

ECSA & ETF initiative

Seafarers Go Digital



GETTING READY FOR THE FUTURE



ECSA
European Community Shipowners' Associations



Overview

ECSA and ETF are the recognised EU sectoral social partners for maritime transport. In view of preparing the maritime workforce for the digital age while ensuring that seafarers' employment rights, welfare and safety, are upheld, the social partners are launching the Seafarers Go Digital initiative.

This initiative is a mutual commitment from social partners that seeks to address the transformative impact of digitalisation on the maritime transport industry. The document recognises the need to adapt international regulations, training programs, and operational practices to embrace digital technologies while safeguarding the employment rights and well-being of seafarers.

The document addresses key areas such as onboard digitalisation, cybersecurity, automation, internet access onboard, e-certification, digital skills and attractiveness. It acknowledges the importance of protecting seafarers and promoting a fair and inclusive digital transition for everyone.

By endorsing these social partners' commitments and policy recommendations, the initiative aims to harness the benefits of digitalisation while mitigating its risks and contributing to a sustainable and attractive future for seafarers in the maritime transport industry.





Onboard Digitalisation

- ▶ Promote digitalisation as a tool and not an objective.
- ▶ Mitigate the risk of over-reliance on digital tools and highlight the role of seafarers in using cutting-edge digital tools in the workplace.
- ▶ Provide user-friendly tools with built-in familiarisation training for seafarers.
- ▶ Ensure seafarers' involvement in testing and refining digital tools before full rollout.
- ▶ Moving away from unnecessary paperwork and administrative workload and procedures to digital procedures, allowing seafarers to focus more on their core responsibilities and reducing fatigue.
- ▶ Collaborate on updated international standards for safe shipping digital operations.



Cybersecurity

- ▶ Raise awareness of cyber hygiene across industries.
- ▶ Highlight importance of human element in cyber-risk management.
- ▶ Ensure seafarers' data protection and offer adequate training.
- ▶ Encourage voluntary reporting of cyber incidents.

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Automation

- ▶ Support for trained personnel for remote controlled, autonomous, or unmanned vessels.
- ▶ Consider the human element in all ship-related digital interactions and take advantage of the automation process to improve seafarer employment and working conditions.
- ▶ Anticipate rise in demand for specialist crews and new digital skills.
- ▶ Collaborate with all stakeholders on updated international standards for safe shipping operations.
- ▶ Note security advantages and cyber risks of remote and autonomous ships.



Internet Onboard

- ▶ Disseminate ECSA and ETF guidance among shipping companies to facilitate internet access on board and for seafarers' appropriate personal use.
- ▶ Commit to consider overcoming obstacles to granting seafarers internet access.
- ▶ Address health, safety, and well-being concerns from excessive use.
- ▶ Promote the establishment of policies for cybersecurity and safe internet use.
- ▶ Consider providing training on safe internet use.
- ▶ Promote company guidelines on internet access and social media acceptable usage in the workplace.
- ▶ Maintain in-person social opportunities for all crew members on board.



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E-Certification

- ▶ Support e-certification of seafarers' documentation.
- ▶ Address challenges of e-certification in validity and acceptance.
- ▶ Follow IMO guidelines and Paris MoU to facilitate use of e-certificates.
- ▶ Seek overall reduction in administrative burdens for seafarers.



Digital Skills

- ▶ Support the review of the STCW Convention and Code and the need to address seafarers' digital skills.
- ▶ Foster stakeholder engagement by establishing the EU Maritime Skills Forum.
- ▶ Disseminate the SkillSea project educational packages on seafarers' digital skills.
- ▶ Up-skill, re-skill and create career development opportunities for seafarers to, namely, understand principles for cybersecurity, automation, safe working and automated tasks.
- ▶ Explore funding options for seafarers' training: upskilling funding, government initiatives, EU financing, grants, or cost-offsetting training programs.



Attractiveness

- ▶ Highlight new career opportunities and the possibility of a better work-life balance through digitalisation.
- ▶ Emphasise industry's commitment to digital transformation to attract young generations.
- ▶ Promote digitalisation to increase the employment of women in seafaring roles.
- ▶ Support a career pathway for seafarers from sea to shore by putting into practice acquired digital skills.



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