



PRESS RELEASE ON THE WORKSHOP OF  
BLUE SKILLS IN SHIPPING AND PORTS AT  
THE EUROPEAN MARITIME DAY 2021 (EMD)  
(Den Helder, 20-21 May 2021)



The School of Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering (SNAME) of the National Technical University of Athens (NTUA) has participated in the European Maritime Day (EMD) 2021, upon the invitation of the DG MARE (European Commission). The EMD held virtually in Den Helder, The Netherlands, on 20&21 of May 2021. The event was co-organised with the City of Den Helder, the Province of Noord-Holland and the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management.

The SNAME, NTUA, as coordinator of the project Sea of Experience, has been selected to organise one of the parallel workshops held during the EMD. During the workshop with the title “Blue Skills in Shipping and Ports”, the coordinator of the Sea of Experience aimed at showcasing current trends and future challenges concerning the necessary skills in these sectors of the blue industry, and how the twin transition, i.e., digital and green, is effecting them.

The panel of the workshop comprised four speakers from different European countries with broad professional experience in the public and private sector. In particular, the following speakers participated to the workshop:

- **Sabine Zeller**, International Maritime Organization Goodwill Maritime Ambassador; Executive Secretary – Association for Maritime Vocational Training in Germany;
- **Zacharias Siokouros**, Cyprus Marine and Maritime Institute, CEO;
- **Evdokia Gerasimou**, Hellenic Marine Environment Protection Association, Communication Manager; and
- **Wim Stubbe**, Port of Oostende, Business Development Manager.

Moderator of the workshop was the Associate Professor **Nikolaos P. Ventikos** from the SNAME, NTUA. During the workshop, several polls were conducted to capture and express the opinion of the audience.

The main result of the workshop dealt with the increasing need in skills evolution to keep up with the continuously changing role of the human element in port operations and onboard ships. Key outcomes of the workshop were the following:

- Digital skills, problem solving, and adaptability were terms that frequently popped up during the discussions.
- In the maritime industry, women are still under-represented, and this is also reflected to the percentage of women that enroll in relevant training programs. Women account for only 2% of the seafarers and the female seafarers’ students are about 10-20%.
- Ports are operating as multifunctional industrial hubs, so new job profiles are rising. Thus, a mix of skilled workers on the green skills, digitalisation, and soft skills is foreseen.
- The quote “One size fit all” is not the case for ports and maritime in general, because of the multidimensional nature of these sectors.

The workshop on “Blue Skills in Shipping and Ports” fueled an ongoing discussion about the human element, skills, and the blue industry. Shipping and port management are continuously evolving and thus, new skills, and new tasks are emerging. *A new era has arrived, and we are preparing our industry to adapt and prosper.*

