

# General Meeting 2011

'Protect and respect' was the theme for the 2011 Nautilus International General Meeting — the Union's important policy-making conference, which was held in the Dutch port of Rotterdam. It set the Union's course for the next four years.



## Resolutions

The 11 motions below were adopted at the 2011 General Meeting.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

### 1. Ferry sector manning directive

This General Meeting notes with concern recent developments affecting Nautilus International members in the Ferry Sector. It notes with particular concern the closure of Irish Sea routes operated by Stena Line, the sale of Norfolk Line to DFDS, a continued threat of privatisation to Scotland's publicly owned ferry companies including Northlink and Caledonian MacBrayne and the introduction of a low cost competitor to the Isle of Man Steam Packet.

This General Meeting believes that these developments have led to an increased uncertainty regarding the job security of those members in the Dutch and UK branches serving in the ferry sectors. This is further exacerbated by the existence of low cost competitors using wage rates that are not appropriate to either the Netherlands or the UK.

This General Meeting congratulates Nautilus International on its campaign to protect the jobs of members serving with the Isle of Man Steam Packet which has led to the withdrawal of the low cost Estonian flagged competition.

Nevertheless this General Meeting believes that a long term strategic solution is necessary to protect Nautilus International members within the Dutch and UK ferry sector. It calls on the Union to campaign within the European Transport Workers' Federation

for action at EU level to secure regulatory measures that would require ferry operators to use pay rates that are appropriate to the countries between which ferries operate rather than the flag of the vessel or the nationality of the seafarers on board. This campaign should include working closely with all interested parties including ferry companies, politicians and other seafarers' organisations to put an end to competition based on cost, thus encouraging competition based on quality within this sector.

### 2. Fatigue

Past General Meetings have highlighted the health and safety risk posed by excessive working hours at sea. This General Meeting registers its deep concern that fatigue-related accidents continue to occur — for example, the Shen Neng 1 in Australia — and that evidence from members shows that many are still having serious problems in respect of long hours and limited opportunities for quality sleep.

This GM further notes its shock at the discussions at the IMO during the revision of the STCW Convention, in which some owners and flag states opposed proposals to align the IMO rules with the ILO, and in so doing provide an additional seven hours of rest per week.

This GM welcomes the Nautilus presence in the European Project Horizon research into the impact of fatigue and instructs the secretariat to build up this study to maintain and intensify the long-standing efforts to improve the regulations governing seafarers' work and rest periods.

### 3. Tax

This General Meeting notes the way in which the Dutch and UK tonnage tax schemes have helped to reverse the long-term decline in the number of national flagged ships in both countries. However, we also record our concern that this has not been matched by increases in the number of Dutch and British seafarers.

This meeting therefore calls upon Nautilus to step up its political lobbying of the UK and NL governments to improve the measures in place to protect and enhance the training and employment of British and Dutch seafarers. This meeting also urges the Union to direct further efforts towards the European Commission to improve the state aid guidelines and to ensure that they create a tighter link between state aid and training and employment.

The meeting also urges the Union to maintain its long-running work to protect the UK Seafarers' Earnings Deduction scheme from any further attempts by governments to restrict its scope.

### 4. Piracy / RFA

This General Meeting notes with continuing concern the dramatic deterioration in the number and the nature of piracy incidents and armed attacks on Merchant Ships. The General Meeting also notes the work undertaken by Nautilus International in ensuring members have the best possible protection from pirates, wherever they sail. In particular, the general meeting welcomes:

- the establishment of the first high risk area, giving members the right to refuse to sail into the Indian ocean unless appropriate protective measures are taken;

- the campaigning work undertaken in both the Netherlands and the UK to draw to the attention of governments and the United Nations the very real threat posed by piracy;
- the pragmatic and flexible approach taken that has allowed this Union's policy to keep pace with the changing nature of the piracy threat.

The General Meeting also recognises and applauds the work undertaken by Nautilus International members serving with the Royal Fleet Auxiliary in protecting seafarers from around the world as part of the EU Naval Force patrolling the most dangerous areas, but notes with utmost concern the UK government's decision to cutback the RFA placing at risk 150 members' jobs, and a further 250 ratings' jobs.

The General Meeting also applauds the fight against piracy undertaken by members going about their normal duties. In particular tribute is paid to those members onboard the UK flagged tanker Tessa PG who acted with extreme bravery and professionalism when rescuing a Canadian citizen from a brutal pirate attack in Honduras.

The General Meeting also acknowledges the contribution made by the ITF who have campaigned vigorously to ensure Governments, the IMO and the UN take piracy seriously. Particular tribute is paid to the ITF's petition which attracted over 1 million signatures in support of action against piracy.

This General Meeting therefore calls on the Union to continue its campaigning work to make the world's sea safe by demanding appropriate measures from government and other bodies that will ensure safe seas.

It also calls on the union to vigorously oppose cuts to the RFA which will inevitably weaken the response to piracy placing more seafarers at risk.

## 5. Protecting & Respecting Seafarers

Last year's decision by the European Court of Human Rights to uphold a €3m bail demand for the master of the tanker Prestige provides a graphic example of the unreasonable criminalisation of the maritime profession. This General Meeting further notes other recent cases, such as the Hebei Spirit and the hard line taken by many authorities over the contents of seafarers' PCs.

This General Meeting therefore calls upon Nautilus to redouble its efforts to persuade governments to introduce and enforce the provisions of the IMO/ILO fair treatment guidelines, to ratify ILO Convention 185 on Seafarer Identity Documents, and to urgently ratify and enforce the Maritime Labour Convention 2006 — the 'Bill of Rights' for seafarers — to ensure that important 'decent work' principles are applied on a global basis as soon as possible.

## 6. Job Security and Pay

The GM notes with concern that, in the wake of global economic downturn, our members in both the UK and Netherlands are still having their job security put at risk and their terms and conditions of employment undermined by shipping companies who continue to use the downturn as an opportunity to maintain an unjustified attach on our members.

Additionally, the International and National labour markets for seafarers are still very buoyant. Our members' skills and professionalism remain in high demand and the worldwide shortage of Officers has persisted despite the reduction in seaborne trade.

This GM therefore, calls on Nautilus International to put in place strategies to ensure members' terms and conditions and job security are fully protected and in doing so, aim to achieve increases at least in line with the relevant National inflationary measures in both UK and NL as a benchmark.

## 7. Inland Navigation

This General Meeting notes that with the joining of the Swiss maritime professionals the Union has become an even more important player in the Inland Navigation sector of mainland Europe than it already was.

The GM also notes that the European Inland Navigation sector is in the process of standardising important issues such as social security, hours of work and rest regulations, as well as the quality of training systems.

The GM further notes more and more low-cost seafarers — mainly from the Philippines — are looking for employment in the European Inland Navigation Sector while there are enough workers in Europe to crew the entire Inland Navigation fleet.

The GM therefore calls on Nautilus International to seek to protect European wages in the European Inland Navigation sector and to work to ensure as far as possible that European workers in the European Inland Navigation sector will not lose their jobs to cheap labour workers from outside Europe.

## 8. Emissions

This GM acknowledges the need to reduce the environmental impact of shipping and that the IMO is under pressure from the European Union to take appropriate action.

This GM further acknowledges that the UK MAIB has anecdotal evidence that the introduction of low sulphur rules has resulted in an increase in fuel oil system and machinery failures; members have also expressed concern at the Union's P&T Fora.

The GM expresses concern that 'emissions trading schemes' and inappropriate taxation could potentially distort the shipping market resulting in a migration of tonnage from developed nations. The GM also expresses concern that the drive to change fuels is greatly increasing the workloads of members, especially engineers, and this is also a health and safety risk as fatigue and stress are already major concerns.

This GM further expresses grave concern of serious health and safety issues involved and notes that the continued use of low quality heavy fuel oil has been linked to lung cancer, respiratory problems amongst seafarers and increased incidence of cancer in port areas.

The GM notes with disappointment that the Dutch and UK governments have not taken a lead in promoting new technologies or providing the infrastructure to support a transition to LNG fuels for coastal shipping.

The GM also notes that a recent survey of members found that the development of new technologies and design advances should be given prominence to develop the use of cleaner fuels and more efficient combustion.

Therefore this GM calls on Nautilus International to:

- through the ITF and IFSMA seek to influence the IMO to develop as a matter of urgency emissions policies that do not have a detrimental effect on health and safety, increase onboard workload and endanger employment opportunities;
- lobby the UK and Dutch Governments to promote the use of new technologies and invest in measures to increase the use of environmentally sound fuels;
- lobby regulatory authorities and work with shipowners to ensure that training and safety measures are in place so that any changes in fuel types or machinery systems do not have an adverse affect on the workloads or health and safety of members;
- support emissions and carbon reduction policies which favour national flag shipping over those which give advantages to flags of convenience.

## 9. Equal Opportunities

This General Meeting welcomes the work done by Nautilus to research the ongoing problems of bullying and harassment within the shipping industry. Nothing the findings, as set out in the recently published report, this Conference calls upon the Union to work with shipowners, industry organisations and regulators to secure further action to combat the identified problems and to ensure genuine equal opportunities within the maritime industry.

In particular, this General Meeting urges Nautilus to seek:

- measures to train staff and managers on recognising and dealing with workplace bullying and harassment
- increased awareness of bullying and harassment: ie distribution of, for example, information leaflets along the lines of other leaflets produced for members
- training for HR managers and the Union's own industrial officers and other officials on bullying and harassment issues including handling of complaints

## 10. Youth Forum

This General Meeting notes with appreciation the creation of the Women's Advisory Forum and the positive impact it has had in bringing women members together and helping to address the specific problems and issues they face in the shipping industry. Noting its success, this meeting calls for Nautilus to establish a structure of its young members in a similar attempt to enhance the participation from young members in the work of the Union.

## 11. Port State Control

This General Meeting notes with great concern both the financial and personnel constraints the UK and the Dutch flag and port State administration is working under and the lack of implementation of European port State control law in the UK. The former threatens the thorough and impartial application of national and international shipping safety legislation. The latter threatens safe shipping in UK, Dutch and European waters and burdens other EU member States (in the case of the UK) with additional inspection requirements.

This General Meeting, therefore, urges Nautilus to campaign vigorously for effective, thorough and impartial flag and port State survey and inspection regimes in the UK, the Netherlands and elsewhere in Europe which are operated by well resourced and staffed national or European administrations.

This meeting also requests the Union to ensure seafarers and shipowners recognise in full the requirement for strong flag and port State administrations.