

THE ROLE OF BATUMI STATE MARITIME ACADEMY IN TRAINING OF THE FUTURE SEAFARERS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE MODERN REQUIREMENTS

РОЛЬ БАТУМСКОЙ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННОЙ АКАДЕМИИ В ПОДГОТОВКЕ БУДУЩИХ МОРЯКОВ В СООТВЕТСТВИИ С СОВРЕМЕННЫМИ ТРЕБОВАНИЯМИ

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Abstract: *The present paper deals with a brief history of Georgian Maritime traditions and development of Georgian seafarers. It also describes the collapse of Georgian fleet and hard condition of Georgian seafarers. A negative dynamics of the last 20 years which damaged popularization of the seafarer profession and caused letting down of the high class specialists from the fleet and their degradation.*

A positive dynamics of the last years - the state interest towards Maritime Education sphere is resulted in update of Maritime Academy infrastructure, material technical resources are also improved. The laboratories provided with the modern equipment and updated educational programmes tuned to the IMO requirements promote education and training of highly competitive seafarers in accordance with the international requirements.

KEY WORDS: SEAFARER, GEORGIAN FLEET, SHIPPING, MODERN REQUIREMENTS OF MARITIME FIELD.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, merchant fleet is a main factor of the world economy. It is the cheapest means of the cargo transportation which positively developing average share in the total turnover is 70%.

Taking into account the ports and the nearest's past fleet, Georgia is considered as a country with good maritime traditions. Georgian seafarers successfully serve in the best world maritime companies. Nowadays Georgian seafarers are considered as one of the best and well paid specialists. Such position, taken in the conditions of a high competitiveness also underlines a high level of our seafarers' training, education and competence.

Development of Georgian fleet and recognition of Georgian seafarers started in the first half of the XXth century. Establishing of the Maritime College in 1929 in Batumi promoted this process. Increasing number of competent maritime personnel, as well as the existence of the Port of Batumi promoted creation of Georgian Shipping Company. As the result, Georgian seafarers, because of their diligence and high competence served a high appreciation among the leading maritime and crewing companies. Georgian captains, chief engineers were considered as the best and required specialists. The photos and histories of the Georgian seafarers are widely kept at the maritime museums on the whole Post-Soviet space.

2. Preconditions and means for resolving the problem

The Soviet collapse and the process of the new states establishing aggravated conditions of the Georgian seafarers. Russia, as the Soviet Union heir made everything to disconnect the links between Post-Soviet shipping companies. As the result of Russian policy, the sums accumulated on the common account were not shared between the shipping companies and accordingly the shipping companies were bankrupted, at the same time, the cargoes became under Russian control which left newly created shipping companies without chances of their development. The newly created states had no proper business plans of the shipping companies development, different teams fought for political impact which caused chaos in Georgia, as well as in other post Soviet republics. Weak state control, disconnection of the business relations caused an improper management of the fleet, causing improper usage of the ships and working on the dumping prices. As the result, Georgian Shipping Company, having 56 ships was completely destroyed. The same problem was related to the Fisheries Department with the tens of the trawlers, Batumi and Poti Shipyards and 10 000 t. dock. Georgian ports, despite their military-strategic importance ports were long term leased. The same problems touched maritime

education - Batumi Maritime College – furtherly Batumi State Maritime Academy, #1 Vocational College and Maritime Training Centres. All above said resulted in the fact of Georgian diplomas invalidation.

Collapse of Georgian fleet put Georgian seafarers in the hardest condition. Employment of Georgian seafarers became very difficult. There were only several crewing companies which had limited employment resource. Level of Georgian seafarers did not meet the international requirements, especially regarding the English language competence. Many experienced seafarers left maritime activity, young specialist could not get onboard training and it became difficult to link with potential employer. Only two or three crewing companies monopolized employment stating low salaries and difficult conditions. Maritime specialty gradually became nonpopular. Unfortunately there was no government support of the seafarers.

But the people having old maritime traditions and world famous maritime specialists did their best to manage such hard problems. The experienced seafarers with their love of the profession and their young energetic colleagues made their best and got serious results in the shortest terms. Georgian maritime legislation, Batumi State Maritime Academy and the training centre were tuned to the International Maritime Organization requirements. It also should be noted that as the result of the documents invalidation, Georgian maritime sphere became under the special control. It was a hard task to manage these problems. This task was successfully decided, which was appropriately stated in EMSA 2013 September report. It also should be noted that the members of commission were not only satisfied by the Maritime Agency and Maritime Academy conditions but also expressed appreciation by them. The members of commission were especially satisfied with the Maritime Training Centre and declared that the Centre is one of the best among the centres existed in the Black Sea basin. Comparison with Turkish, Bulgarian, Romanian, Ukrainian and Russian centres was very important for our centre because the stated countries budgets considerably exceed Georgian one [3].

The main role in this success belongs to the Government of Georgia and the Ministry of Economy which during the last years despite the other critical problems put millions investment into Maritime Academy development. The great role played by Georgian Maritime Agency in this success should also be especially noted. The Agency controlled and supported Academy, especially in the process of curriculum tuning to the standards of the International Maritime Organization. The Government of Autonomous Republic also greatly supports Maritime Academy. Municipality of Batumi also supported Academy when provided BSMA with one of the most important building in which a newly constructed and equipped Training Centre was placed.

After the Soviet collapse, onboard training became the most important problem for the Academy graduates. The training is the integral part of Maritime Education. Many rectors together with the government tried to manage the problem, but unfortunately it was fruitless. It is necessary to coordinate activities of several structures and the government's will in order to manage this problem [1].

The shipowners' choice of personnel employment is based on their real education and training level. It is caused by a number of seafarers, exceeding the number of vacancies. At the same time, it is not a secret that many ship masters promote and provide their own countries-oriented employment policy and often unfairly block employment of Georgian seafarers. Taking above said into account education and training of our seafarers should fully correspond the international standards and protect them from possible problems. Batumi State Maritime Academy provides all conditions, necessary to educate and train such personnel.

It is a very important fact, that some neighbouring countries which have no approach to the sea expressed their wish to send their students at Batumi State Maritime Academy. A successful implementation of this project will be the best advertisement for Academy. The choice of Batumi State Maritime Academy is caused by some logical reasons. Nowadays there are several popular higher maritime institutions in the Black Sea basin and the choice of Batumi State Maritime Academy has a set of fundamental reasons. The academic level of the students who, in the frames of academic mobility were enlisted at Batumi State Maritime Academy from the similar institutions differs from the level of BSMA students. During the last decade I worked with the graduates of different maritime institutions and can't say that their level exceeds the level of BSMA students. It is caused by some objective and subjective reasons and the positive difference of our maritime education and training should be appropriately promoted among the structures related to the employment of the seafarers [2].

It should be noted that the countries which express their desire to provide their citizens with Maritime Education in Georgia are expected take active part in transcontinental projects and it is not excluded that were going to participate by their own fleet and personnel. It will be a patriotic activity which also should provide a great profit from the named projects.

It would be better if Georgian Government discusses Georgian fleet and seafarers participation in the process of economic development of our country's economy. One of the main problems - manning of the fleet will be decided by the local personnel inclusion.

3. Conclusion

The role of Academy administration and the Rector should be especially noted, whose great love of the maritime sphere resulted in the Academy rapid and fruitful development process, which was appropriately appreciated by the International Maritime Organization and the crewing companies.

Such attention increased motivation and moral obligation sense of Academy personnel and created appropriate working conditions.

4. Literature

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