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Innovation in MET for New Career and Mobility Opportunities

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This paper reports on the recent development by a consortium of well-known Maritime Education and Training (MET) institutions and several maritime research and development organisations to provide seafarers with an online guidance tool to enable them to have professional careers support.

The EU Leonardo SAIL AHEAD concerns the development of an on-line guidance tool in order to provide a second career for deck officers/captains. Research has indicated that seafarers in general have a job with extraordinary features and that there is reluctance by many young people to join the seafaring profession even though the salaries in the sector are very attractive (IMO, 2008). Recent reports by prominent maritime organisations (such as BIMCO, ISF) have predicted severe officer shortages in the future (BIMCO and ISF, 2010). The research work conducted as part of SAIL AHEAD has identified the transferable skills by comparing the curricula of different Maritime Education and Training (MET) institutions and by surveying the knowledge, skills and competences deck officers/captains developed during their education and training as well as in their seafaring profession. The tool is a roadmap and provides a list of competences that captains acquired in their education and training and when working at sea and a list of what knowledge, skills and competences they need to successfully seek employment onshore.

The SAIL AHEAD project is learning from the knowledge, skills developed throughout the deck officers/captains' professional life and these is investigating and cross-referencing with job profiles onshore so that many deck officers and captains will be able to develop their profile and acquire knowledge and skills for these jobs while still working at sea. This would enable them to find jobs ashore after a period of service at sea. Furthermore, as part of UniMET (Ziarati et al, 2011), an opportunity has been created to incorporate the knowledge and skills identified in the job profiles ashore into the existing MET programmes and develop the UniMET programmes into internationally recognised programmes leading to certificates accepted by major maritime organisations recruiting people for jobs ashore.

It is fairly apparent that providing seafarers with an online guidance tool to enable them to have professional careers support will simplify the MET system and empower and support maritime personnel with their career and continuous professional development. The SAIL AHEAD online guidance tool will enable seafarers to prepare for successfully seeking new jobs onshore and have appropriate professional careers support.

References

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