



# JOINT ETF-ECSA DECLARATION OF INTENTION TO ADDRESS THE ENHANCED PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN EUROPEAN SHIPPING

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The European social partners for maritime transport, the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF) and the European Community Shipowners' Associations (ECSA), are jointly seeking to increase the participation of women in careers in the European shipping industry. Gender equality is at the heart of the EU's fundamental values for sustainable and inclusive growth and ETF and ECSA are willing to take an active role in promoting gender diversity and equality of opportunity to attract and retain new talent in the shipping industry for strong, prosperous and socially sustainable maritime clusters in Europe.

## Why should the maritime transport industry attract more women?

Currently only about 2% of seagoing Masters and officers are female<sup>1</sup>. Shipping has traditionally been a male dominated sector and ETF and ECSA share the view that a more gender-balanced industry would improve culture, sustainability and productivity. In order for the shipping industry and maritime clusters in Europe to recruit and retain the required quantities and qualities of people and stay competitive in changing times with technological and environmental developments, it will be imperative to find ways to attract more women to maritime careers.

## What are the root causes of the low participation of women in shipping?

There are many reasons why women may not find maritime careers attractive and prefer alternative career paths. ETF and ECSA agree that the main root causes can be summarized as follows:

- Image: shipping is often perceived by the general public as a harsh sector to work in
- Working conditions: long periods away from home make it difficult to reconcile work and family life
- Male domination: since there are so few women working in the industry, work at sea is often perceived as a job for boys and men. Ships are closed communities and in most cases serve as a seafarer's home as well as a workplace. Concerns about the possibility of gender stereotyping and discrimination may deter potential female applicants.

## Which are the shared priorities?

Based on the above-mentioned root causes, ETF and ECSA declare their readiness to develop joint actions to tackle the following priority topics:

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<sup>1</sup> [Seafarers' Statistics in the EU](#), July 2018, European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA)



- An Awareness-raising campaign: to increase the awareness of the attractive career opportunities in shipping both at sea and ashore, where many openings exist for persons with seagoing qualifications and experience (e.g. through female role models). This includes working to increase knowledge of and dispel outdated and inaccurate perceptions of the industry.
- Measures to recruit and retain women in the industry, such as ensuring the provision of female-friendly facilities on board ships, promoting shipboard cultures that promote the dignity of all crew members, communicating about long-term career opportunities at sea and ashore.
- Gender policies in the workplace: it is suggested to develop training modules on gender, policies on work-life balance, as well as policies on bullying and harassment based on the joint ECSA- ETF guidelines and training materials.

### Intention declaration

Both social partners will focus on these priority issues as from 2019. Implementation will be sought either through EU-funded social partners' projects, or through dedicated working groups in the framework of the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for maritime transport.

Any joint action will be based on past work, such as the joint ECSA-ETF Guidelines to shipping companies to prevent on-board bullying and harassment. The agreed action will be designed to ensure that recommendations and guidance are provided in order to assist both shipping companies and seafarers' organisations in promoting change and a corporate culture and behaviour that is conducive to recruitment and retention of women