



# heartbeat

## Swallow the anchor



The stresses and strains of a life at sea are well documented, with long shifts, often worked in variable conditions and inhospitable weather a constant threat. Some seafarers must face alternating four-hour shifts, extreme changes in temperature, a poor diet, stressful tasks and little contact with loved ones, so perhaps it is easy to see why the average seafarer works at sea for less than 10 years.

For these reasons, the EU funded SAIL AHEAD project has been working with captains to provide seafarers with the knowledge that if such personal reasons do arise, there is a possibility for them to engage in an alternative career ashore, using competencies they have acquired both through formal and non-formal learning and work experience onboard.

The SAIL AHEAD project provides guidance about ashore career paths

through an innovative online guidance tool for second career options for captains, supported by detailed job profiles and interviews with maritime professionals already working ashore. Recently, the SAIL AHEAD tool, which is the major outcome of the project, has been launched on the project's website, in order to assist captains in assessing the opportunities available for working ashore. The tool is available in English, Greek, Slovenian, Turkish, Polish and Finnish.

The SAIL AHEAD project helps captains explore a wide range of alternative career paths such as entrepreneurship, maritime lecturer, arbitrators and much more. Case studies, containing recorded interviews with captains who have already followed each specific career path with their personal story, are available online.

For more information please go to: [www.sailahead.eu](http://www.sailahead.eu) ♥

## Study reveals poor care for piracy victims

Less than a third of seafarers subjected to piracy attacks felt they received adequate follow-up care, according to a newly published clinical study.

Results also showed that while the incidence of attacks has been declining, the psychological impact on seafarers remains.

The study into the effects of piracy on seafarers' mental health was carried out jointly by the US-based Seamen's Church Institute (SCI) and Mount Sinai School of Medicine. Between 2009 and 2011 the SCI's Clinical Researcher Dr Michael S Garfinkle and his assistant, Dr Janaka

Saratchandra, interviewed 154 seafarers from all over the world, 25 of whom had been held captive or had witnessed attempted boardings by pirates.

The study showed that many seafarers are not receiving appropriate follow up treatment because of the stigma of mental health care and lack of available resources to conduct proper assessments.

Although most seafarers interviewed did not think their job was unduly stressful under normal conditions, throughout the study period concern about piracy increased along with anticipatory stress about transiting piracy zones. The frequency with which seafarers appealed

for armed guards onboard ships also increased during the study.

In his presentation of the report to Working Group 3 of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia in London, Douglas Stevenson, Director, Center for Seafarers' Rights, said: "To assist the industry, SCI, in collaboration with other clinical researchers, is preparing a recommended assessment battery for administering evaluations. We hope that the psychological assessment battery positively adds to the Maritime Piracy Humanitarian Response Programme's work as well as the work of governments, ship operators and other maritime stakeholders." ♥