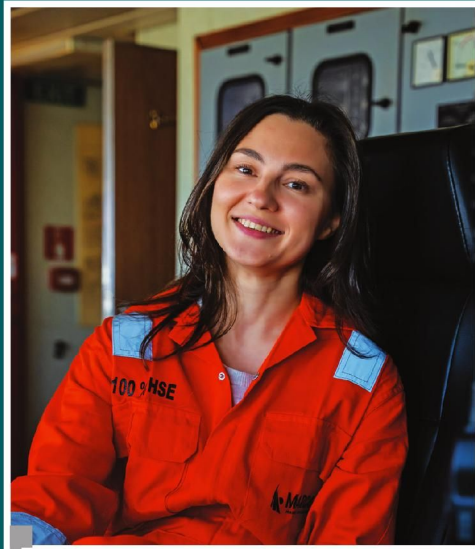




“It’s a remarkable, adventurous career filled with life-long learning that will take you places and bring extraordinary experiences.

- Elisabeth Cosmatos



“Don’t let fears or external judgment make the decision for you, because you never know until you try. Jump on board and embrace the favorable wind!

- Elena Skorokhod

and today, she proudly serves as the Director of Legal Services for the GMCG group.

Obeid continues: “As a mentor, I am deeply committed to supporting and empowering women in the maritime sector. I understand the challenges we face in a male-dominated field, but my resilience and dedication have earned me numerous awards and recognitions. I take pride in fostering a culture of sustainability and environmental responsibility, spearheading various initiatives to reduce our industry’s impact on the environment.”

Part of the Change

25 years ago, there were few women working in the maritime industry, and throughout her career, Elpi Petraki has always believed in the benefits of diversity, inclusion and equality, from both a business and personal perspective: “I have been a member of WISTA for over 20 years and, before becoming the President of WISTA International, I was the President of WISTA Hellas.

Working with other women through my WISTA membership, it becomes clear what is possible and what needs to be changed, and I wanted to be part of that change. My family and company were also very supportive, which allowed me to make the most of the

opportunities that arose throughout my career.”

Clear Objectives, Dedication & Hard Work

Elena Skorokhod talks about her own story as well, being quite a successful one; “A few years ago, I entered the industry from a completely different field, with no prior knowledge of the maritime world. Today, I have the amazing opportunity to share my humble experience in a prestigious maritime magazine. Being a Marketing Manager in one of the leading offshore support companies in the UAE & KSA fills me with pride and highlights Marcap as one of the companies that supports women in the industry. I initially joined as an Executive Assistant to the CEO, but my ambition to grow further has always driven me.”

Skorokhod believes that any success story is not simply a result of luck, but rather a combination of clear objectives, dedication, and hard work: “I embraced and overcame all the challenges along the way to get to where I am today: seeking out more responsibilities, bridging any knowledge gaps, identifying how I could be helpful, always thinking ahead before delivering, working with enthusiasm and motivation, and consistently delivering results on time. At times, I treated the business as if it were my own. This is what the nature of women is about - work as a passion.”



It's an industry that can take you all over the world. It has a diverse range of roles so there is always something for everyone.

- Elpi Petraki

Rewarding & Empowering

Throughout her 25 years in Cosmatos Group, Elisabeth Cosmatos has put her heart into every task, being fully aware of the way the people she's working with will feel: "Perhaps it's innate in me that I always ask questions, listen carefully to the answers, and understand the real needs, obstacles or challenges we might face in any given assignment. I strive to instill a culture of empathy, so that my colleagues know they are safe to speak their minds, based on the conviction that teamwork produces the best ideas and solutions."

Cosmatos Group is a project cargo logistics company, shipping cargo for some of the world's largest organizations, and its work is often complex and involves challenging conditions and tough calls. Elisabeth says that there are hard lessons, as well as moments of glory: "I'd like to mention empowerment in that context, because the whole purpose of our business includes doing things 'the right way', rather than 'the easy way'. To me, it's been rewarding and empowering that my career has aligned with and consolidated something which is also a core personal value."

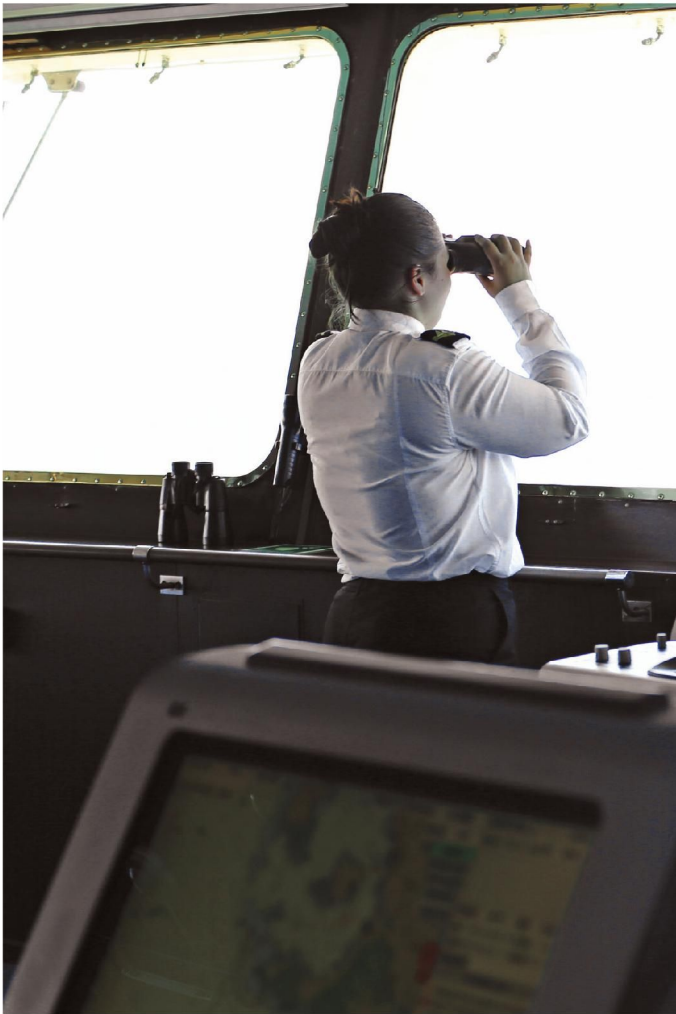
Golden Advice

When Heba Bawarshi first joined the family business, she immediately sought out mentors within the company to learn from. She says: "I've had Mrs. Bawarshi's golden advice tagged on me all along: to always participate in training programs and attend industry conferences and be an active member of industry associations."

Determination and Passion

Ranim Obeid's journey in the maritime industry has been fueled by determination and passion. After graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree in Mathematics/Physics and Chemistry, she found a way to combine her love for numbers and the sea, leading her to pursue a career in shipping. Over the years, her expertise in ship registration has been acknowledged by various flag administrations,





Take the time to research and understand the different roles available within the industry. You might find a niche that aligns with your skills, interests, and passions.

- Heba Bawarshi

Assafina that the main challenge is the pay gap in many industries; as the maritime industry has traditionally been male-dominated, and women have to work harder to prove their capabilities.

Work-life Balance

However, Obeid goes a bit more specific in explaining the challenges, highlighting the work-life balance as a significant challenge, particularly for those in seafaring roles: "The long periods away from home and the demanding nature of the work can make it difficult for women to balance their professional and personal responsibilities. Women often lack access to mentorship and networking opportunities, which are crucial for career advancement. This is one of the reasons why we at Global Maritime Consultants Group are in the process of creating a mentorship program specifically for women in the maritime industry."

Competition

Another challenge arising from the mentioned issue is that women often try to compete with men using the same instruments of warfare without being familiar with them, resulting in their easy

defeat. Skorokhod explains: "While women possess strength in care and love, men are strong competitors, often fighting tooth and nail. Furthermore, if we examine management positions, we observe a significant under-representation of women. The blame for this can largely be attributed to the overall lack of numbers in the industry."

Harassment and Bullying

Dealing with harassment and bullying in the workplace, Petraki says that women often encounter these practices, that's why one of the main issues WISTA is working on with the IMO and other organizations is behavioral change; how to change people's mindsets in terms of acceptable behaviors - both onshore and onboard vessels - and their treatment and attitudes towards others.

Success stories

Every woman has her story to tell, and one who works in the maritime industry, always has a special print regarding either a unique memory or a success story. Here, each of the female industry experts that we have interviewed talks about her own story. So how do these women feel in this industry?



Just as the waves respect no boundaries, your potential knows no limits. Embrace your uniqueness and harness your strengths.

- Ranim Obeid

believes that companies should create a clear and comprehensive policy regarding gender equality and diversity, whereby the company emphasizes equal opportunities, non-discrimination. Thus, recruitment processes should ensure, according to Bawarshi, bias-free practices and gender equality. And it is very important, that companies should implement family-friendly policies that support work-life balance by including flexible working arrangements, and maternal leave policies.

Motivations to attract women

As females represent only 1.2 percent of the seafarer work force worldwide, there are motivations that attract women to work onboard ships. Obeid says that the maritime industry, particularly roles onboard ships, offer a unique and thrilling career path that can be highly attractive to women. The industry is dynamic and ever-evolving, presenting new challenges and opportunities at every turn. This makes the work both challenging and rewarding, providing a sense of accomplishment that few other careers can offer.

"The nature of the work onboard requires a high degree of teamwork. Crew members must work closely together to ensure the smooth operation of the vessel, fostering a sense of camaraderie." This teamwork, according to Obeid, extends beyond just professional

interactions; the shared experiences and challenges onboard a ship can lead to strong bonds and a sense of community. This aspect of the work can be highly appealing, as it provides a supportive and collaborative environment.

Speaking of motivations and the role of companies in fostering such supporting environments, Mishra talks about her own experience in BV, and what motivated her to work: "When I joined BV in 2020, I didn't even think about joining an organization that operates in (yet another) male-dominated industry. Having spent the first 10+ years of my career in the service sector, I've learned to accept that most of my colleagues are going to be males. However, what I do have control over, is choosing on putting my focus and energy on things that help me to achieve my career success."

Mishra continues: "I can tell that seeing BV strongly oriented towards gender balance is what kept me motivated and engaged. The fact that we got female leaders who are making progress in their fields, is something that aspires me to try even harder as they are my role models."

Sense of Exploration

And that is practically true, as today, women are exploring the world like never before, venturing into different areas such as aerospace, politics, engineering, and more, explains Skorokhod, who believes that the maritime industry carries a romantic charm as it maintains a constant connection with the sea: "When I joined Marcap, the first thing I did was go on board to experience the way of life there - the scents, the atmosphere, and the hot engine room. Just as any man can feel drawn to this industry, any woman can also experience the same attraction."

The maritime industry has historically been a challenging environment, dominated by strong and unyielding men. However, Skorokhod says, "as technology develops rapidly and we become better equipped, many issues can now be solved without getting one's hands dirty. This reality makes it possible for women to give it a try. Those who have a love for the sea, an introspective nature, a sense of exploration, and a passion for machinery, can now make their dreams come true."

Speaking of technology's contribution to this matter, Petraki believes that there is a huge demand for new talent onboard, so shipping companies cannot afford to overlook 50% of the population. Technology onboard is also changing how a vessel operates; the work is less physical, and the desired skillset is changing, so it is important to recognize that the skills themselves are gender neutral.

According to Petraki, a career at sea can be very rewarding and it allows people to travel the world and experience different cultures: "Attracting new talent to the shipping industry is a challenge and this is a priority area for WISTA. There is a lack of awareness of the many opportunities and career paths available, and to address this, we are looking at how we can work with educational institutions, whilst also considering how we can make the industry more attractive."

Pay Gap

As women maintain and enhance their positions in the industry, challenges still follow along the way. Experts explain to Robban

measures should be taken from the companies and shipowners' side. For Bureau Veritas Marine & Offshore, the classification society is strongly oriented towards gender balance and women empowerment, setting its sights on the next rungs of management, aiming to achieve a 35% women's rate in leadership by 2025.

Commenting on this, BV Marketing Executive in UAE & KSA Shikha Mishra says: "We are proud to say that there are many successful and enthusiastic women throughout the global BV family and they are doing wonderful professional jobs and enjoying a rewarding career within this sector." Mishra explains that through BV's efforts to provide equal opportunity for women, Bureau Veritas Officlas frequently participates in conferences at different organizations such as the Saudi Maritime Congress, promoting the women workforce in this sector.

From a project cargo logistics point of view, Elisabeth Cosmatos, CEO of The Cosmatos Group of Companies and President of The Heavy Lift Group, believes that the maritime community needs to be sensitive to the expectations of the next generation: "In this spirit, I asked my 15-year-old daughter to offer input on this question, she told me that young women today expect the same salaries as their male counterparts, that they expect equal recruitment and promotion opportunities, that there should be gender balance within the workplace, and there is zero tolerance when it comes to discrimination against women in male dominated environments."

Voices Amplified

On the same level, Ranim Obeid, Managing Director, Global Maritime Consultants Group, states that companies must establish and enforce policies to advocate for gender equality, such as equal pay and non-discrimination, believing that it's crucial to have fair and unbiased recruitment and promotion processes: "We're proud that over 40 percent of our management positions at GMCG are filled by women, demonstrating our commitment to these principles. Women's voices need to be amplified, so their adequate representation in decision-making bodies is essential. Collaborations with other stakeholders, such as government agencies and NGOs, can further bolster gender equality in the maritime industry. Ultimately, it's not just about increasing the number of women in the industry, but ensuring they have the necessary support and opportunities to thrive."

Non-discrimination

Talking about improving gender equality in the maritime community, Elpi Petraki, President of WISTA International; and Operations, Chartering & Business Development Manager at ENEA Management; and 2nd Vice President of the Hellenic Shortsea Shipowners Association (HSSA) sees that companies need to understand and acknowledge the issue and conduct an internal review to evaluate whether or not their company culture and policies align with creating a fairer and more inclusive working environment for all.

Petraki adds: "Policies that support people through all stages of their lives need to be in place, with procedures to address unacceptable behaviors and training available to enhance understanding of the importance of diversity and inclusion. This will not only help to remove biases, but it will demonstrate that mindsets are changing and empowering women in the workplace. Collaboration is also essential, and I am delighted that WISTA International is working very closely with the IMO and other organizations on several projects which we hope will start to bring about real and measurable



Maritime is really broad, so there are a ton of different roles inside it starting with creative minds, analytical minds to process-oriented minds.

- Shikha Mishra

change."

Awareness and Supporting Policies

Marketing Manager & Executive Assistant to CEO at Marcap Elena Skorokhod's, says it's uncommon to hear a woman's name belonging to the crew, highlighting the importance of raising awareness to encourage women to join the industry, educate them, and demonstrate the advantages it offers. This can be achieved by broadcasting successful stories, showcasing examples, and being proud of those who have already shown the courage to enter the industry.

Skorokhod talks of initiatives to support this matter: "Companies can consider opening internships specifically for women or offering them more seats during interviews. I believe that providing women with such benefits in the industry would be fair, considering that we cannot ignore the different physical stamina between genders when it comes to demanding work. Moreover, improving facilities on board, implementing welfare programs, and providing care from onshore personnel are all ways to increase the chances of having more women on board."

Supporting this, Heba Bawarshi, Board Member at Gezairi Group, also

Facing the Masculine Maritime Industry:

Women Demand Equal Pay, Nondiscrimination & Enhanced Training Programs

In need of diversity in the workforce, women have started to engage in the maritime industry to further develop, safeguard the future, and ensure a fair balance of genders. The numbers show that women represent now 1.2% percent of the global seafarer workforce, but the percentage is increasing year by year, as per BIMCO/ICS 2021 Seafarer Workforce's report.

There is an increasing pressure on the global network to identify new opportunities to support and sustain economic growth as the maritime sector is facing a shortage of workers. To solve this issue, the industry must ensure equal employment opportunities by building safe, flexible, and inclusive workplaces. This field needs to be forward-thinking, while embracing innovation to tackle persisting barriers and support meaningful participation of women in the maritime industry.

In this issue's main story, Robban Assafina sheds the light on women in the maritime industry, looks further into how the industry takes this matter into consideration, taking into account different perceptions aiming to empower the role of women in the maritime community, focusing on challenges that they face, and motivations that attract them to work in the field.

Investing in Women

There is ample evidence that investing in women is the most effective way to lift communities and companies, and in this way, women's presence helps in improving the maritime industry. Going through the experts' viewpoints, it is undeniable that women are excellent sources of inspiration and motivation in the context of teamwork. Their knowledge and experience - both lived and professional - are essential for the industry to progress, learn and fully understand the challenges they face to find solutions. Also, by tapping into the underutilized talent pool of women, the growing demand for skilled workers in the maritime industry can be met.

Gender equality

Besides investing in women, processes should be done in the aim of reaching fair balance of genders. And in this manner, steps and