

General Meeting 2015

'Jobs, Skills and the Future' was the theme for the 2015 Nautilus International General Meeting — the Union's important policy-making conference, which was held in Liverpool, England. It set the Union's course for the next four years.



Resolutions

The 12 motions below were adopted at the 2015 General Meeting.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

1. Jobs, Skills and the Future

The theme for the 2015 Nautilus general meeting is Jobs, Skills and the Future. For the Union and its members, there must surely be no more important theme than this.

Seafaring and nautical skills are of fundamental importance — to the very future of our maritime and shipping clusters and their core role in national and regional economic and strategic wellbeing. Noting with concern the long-term decline in the number of EU seafarers and qualified inland waterways personnel and the overall level of recruitment and training in EU member states, as well as the low levels of EU seafarer employment on a large proportion of the EU-controlled fleet, this conference calls for Nautilus to redouble its efforts to maximise the support available to protect maritime and shipping clusters through a continued flow of skilled and experienced maritime and nautical professionals.

In particular, this general meeting calls for focussed campaigns to not only maintain but to enhance the provisions of the EU state aid guidelines; to press shipowners to increase their investment in employment and training of EU seafarers and qualified inland waterways personnel; and to promote decent work and collaboration with other organisations, including in different sectors, to resist social dumping and precarious work.

2. Crew Communications

Noting the rapid pace of change in communications technology and the standards of IT access ashore this general meeting calls on Nautilus to work to ensure that seafarers get the best quality access to crew communications while at sea.

Further noting that the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 states that seafarers should be given 'reasonable' access at 'reasonable' cost, this general meeting registers its concern at the evidence showing extreme variations in the quality of communications provision for seafarers and the frequent limitations in terms of cost, bandwidth, and access — despite the advances in technology and capacity which have eroded many of the past obstacles.

Recognising the important role of communications for recruitment, retention and morale, this general meeting calls upon the Union to make crew communications a core element of its negotiations with employers and also to support moves to promote the provision of free wi-fi services for the crews of ships visiting ports around the world.

Furthermore, calls on the Union to continue to exploit modern communications to enhance information flows and communications with members through the development of applications and other digital communication opportunities.

3. Partnership at Work

This general meeting endorses the long-standing Nautilus policy of promoting the concept of partnership working with progressive employers.

Recognising the importance of good relationships with key companies, this general meeting re-states the principles of seeking to develop a joint commitment to the success of companies where members work, by developing mechanisms that help to underpin meaningful dialogue and transparency, promote job security and corporate social responsibility and a high quality working life.

Further recognising that partnership can ensure that changes are introduced through consensus rather than resistance and enables issues to be dealt with before they become problems, this general meeting recommends that Nautilus re-launches partnership to encourage employers to embrace the concept by working with the Union on practical policies that enable members to have a voice in company strategy and the opportunity to ensure that the impact of staff is considered in any decision.

4. Nautilus Federation and International Activities

This general meeting recalls that the Officers (Merchant Navy) Federation was launched in 1928 as a means by which officers' organisations could cooperate and work together in common effort whilst retaining their individuality.

The federation brought together officer unions from afar afield as Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, India, New Zealand and Singapore.

Therefore welcomes the work being done in the 21st century to develop the Nautilus Federation in a similar spirit and with similar objectives of encouraging more and deeper cooperation with like-minded unions representing maritime and shipping professionals.

This general meeting particularly supports the way in which the Nautilus Federation is focused on the delivery of practical support and mutual benefits to

members, enhancing the professional support that can be provided — notably on legal, industrial and technical issues.

This general meeting therefore calls for Nautilus to continue developing the membership and scope of the Federation, whilst also continuing to maintain its strong commitment and contribution to the work of the ETF, ITF and IFSMA.

5. Maritime Labour Convention

This general meeting welcomes the introduction of the Maritime Labour Convention 2006 and congratulates Nautilus for its invaluable contribution to the development of a set of minimum conditions for seafarers and its implementation by countries around the world.

This general meeting also notes that the MLC is a 'living' instrument that is open to amendment and therefore calls for Nautilus to continue to seek further improvements to address such issues as:

- support for abandoned seafarers through the establishment of national funds
- criminalisation and adherence to the IMO/ILO fair treatment guidelines
- improved levels of access to shore leave and port based welfare
- measures to prevent seafarers from working excessive tours of duty
- measures to combat tiredness and fatigue and low manning levels
- improved accommodation and the provision of adequate number of berths for trainees (by amendment to the Tonnage Measurement Convention)
- harassment and bullying at sea
- pensions and other provisions for retirement
- onboard welfare including improved communications for the recruitment and retention of seafarers

6. LRD Membership Survey 2014–2015

This general meeting welcomes the findings of the independently-produced Nautilus membership survey. It notes the continued improvement in satisfaction levels for the Union's performance and services since previous surveys in 1999 and 2004 and commends staff and its lay representatives for the work that lies behind such statistics.

This general meeting also notes the shift in emphasis on the reasons for membership and the benefits and services that members consider to be most important. The data collected in the survey is complex and significant and this general meeting therefore calls for the creation of a Council working group, as in previous years, with terms of reference to be agreed by the Council. This working group should be tasked with analysing the survey results in detail, assessing the implications for the Nautilus Strategic Plan and the work of all relevant departments, as well as the benefits and services offered by the Union, and to produce a proposed plan of action in response to the key findings.

7. Alcohol awareness among Seafarers

Noting the numerous incidents involving the abuse of alcohol, damaging the reputation of the seafarers and bringing other ships and seafarers in danger, this Nautilus International General Meeting calls for the Union to work in close cooperation with other seafarer organisations and employer bodies to initiate a campaign to make seafarers around the world aware of the danger of alcohol for their own health and safety and that of others around them.

Incidents involving the abuse of alcohol, such as the African Harrier case in March 2015, should be a wakeup call to the industry. This conference notes that not only the reputation of seafarers, but also the safety of seafarers, is put in danger when there is alcohol abuse.

Whilst there are rules and regulations in force regarding alcohol on ships, many seafarers are not made fully aware of the perils of alcohol abuse and this meeting recommends that a widespread campaign is undertaken to raise knowledge about the health and safety risks and consequences of alcohol abuse and misuse.

This meeting calls upon Nautilus International to take the lead in this and to try to secure the cooperation from as many seafarer organisations as possible, and also from employer organisations.

8. Inland Waterways Transport

The General Meeting greets the efforts to promote transport in Europe by inland waterways transport (IWT) as the least environmentally damaging mode of transport. But beside working towards improvements in e.g. infrastructure and harmonisation of the various technical regimes, more attention needs to be urgently given to the human factor.

The General Meeting therefore:

- supports the initiatives for a modern European system for the training and certification of all nautical crew members thus raising the status of the profession
- greets the conclusion and ratification of the social partners agreement on working time in IWT as a significant first step towards enforceable unitary social and labour legislation
- supports the joint initiative of unions, employers, educational institutes and enforcement authorities to work towards such a unitary system, building on the social partners' agreement and the initiatives to extend the exemption agreement to the EU's social security directive 883/2004 signed by 6 states to the rest of the European Union
- opposes efforts to reduce crewing levels in IWT under the guise of 'modernisation' and supports calls for a scientific study on the psychological

and physiological effects of fatigue, the intensive use of new technologies and the widespread two-watch system

- expresses concern at the widespread social dumping in the river cruise sector and commits to actively support the ITF/ETF river cruise campaign

As an international union and key member of the Nautilus Federation as well as being the leading union in Europe's largest IWT industry in the Netherlands our union recognises that a strong union movement is essential to safeguarding the interests of crews in IWT and is firmly committed to playing a key role in shaping the future of the industry and protecting the interests of those workers.

9. Health & Safety for Women Members

This conference believes that women who work in male-dominated industries should not have to face barriers associated with any aspect of health and safety. However, Nautilus International has identified a range of problems in the maritime sector, and consequently calls for:

- the introduction of a separate shipboard locker containing birth control, sanitary and hygiene products. This locker should be additional to the statutory medical locker and be readily accessible to female employees without the embarrassment of having to approach a male medical officer
- employers to conduct a thorough analysis and risk assessment of all Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and emergency equipment in use onboard to ensure that all persons using such equipment are able to do so safely
- increased recognition from employers of gender specific health and safety issues and the actions that can be taken to mitigate them and, as a result, the creation of a safety culture where nobody is disadvantaged in the workplace

10. Trade Agreements

This GM notes that the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) with America and the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) with Canada have been described as the 'biggest threat to employment rights in a generation' which will result in 'a race to the bottom in terms of regulation and workers' rights — giving big business the power to over-rule any legislation they deem to be restrictive to their profits'.

This GM believes these trade agreements with the European Union pose a serious threat to the working lives of maritime professionals in Europe and around the world.

For seafarers these agreements have the potential to remove any restrictions on nationality of crew, wages or working conditions — meaning European seafarers could be priced off ships as companies employ the cheapest seafarers on the worst terms and conditions. At their worst, these agreements could undo much of the progress made in recent years to provide a global level playing field with basic rights for seafarers provided for under the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006.

This GM applauds the American maritime trade unions in their defence of the Jones Act — which requires all passengers and goods transported by water between US ports to be carried on US built, flagged and crewed vessels — from the threat of deregulation under TTIP.

This GM calls on Nautilus International to:

- campaign alongside other organisations for the immediate suspension of negotiations on TTIP and CETA
- support calls for legislation to protect seafarers and other workers from unfair competition
- work with the ETF to urge the European Union to consider legislation based on the strategic aims of the US Jones Act

11. Career Transitions — all in the same boat

This GM notes the work that has been undertaken by the Young Maritime Professionals Forum and the Women’s Forum since their inception to ensure that young and female members have all the specific information they need for their careers, especially when they are serving away at sea.

This GM understands that much of the work has been on the issue of transition periods — supporting members when they first go to college, go to sea, embark on their first trips as qualified officers and eventually when they make the transition to a shore position in the future if this is how they wish to develop their career.

This GM calls upon the Union to further develop this initiative into a campaign under the banner of ‘All in the same boat’.

This campaign should include the provision of information in a variety of formats which support members during the various transition stages of a maritime career; a mentoring scheme so that members can learn from other members who have already been through the experience; and the gathering of case studies and anecdotes from members with personal lessons to share.

12. Equality and Diversity

The GM believes that maritime professionals in Europe were traditionally white and male, but that this demographic has changed dramatically in the last twenty-five years; with more women, more young people and people with more ethnically and socially diverse backgrounds choosing careers in shipping. To facilitate the needs of all its members, Nautilus must understand how this changing demographic has affected the demographic of the Union.

This GM notes that membership surveys have been conducted in the past, but none have asked specific questions around the age, gender, ethnic background or sexual orientation of members with the specific aim of ensuring that the Union’s structures support the different needs of these groups.

This GM agrees that specific diversity groups have specific issues which need to be addressed in targeted ways to ensure that the future of the maritime industry is open, inclusive and welcoming to all — regardless of gender, sexual orientation, age, ethnicity, cultural or social demographics.

This GM applauds the excellent work of the Women’s Forum and the Young Maritime Professionals Forum; whilst recognising that equality and diversity are far from fully represented within the existing structures of the Union and realising that a mechanism must be in place to allow Nautilus to focus on broader equality and diversity issues and specific issues affecting specific demographics.