

## STANDARDIZATION IN TRAINING AND QUALIFICATION OF THE LABOR FORCE IN SHIPPING

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**Abstract:** *Shipping is an industry governed internationally by imposing regulations that must take into account by any company involved in maritime transport. In a market where companies operate all around the world, each respecting the rules imposed at national level, standardization is an activity that comes and establishes common rules and helps the interaction between firms. The most important regulations are imposed on the labor market in shipping. In this paper the authors aim to highlight the importance of standardization in training and qualification of the seafarers in shipping by presenting the factors that lead to the improvement and functioning of these market regulations.*

**Key-words:** *seafarer, shipping, standardization*

### INTRODUCTION

Standardization is the activity which establishes the rules for a common and repeated use, resulting in increased cooperation, compatibility and reduces risks in scope to the tasks undertaken. Standardization in the field of shipping is nothing new there are already a number of regulations such as SOLAS (International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea), MARPOL (International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships), COLREG (*Convention on the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea*), LOADLINE (International Convention on Load Lines). The shipping companies are required norms and standards on structural characteristics, the fitting and equip ships over 100 GRT, model contracts for ship management and management of selection seafarers.

All these rules imposed by conventions represent the most important documents adopted by the International Maritime Organization. The Conventions shall enter into force after ratification by at least one third of the Member States of IMO. With the imposition of regulations across transport activities and employment of the seafarers is subject to compliance with standards (Mitroussi, 2004). Thus, there is a minimum professional standard that must correspond a person in the exercise of the main tasks of the board on ship.

These minimum standards of competence for seafarers are differentiated for maritime and inland waterway personnel, as specified in the *International Convention On Standards Of Training, Certification And Watchkeeping For Seafarers* adopted in 1978 (STCW).

The main purpose of the STCW Convention is to clearly establish minimum international standards for certification of seafarers, depending on their

position on board, whereas the continuity of career and professional development of seafarers is another aspect.

Origins of STCW certification is due to process of globalization of shipping and by default of labor market, with a consequent effect on the need for a global uniformity of training and certification standards for seafarers. The analysis carried out, shows that most countries providing seafarers have not implemented a system of maritime education and training one reason being lack the economic means, so they can not meet existing standards in Europe, North America, India and Japan, where standards of education, training naval and certification are established long-term.

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Educational standards and certification deficiencies in some of the new countries providing seafarers have been recognized by the ship owners in several northern European countries and Japan. As a result of this situation, some of the shipping companies have set up their own training schools to improve abilities and skills development, while ship owners' associations have supported institutions of maritime education and training.

The imposition of minimum professional standards certifies the minimum skills of the crew. Qualification is a result of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent organization determines that a person has obtained learning outcomes as a result of certain standards.

So, the qualification is estimating the individual results of education for the labor market and continuing training. Regulations affecting the education and skills of the workforce are

highlighted by naval ISM Code, STCW 95 and MLC 2006. By ISM Code (*International Management Code for the Safe Operation of Ships and for Pollution Prevention*) it establishes a culture of safety management, each company and each person becomes responsible for measures to be taken to improve safety on board.

The certification procedure impose shipping company and thus to ship, requires to hold a certificate from the state administration whose flag the ship is or an approved classification society that meets the requirements of the ISM Code.

Safety management system must be designed and implemented by the crew responsible for its operation. The human element is involved in the design, implementation, application and safety management system audit leading to the need for training of certain skills, skills required to perform their assigned crew aboard.

With the implementation of STCW 78 came the first regulations on employing staff knowledge necessary to function in a ship. The amendment to the Convention known as the STCW 95 identified standards of competence by defining skills for each member of the crew, led to uniform qualification standards, has implemented a process of periodic auditing institutions that prepare staff for the labor market work in shipping. After the implementation of this Convention was identified seafarers holding certificates issued by certain countries that are not up to the minimum professional standards required by the text of the Convention.

STCW 95 established new responsibilities for shipping companies, higher standards of competence, inspection measures of the countries on the implementation of the Convention. The Convention requires member countries to inform IMO of measures taken to ensure the implementation of the Convention and for countries providing seafarers are subject to inform the other on the standards they apply. This leads to the "White List" which shows which countries meet the standards IMO Convention.

Also flag countries have the right to check seafarers training institutions operating on their vessels, which can lead to acceptance by certain countries, only professionally trained graduates in certain training centers in other countries.

In Romania, the STCW 95 requirements are set out in Regulation on Standards of Training, confirming competence and issue of certificates of capacity for seafarers, which states that activities relating to certification and certification of seafarers described in the Regulation are continuously controlled by implementing a quality management system in institutions and ONGs.

Objectives on the level of education and training and competency standards required to be met are

defined and thus identify the levels of knowledge, understanding and skills required by the STCW Convention within examinations.

Abilities specified in the standards of competence in the STCW Convention are divided into seven groups, namely: navigation; handling and stowage; control operation of the ship and concern for persons on board; marine engineering; electromechanical, electronic and automation systems; maintenance and repairs and radio communications.

Although there are many countries that can provide competent crew on board certain ships flying the flag of convenience the crew unsatisfactory in terms of level of knowledge. This situation is common on ships considered sub-standard recognized for poor working conditions offered to seafarers, ship owners prefer low labor costs at the expense of training of seafarers.

Competence crew of a ship is given a country's ability to regulate a uniform standard providing training opportunities and quality education. (OECD, 2001)

At the same time, informal training should not be forgotten, for which shipping companies play an important role by extending the theoretical knowledge and putting them into practice in daily thereby gain experience.

This type of experiential learning is much more than theoretical knowledge learned from experience training institute by learning behaviors, unwritten rules and attitudes of culture sailor. China is the only major nation that has a significant fleet of merchant ships crew aboard which consists of national trained in their training institutions.

Between 2005-2010, the employment of the ship was a significant increase in officer cadets who attended training programs for accession to the watchkeeping officer. This possibility of cadets officers training on board was possible only in countries that have created a favorable tax environment for employers.

However, the owners do not regard future officers as having the same level of training, knowledge, skills that are found to current employees. The reality is that the level of training of officers' cadets through training standards differs in each country, working certificate later on the labor market through existing demand for officers of a certain nationality.

While supply and demand in the labor market remained steady quality of the human resources indicate a decrease overall, mainly due to entry of officers cadets with a low quality of training, despite the fact that there are standards the minimum crew competence.

## CONCLUSIONS

Factors that lead to the improvement and operation of global regulations on labor market from shipping are:

- Growing interest of the International Maritime Organization workforce capabilities;
- The possibility that the International Labour Organization to play a more significant with the trade unions and ship owners identify the needs of global cooperation;
- Developing a global network of increasingly efficient port state control;
- Increasing influence of various international associations shipping.

Among the advantages of standardization in training and qualifications of the labor force in the naval field are: the initial and continuous quality assurance; certification training centers, career development, an effective mechanism for internal and external evaluation of the results, but also the process of training, institutional cohesion among various segments involved in training.

But at the same time, can be identified and deficiencies relating to standardization, namely:

- a) the tendency to generalize the functions standards;
- b) the difficulty of determining the optimum point of connection between the constant and mandatory, on the one hand, and the dynamism and flexibility, on the other hand;
- c) the difficulty of derivation specific training process, dependent on certain features subtle, hard to notice.

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