

Existing Operation of traditional Ships under German Flag and its gloomy Outlook

1. GSHW is the joint Commission for historical vessels and the umbrella organisation for traditional ships in Germany, located in Hamburg.

I'm member of the board and my name is Christian Sedelmaier.

2. Definition for traditional vessels is
 - carry the German flag,
 - Hull length not exceeding 55 m,
 - maintaining maritime tradition as seagoing vessel and
 - operating non-profit-making (all people on board are volunteers!).

However, these ships are allowed earning money for their upkeep. The border to a professional operation is not clearly defined and is leading to misunderstandings, even conflicts.

3. The legal environment accepts exemptions from SOLAS but requires
 - agreement with MoU of EMH
 - agreement with special safety regulations for traditional ships (considering hull, stability, equipment, crew and mode of operation)
 - Safety Certificate issued by authority under Ministry for Traffic, for a period of maximum 5 years, including an intermediate inspection.
4. Standards for training and certification are comprehensive:
 - ship management has highest certification for non-professionals (training provided by nautical highschools), a radio-licence depending on equipment on board and a specific knowledge for traditional ships (which includes 200 days at sea, numerous certified activities . required time approx. 2 years)
 - crews have ship-bound training on board, following a career, and seamanship-training ashore (very often under the guidance of our guru, Jochen Garrn).
 - trainees are parttime crew members and have shipbound training.

Sail Training Ships have a training plan and have to provide evidence of training accordingly.

5. In addition there is a profound safety training including
 - exercises on board during each voyage (i. e. all 1 . 2 weeks)
 - exercises ashore by means of special training courses of authorized institutions (like Priwall, Neustadt)
 - partnerships between vessels and safety organisations like DGzRS/German Maritime Search and Rescue Service, Navy, fire brigades, emergency hospitals and doctors.

6. Unfortunately, there are accidents:
 - 2006 . 545 reports
 - 2007 . 85 accidents
 - 2008 . 130 accidents
 - 2009 . not available yet.

In each year only one traditional ship was involved: as a passive part of a collision while anchoring, a crew member hurting his ankle and a ship touching a pier while berthing. I´m sure, more but smaller incidents have occurred, which were not registered.

7. We believe traditional ships provide better understanding of weather. P & I registered total losses caused by ~~weather~~:
 - 1994 . 1998 29% of all losses,
 - 1999 . 2003 22% and
 - 2004 . 2008 42%.

This will state very obviously weather conditons becoming worse over the years (but ~~weather~~ includes all aspects, also fog).

We believe professional seafarers can gain better understanding of wind and sea if experienced on eye level than 20 to 40 m above as on bridges of modern ships.

8. We believe traditional ships provide a social mission by
 - training on-the-job
 - gaining experience on unusual challenges
 - participating in team-work
 - finding problem solutions even under pressure.

All crews on this photo still remember many years later this jibe 50 miles south of Cape Hoorn at 10/11 Bft.

9. Traditional ships improve human relations by

- better understanding for others
- better knowledge of foreign cultures
- testing own personality
- developing team competence.

There are no restrictions or discriminations about age, sex, colour, social status, nation, religion or politics. A modern society based on traditional values!

10. Unfortunately, our outlook discovers obstacles:

- disagreement among members of EMH
- development of rules of common understanding within Europe interrupted
- new rules will be introduced in Germany within this year (jointly developed rules of 2007/8 deceived by our authority)

11. We expect following consequences:

- unclear way of earning money has created conflicts and led to court cases
- recent judgements are not in favour for some existing operations and will lead to restrictions
- which will reduce the fleet under German flag by about 30%.

(Off the record: GSHW is investigating possibility of changing flags).

12. Thank you for your attention.