

Improvement in connectivity at sea, but less satisfaction overall, latest Happiness Report shows

LONDON, 28 JANUARY 2020 – The latest Seafarers Happiness Index report, published today by The Mission to Seafarers, has revealed that seafarer happiness continues to fluctuate – with improvements in connectivity at sea, but also continuing concerns regarding workload among the issues raised by seafarers.

The index, undertaken in association with leading P&I insurer the Shipowners' Club, is a tool for measuring the experiences of seafarers across the global maritime industry. In the latest report, overall seafarer happiness dropped to 6.13/10 from 6.59 the previous quarter. The data comes from over 2000 respondents, with surveys completed in the final quarter of 2019. In 2020, maritime solutions company, Wallem Group, will be partnering with The Mission alongside the Shipowners' Club to support this initiative.

Across all vessel types, three key issues emerged from the survey responses over the three-month period: workload stress caused by changes in regulations; a drop in satisfaction with access to welfare facilities ashore; and an increase in racism experienced while at sea.

Taking into consideration the then-impending global Sulphur cap, which took effect on 1 January 2020, it is not unexpected to see a rise in concern among seafarers over changes in workload and responsibilities resulting from the new regulations. There seem to be continuous claims of pressure surrounding inspections and audits, in addition to the demands of 'day to day' administration and paperwork.

Responses regarding shore leave show that seafarers are not being able to reap the benefits of welfare facilities ashore, which in turn hugely impacts their wellbeing. There needs to be an industry-wide drive to ensure correct visas are acquired so that seafarers are able to enjoy the benefits of shore-based welfare facilities whilst in ports and terminals.

Importantly, there has been a slump in happiness concerning interaction with other crew this quarter – coming in at 6.67/10, down from 7.28. Troubling accounts of racism were raised, with concerning reports that victims do not feel they have anywhere to formally complain or ask for support. This is an area of concern which has been mirrored in earlier reports of sexism. The industry has a responsibility to recognise these concerns and respond to the calls for an independent complaint line or procedure to support seafarers.

On the positive side, seafarers' happiness with their ability to keep in contact with loved ones when at sea rose this quarter. The data demonstrates that crews who have good quality, low-cost access to the internet and good communication with their families are far happier than

those who do not. This is an encouraging indication of the benefits to seafarers from widespread improvements to connectivity at sea.

In other welcome news, happiness levels among seafarers in the cruise sector have continued to rise, with a general upward trend in views on opportunities for career development within the industry.

Steven Jones, Founder of the Seafarers Happiness Index, commented: *“After our two previous reports, it is a very positive sign to see that the levels of happiness among seafarers in the Cruise sector continue to rise to 7/10, from 5.3 in the second quarter and 6.3 in the third quarter of 2019. It is also great to hear of the pride seafarers feel when providing for their families and communities. There is a sense of sacrifice, but where that translates into tangible positives for the families, seafarers are happier in their role.”*

“We hope some of the insight we provide through the Happiness Index has contributed to this improvement in seafarers’ sentiments about life at sea, although there is no room for complacency. Indeed, we are concerned to hear instances of racism at sea being raised by respondents and encourage all ship owners and managers to ensure everything possible is being done to address this issue.”

Louise Hall, Director - Loss Prevention at the Shipowners’ Club commented: *“The Shipowners’ Club is proud to have supported the 2019 Happiness Index. We firmly believe that the reports have helped to create a more transparent industry, whereby best practise can be promoted and shared, and issues or shortcomings can be identified and addressed. In the renewal of our sponsorship for 2020 we hope to be able to assist in further enhancing the scale of the Index, to reach and improve even more lives at sea.”*

Partnering with The Mission in 2020, Frank Coles, Chief Executive Officer, Wallem Group, commented: *“Wallem is focused on quality ship management and this means quality crew, and quality crew should be happy. Wallem has a priority on seafarers’ conditions and mental health. This survey is a great way to get a proper sample of actual seafarers’ views on life at sea and what can be improved. Hopefully we can then use this to improve the lives of all seafarers.”*

Overall, while this report shows a drop in satisfaction towards the end of 2019, it must be recognised that the festive period is a difficult time for most seafarers who are away from family and this could have contributed to the decrease in happiness. Regardless of the dip, crews felt that they were seeing an improvement in the connectivity services. Furthermore, the pride felt by seafarers in providing for their families is beneficial to their health and wellbeing. Industry-wide changes are driving important progress in seafarer satisfaction and the impact of further improvements in the industry cannot be underestimated.

Once again, The Mission would like to offer its thanks to all the seafarers who contributed to the latest survey. To read the full report online, [click here](#).



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Notes for editors

The Shipowners' Club is a mutual marine liability insurer, providing Protection and Indemnity insurance for small and specialist vessels since 1855. The Club is a member of the International Group of P&I Clubs and works with more than 600 brokers globally to insure over 34,000 vessels across a range of operating sections and geographical areas.

The Mission to Seafarers provides help and support to the 1.5 million men and women who face danger every day to keep our global economy afloat. We work in over 200 ports in 50 countries caring for seafarers of all ranks, nationalities and beliefs. Through our global network of chaplains, staff and volunteers we offer practical, emotional and spiritual support to seafarers through ship visits, drop-in seafarers' centres and a range of welfare and emergency support services.

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