

## GREECE and SHIPPING

The "largest" interest that Greece has in providing international shipping services is evident by the consideration of the following facts:

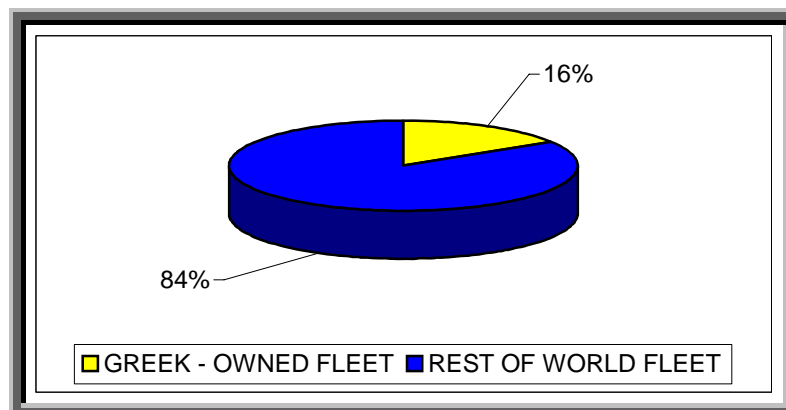
### 1. The size of the Greek merchant fleet

Greece is one of the world's largest shipping nations and Greek shipping is the most dynamic sector of the Greek economy. According to statistical data of the [Lloyd's Register of Shipping](#) (31-12-2003), for ships not less than 100 GT, the Greek merchant fleet counts 1.558 ships of total gross tonnage 32.203.117 GT and it is placed fourth among the world's major shipping nations, after Panama, Liberia and Bahamas, with 5% of the world gross tonnage.

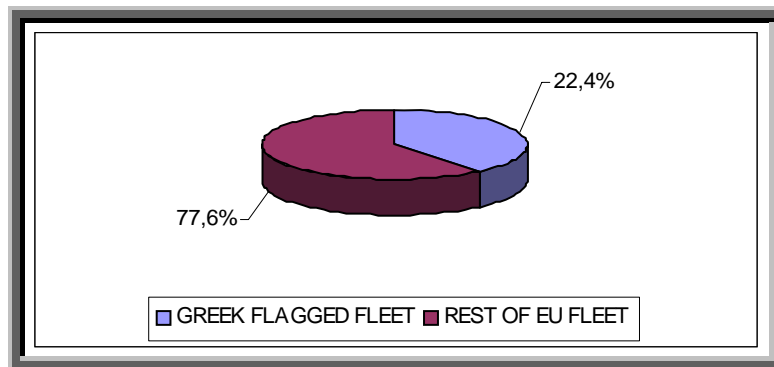
Furthermore, according to statistical data of the Institute of Shipping Economics and Logistics of Bremen (01-01-2005), for ships of 300 GT and above, the number of Greek flagged ships amounted to 1.153 with total gross tonnage 32.330.000 GT and 55.368.000 DWT, thus, the Greek merchant fleet was placed third, in the world DWT scale, after Panama and Liberia.

Moreover, as far as the quality of the Greek registry is concerned, it should be stressed that, according to data of the [Paris MOU](#), the Greek flag is in the White Zone and, at the same time, equally impressive is the steady gradual renewal of Greek merchant fleet which has been observed during the recent years. More specifically, the average age of the newly registered ships in the Greek registry is about 6 years while the average age of those withdrawn is about 20 years.

As regards the Greek owned fleet - irrespective of flag - according to statistical data of the Lloyd's Register of Shipping (31-12-2003), for ships 1.000 GT and above, it amounts to 3.025 with a total gross tonnage of 91.094.974 GT, thus, Greece holds the top position in the world fleet with 16% of all tonnage.



At EU level, Greece accounts for 22,4 % of the total gross tonnage of vessels under EU flag, thus, holding the first position among the 25 EU-Member States.



Therefore, Greece's interest in providing international shipping services is probably larger than any other IMO-member and this fact established our country's undoubtable right to be included among the 10 countries in Category (A) in the IMO's Council Members.

## **2. The contribution of shipping to the national economy**

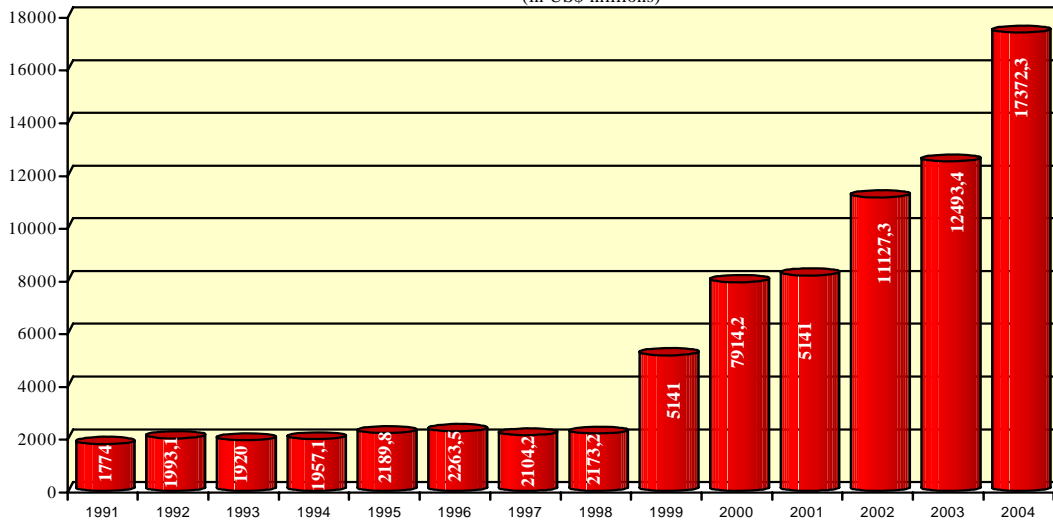
The shipping industry is one of the most vital branches of the national economy, providing employment for some 20.000 Greek seafarers, representing approximately 3 % of the Greek labour force and providing at the same time subsistence to 5 % of the Greek population. Moreover, Greek shipping renders indispensable, the supply for various ancillary services, such as agencies, suppliers, banking, shipbuilding and ship - repairing.

The above shipping related activities, provide employment for a further 1,5 % of the country's labour force and support thereby 3 % of the population.

The ratio of seafarers and people involved in shipping (4,5 % of the country's total population) is high indeed, actually it is one of the highest in the world and an additional testimony to Greece's largest interest in providing shipping services.

### **INFLOW GENERATED BY SHIPPING ACTIVITIES 1991 -2004**

(in US\$ millions)



### **3. Infrastructure**

#### *Maritime Education*

Greece as a traditional maritime country has established at the Merchant Marine Academies a modern training system, designed to meet the requirements of modern shipping and supply the industry with skilled and qualified seafarers, thus ensuring that the vessels of the Greek fleet will be manned with competent and qualified personnel.

This training system includes both theoretical training courses provided by the Academies and practical training which is acquired aboard vessels for two periods of five to seven months each, between the academic years. In this way, students familiarize themselves with the ship and get acquainted with their prospective employers.

This training system has attracted young people to the Merchant Marine Academies, a fact which led to the improvement of the candidates' quality level and increased the number of the students to some 4.376 - while for the academic year 2004-05 it totalled 1.445 - thus enabling the administration to select the best among the candidates for admission. The continuous provision of modern equipment for the training of the students of Merchant Marine Academies meets the increasing demands of maritime industry for well educated and trained graduates.

Furthermore, the introduction of new training methods and high technology equipment at the "Education Centres" for the active seafarers have enabled them to adapt with great success to the high skills required from today's seafarers.

The recent inclusion of Greece in the 'White List' of the IMO, a list containing those countries which fulfill the Provisions of the revised STCW Convention, establishes the quality of the provided maritime education.

### *Maritime Safety - Marine Environment Protection*

With respect to the safety of navigation and marine environment protection, at international level, Greece considers imperative the need for the intensification of all efforts, within the IMO framework, for the adoption and implementation of appropriate measures.

At national level four Directorates of the Ministry of Mercantile Marine deal solely with matters of this nature.

The Safety of Navigation Directorate deals with issues concerning the safety of navigation, the harmonization of the Greek legislation with the international standards, the drafting of the relevant laws, the conduct of maritime search and rescue operations, the co-ordination of inspections of foreign-flag ships calling at Greek Ports (Port State Control - PSC), as well as the development of the appropriate technical infrastructure (e.g. VTMIS) that will contribute to the promotion of the safety of navigation within the Greek F.I.R.

The ISM and ISPS Directorate is responsible for the application of new security standards and requirements for ships, shipping companies and port facilities according to the amendments of SOLAS,1974 and ISPS Code as well as for the recognition and authorization of Organizations and other institutions to perform inspection and certification of ships and shipping companies.

The Merchant Ships Inspection Directorate, with branches covering all Greek ports is manned with qualified personnel and ensures the proper enforcement of international and national regulations related to maritime safety. In addition to that, world renowned Classification Societies have been authorized by the Greek Administration to perform inspections and issue the necessary certificates for Greek flagged vessels at all major ports worldwide.

The Marine Environment Protection Directorate is the focal point for the protection of the marine environment and for the response to marine pollution incidents. It has the task of training and specializing staff, of purchasing, manning and using to their full extent the available capacities and equipment for the marine environment protection. Moreover, it deals with the updating of the national legal framework concerning the protection of marine environment, monitors the international trends and developments and co-ordinates the efforts and mechanisms for the prevention and

management of marine pollution incidents in close co-operation with the international organizations (IMO, EU, REMPEC).

The Greek legislation covers all sectors of maritime safety and marine environment protection, according to today's international standards. Furthermore, it guarantees the objective investigation of the conditions and circumstances of the accidents that occur at sea, ensuring at the same time that all necessary precautions for their prevention are taken.

### *Administration of the Merchant Marine*

Greece is presumably one of the few countries in the world that has a dedicated specialized Ministry dealing exclusively with all issues related to merchant marine. This Ministry, namely the [\*Ministry of Mercantile Marine\*](#) comprises of 27 Directorates with a wide domain of responsibilities:

- Is responsible for the organization, improvement, preservation and development of shipping, its linkage with the national economy, the support of tourism, the provision of sea transport services, the protection of human life and property at sea, search and rescue, the protection of the marine environment, the safety of navigation, as well as the adoption and implementation of the country's maritime policy.
- Organizes and oversees maritime education, regulates and solves issues of maritime labour oversees the administration of Organizations and Insurance Foundations.
- Oversees the administration, organization, and operation of the country's ports, the organization and administration of the pilotage service and the implementation of the country's port policy.
- Organizes and oversees the policing of ships, of the sea area of the ports and of the sea borders in accordance with the relevant internal and international legislation.

This very fact guarantees that all problems that ships and seafarers are faced with are handled and tackled with, whenever and wherever they occur, in an appropriate, uniform, co-ordinated and efficient manner, on a round-the-clock basis.

Moreover, 168 regional Port Authorities are located throughout the Greek territory, staffed by Hellenic Coast Guard personnel.

Finally, it is worth mentioning the unique system of maritime attaches assigned at [\*Greek Embassies and Consulates\*](#) in major ports all over the world (like London, Rotterdam, Tokyo, Buenos Aires, New York, Vancouver,

Sidney, Singapore, Port-Said, Hamburg, Novorossiysk, etc.). Their mission is mainly to assist Greek ships and seamen abroad, as well as to perform flag-state inspections of the Greek flagged vessels with regard to their compliance with the national and international legislation related to safety of navigation and protection of marine environment.

#### 4. Greece's contribution to [IMO](#) activities

Greece attaches paramount importance to [IMO's](#) aims and ideals, since it is the sole international organization with the exclusive competence on matters related to safety of navigation and protection of marine environment.

Greece was among the first states to accede to the IMO Convention and, since the Organization's foundation, has been an active member, participating constructively in all its deliberations.

Greece has an outstanding record in the ratification and application of the instruments adopted under IMO auspices since it is Contracting Party to nearly all international conventions, including those related to protection of life at sea and the preservation of the marine environment. This very fact reflects the importance placed by Greece on shipping, as well as on maritime safety and prevention of marine pollution. In this regard, Greece has contributed to the financing of a series of seminars and workshops organized by IMO and aimed at combating and preventing piracy and armed robbery incidents at sea. We believe that the proper implementation of IMO's international rules is necessary in order to eliminate substandard shipping at international level, enhance safety at sea and preserve the marine environment

Furthermore, Greece reaffirms its strong commitment to the aims of IMO and believes that the role of the Organization as the sole United Nations specialized agency responsible for improving maritime safety and preventing pollution from ships must be further strengthened. Consequently, Greece intends to continue to play an active role in the work of the various IMO bodies, as well as in conferences convened by IMO.

It should also be taken into account that, due to its large tonnage, Greece's annual financial contribution to IMO is very considerable. For 2005, our contribution amounts to £ 1.006.617, a sum that corresponds to 4,71% of the Organization's budget. With the prompt payment of its contribution, our country assists the IMO in fulfilling its objectives and firmly supports the financial viability of the Organization. This justifies Greece's interest in being represented in the Council, i.e. the instrument dealing with IMO budgetary and planning matters.

## 5. Economic assistance to developing countries

Despite the size of its fleet, Greece has limited financial capabilities in comparison with the rest of the highly developed countries. It has limited natural resources and a large part of its economic activities is based on the provision of shipping services. This fact is an additional argument for the great interest of Greece in providing shipping services. Nevertheless, Greece has never neglected to offer technical assistance, as far as possible, to the developing countries in the context of bilateral co-operation. This technical assistance includes the admission of a significant number of foreign students to study in Greek merchant marine academies, as well as the organization of field trips for students of the [World Maritime University](#) (WMU).

A substantial number of ratings employed on board Greek vessels originate from developing countries. This contributes to the reduction of unemployment in these countries. Furthermore, once home, these seafarers have the knowledge and skills required to improve quality standards in their national merchant fleet. This form of assistance is often more effective than pure economic aid and is based on the co-operation between countries on a reciprocal basis. Finally, due to its very nature, Greek shipping operates mostly outside Greece, therefore the cost of maintaining the seaworthiness of Greek vessels is disbursed in foreign currency and a substantial part of it is spent in developing countries, thus assisting them to improve their financial situation.