can cope with the privations of long periods spent away from home and with the huge responsibilities that go with the territory of operating modern ships."

Secretary General Mitropoulos, Guest of Honour at the reception, was introduced



by Peter Cardy, Chief Executive of the UK Maritime and Coastguard Agency. He said: "Sail training has the capacity to thrill and delight sailors and landsmen alike, to draw in more good people to the vocation of seafaring and to redress the balance of public understanding of the industry in this new Age of Sail". He talked about the different approaches to sail training and sail training vessels adopted national regulators and pleaded for greater consistency. "I do not believe that more international regulation is required at this stage," he said. "But better international understanding and more common practices between maritime administrations would be helpful."

Nigel Rowe, President and Chairman of Sail Training International, said safety and good seamanship are at the heart of what Sail Training International does, and of the practices on board all bona fide sail training vessels. Recognising the critical future shortage of sea-going personnel, identified in the 'Go to Sea' paper by the IMO, ILO and others, he said sail training and events for sail training Tall Ships could play a far wider and more effective role in both recruiting and training young people for a career at sea.

Full texts of the speeches of Secretary General Efthimios Mitropoulos, Peter Cardy and Nigel Rowe.



(As delivered)

UK Maritime and Coastguard Agency Sail Training reception

24 February 2010, IMO Headquarters

Opening remarks by Efthimios E. Mitropoulos Secretary-General, International Maritime Organization

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to address such a distinguished audience this evening and I am delighted that you have chosen to host this reception here at IMO. I cannot help feeling that this is the natural home for a gathering of people who share an interest not only in seafaring but also in bringing the experience of seafaring to new generations of young people. In so doing, you are also promoting the objectives of the "Go to Sea!" campaign, which we launched, in this very house in November 2008, with ILO, the "Round Table" of international shipping associations and the ITF – and this is greatly appreciated.

I am also aware of your main topic of interest, sail training, which, let me say at the outset, is something of which I am a staunch supporter, as, apart from its very substance and aims, it brings back memories of my years as a cadet at the Aspropyrgos Academy in my native country, and later on, when I could find some time to relax while Harbour Master of Corfu. That is also why I am looking forward with great anticipation to joining the Polish training ship *Dar Młodzieży* later in May, to spend a few days with the cadets of the Gdynia Maritime University during a training trip in the Mediterranean to participate in a Tall Ships Race like the one I had the privilege to give the starting signal to, while on mission in Poland last year. To my mind, sail training (recognized by our Code of Safety for Special Purpose Ships) provides an unconventional yet extremely effective way of building many useful skills, not just within the purely maritime context but also life skills that will prove invaluable both on and off the water.

Of course, we all know that the daily operation of a sailing ship can be exceedingly tough and it is clearly not for everyone. But those who do take to it find that it can provide a living classroom in which otherwise dull lessons can come magically to life. The wind is harnessed using

the principles of physics; engineering skills are called upon to handle the sails and utilize the lines, sheets, blocks and tackles that make up the rigging; mathematics, astronomy, geometry, geography and meteorology, along with knowledge of currents and tides, are used to fix one's current position and navigate a safe course to one's destination. The marine environment can provide a biology masterclass, while the vessel itself is a lesson in history and the evolution of seaman-ship.

As for the life skills, well, teamwork and discipline are vital on a large sailing vessel and the isolation created by the sea means the vessel and the crew must quickly learn how to become not only self-sufficient but also mutually-supportive. I think it is fair to say that sail training has never been intended to be a relaxing experience – until, of course, you are back in port safely berthed and enjoying a glass of beer! The sea has always been associated with some element of risk and sail training is no exception to that. Anyone looking to stay warm, dry and comfortable should stay at home, or perhaps book a place on a cruise ship! No, sail training is for the daring ones, those who relish the excitement and the uncertainty of undertaking a journey through some of the toughest, yet most rewarding, conditions that the elements can throw at you. Indeed, challenge and adventure tend to be the motivating factors for those who decide to try their hand at sail training.

And yet these are the very people that the shipping industry needs to attract: self-motivated, self-starting, team players, capable of thinking for themselves and their mates and of following instructions when necessary; people of high calibre, who can cope with the privations of long periods spent away from home and with the huge responsibilities that go with the territory of operating modern ships – not to mention what lies ahead for those who will soon be called to man ships operating in polar waters!...

You will be aware, I know, that this year has been designated by IMO as the "Year of the Seafarer" and we hope that the maritime transport industries, the sailing community – represented at IMO by the International Sailing Federation – and the

wider public will all take the opportunity to recognize, in some way, the huge debt that modern society owes to seafarers and to reflect on how rarely that debt is acknowledged and how poorly it is often repaid – and I do not mean in financial terms.

We hope, too, that it will provide a stimulus and an impetus for efforts to raise the profile of shipping as a genuine, stimulating and rewarding career choice with long-term prospects for young people and to remove any barriers – whether psychological or physical, real or apparent – there may be to entering the profession. Land-based educational establishments have a vital part to play in this, of course, but the role of sail training, which can bathe seafaring in the spotlight of excitement, adventure and, dare I say it, even glamour, should not be underestimated. Never forget that, while the opportunity to participate personally in sail training will, inevitably, only be afforded to the fortunate few, many more will be inspired to pursue a career at sea by encountering sail training second-hand, through films, photographs, websites and so on.

So, in this "Year of the Seafarer", may I, once again, welcome you here to IMO and wish you every success in your discussions and networking. I know that, while exciting and glamorous, sail training is also beset with practical problems, not least concerning funding. I sincerely hope that what emerges from your dialogue today will be a way forward that will enable you all to build upon the excellent foundations that are already in place in the global sail training community and expand, enhance and improve what is a life-changing opportunity for young people and an invaluable service to the industry.

Thank you.

UK Maritime and Coastguard Agency Sail training reception

24 February 2010, IMO Headquarters

Peter Cardy
Chief Executive Maritime and
Coastguard Agency UK

The New Age of Sail

It is a little over fifty years since the modern sail training movement was born from a potent combination of nostalgia for the glories of the sailing ships driven off the oceans by steam, diesel and the Second World War, together with optimism for the future that in sailing together, young people from many nations could find friendship and contribute to the struggle for world peace.

A few schoolships survived, many other traditional and modern sailing vessels were pressed into service, and the Tall Ships Races ushered in what I would call The New Age of Sail. Sail training does more for the positive image of shipping than anything else I can think of. The sight of a towering stack of canvas at sea, the forest of spars and rigging in port, the grandeur of the parades of sail, the sheer exuberance of the crews in procession through the streets: what an antidote to the image of shipping as a polluting, accident-prone, marginalised industry! We owe all this to the energy and imagination of Sail Training International and their predecessors.

We have come together not simply to celebrate the magnificence of the achievement of sail training in the present day, but to invite you to consider its potential for the future too. The sail training sector is now much larger than it may appear: worldwide there are now over 100 Class A sailing ships (over 40m in length) and even in this time of recession, the number is still growing. There are countless hundreds of smaller vessels, converted, purpose-designed, replicas or production yachts.

As well as training in the skills of navigation and seamanship for merchant shipping and the national navies, modern sail training has many functions: helping young people to realise their own potential; leadership training; developing self-reliance and teamwork; overcoming social, economic and physical disadvantage;

extending environmental education and internationalism; ambassadorship for cities and regions.

And of course a great many young people learn to love the sea and ships, and some of the thousands who participate, or the millions who admire from the land, will take up some kind of maritime career. Sail training has been decisive in the fortunes of many senior figures in the maritime world: to cite three examples close at hand, it influenced the careers of the Secretary General of the IMO, of the UK's Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents - and my own career too.

Sail training also poses challenges for regulators and shipping administrations. Virtually every vessel is unique; the ships often seem paradoxical, designed for maximum physical labour, using the archaic propulsion of sails, where the voyage is more important than the destination, where the passengers are signed-on as trainees or students, and what might look like cargo space is taken up with bunks or pipecots.

The safety of trainees, crew and the ships themselves is a top priority for Sail Training International and participation in the Tall Ships Races is well regulated internationally by STI. The loss of the Barbadian-flagged Concordia on a passage off the Brazilian coast last week is a great regret, though it is a great mercy and a tribute to the seamanship and preparedness of the crew, that all the trainees and crew were saved.

Since 2008 the larger vessels and their trainees have had a degree of international recognition as Special Purpose Ships under the IMO's SPS Code. But since only a proportion of sail training vessels fall under the provisions of SOLAS, most vessels are regulated under domestic provisions, which vary greatly from one administration to another. Many are treated as if they were yachts or pleasure vessels, others as small passenger vessels or workboats.

In the UK we include them specifically in our domestic Codes, and we are now supporting our national sail training organisation, ASTO, the Association of Sea Training Organisations, in the develop-

ment of a Safety Management System appropriate to the operations and resources of its diverse membership. The American Sail Training Association too has been organising a biennial Safety Forum for some years, and has been working to create a friendly regulatory climate for sail training.

I do not believe that more international regulation is required at this stage, but international understanding and common practices between maritime administrations would certainly be helpful. The representatives of national administrations known to recognise and sympathise with the aims and practices of sail training are here this evening along with their national sail training counterparts. I hope with the support of the IMO we shall be able to start a dialogue that will lead to an international framework of understanding for this great endeavour.

In this Year of the Seafarer it is appropriate that we focus not only on the wellbeing of our people afloat, but that we consider how we can raise public and governmental support for the seafarer and the wider shipping industry. Sail training has the capacity to thrill and delight sailors and landsmen alike, to draw in more good people to the vocation of seafaring, and to redress the balance of public understanding of the industry in this New Age of Sail.

It is a great encouragement that all of you have shown your support and interest by coming here this evening: shortly I shall invite Nigel Rowe, the President of STI, to speak. But first it is an honour that the Secretary-General of the IMO has joined us and it is now my great pleasure to invite Mr Mitropoulos to address us.



UK Maritime and Coastguard Agency Sail Training reception

24 February 2010, IMO Headquarters

Nigel Rowe, President and Chairman of Sail Training International

What an unenviable task to have to follow the Chief Executive of the MCA and Secretary General of the IMO ... particularly after what they have said about sail training and its essential values in the development of young people and its contribution to safety, good seamanship, and careers at sea.

So, you will be pleased to hear I will limit myself to just three observations.

The first is this: safety and good seamanship are at the heart of what we do, and of the practices on board all bona fide sail training vessels. Safety and good seamanship are always key topics at our annual international conference, meetings of our Class A Tall Ships Forum (whose members are the operators of the big square rigged ships around the world), and in much of the documentation we produce for vessel operators. This ranges from our 'best practice guidelines' on safety aloft, to our International Trainee Logbook ... a copy of which will be available to you as you leave later. We launched the Logbook prototype last year as a 'Basic Safety and Seamanship Record of Training', actually as a follow up to the IMO's recognition of sail training in its Code for Special Purpose Ships. We will make some very minor changes in the next edition, and we understand it is now being reviewed closely by one or two national administrations for their endorsement as an approved document for use on sail training vessels.

Secondly, as we have heard already this evening, and from more independent observers than me,

sail training develops in young people important qualities for anyone wishing to pursue a career at sea. One of the principal purposes of sail training is to develop in young people a good sense of self-worth and a good understanding of the role of, and skills required for, effective teamwork and leadership. There is a growing body of independent research that demonstrates sail training does these things. Indeed, sail training provides a uniquely valuable, some would say essential, grounding for a career at sea and an understanding of the forces of nature at work on the ocean that cannot be acquired on a ship with a fully enclosed centrally heated bridge, and an engine to drive her on a steady course and at a predetermined speed ... this, after all, is why so many Navies and Maritime Academies around the world own and operate, or charter, sail training ships for their officer cadets.

And the third point I want to make, related to the same issue, is that support for the IMO's 'Go to Sea' and 'Year of the Seafarer' initiatives is now high on our agenda at Sail Training International. We know that sail training could play a far wider and more effective role in recruiting as well as training young people for a career at sea. This year, for example, we are organising four races and regattas for sail training Tall Ships. They will involve 8 – 10,000 trainee crew members, 11 host ports in nine countries, and some 8 – 10 million visitors to the host ports. What a blindingly obvious opportunity to promote maritime interests and careers in the shipping industry. But here's the rub. So many are involved in this mounting problem of recruitment: international shipping and other maritime organisations, international and national government agencies, the indus-

try's national organisations and individual shipping companies – the IMO is clearly providing leadership at the global level, but as far as we can determine few believe they own enough of the problem to help drive and fund a solution. We're going to keep working at it, though. In fact, we had a bit of a break-through last year when the Russian shipping company SOVCOMFLOT was one of our sponsors for The Tall Ships Races in the Baltic – and it was such a good experience for them that they've committed to being back with us the next time we're in the Baltic.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you so much for being with us here. A key purpose of this evening is to encourage good relations between the sail training community and regulators at both the national and international levels -- an opportunity for face-to-face networking on key common interests that we hope will continue into the future. Thank you Peter Cardy for your remarks, and to the MCA for generously hosting this event for us ... thank you all for sparing the time to be with us this evening.

Finally, our sincere thanks to you Secretary General for your support for sail training and for being our Guest of Honour this evening.
