

# A Brief Critique of the Year 2020 for the Maritime Industry

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## Keywords

The COVID-19 pandemic, Maritime industry, Seafarers as the key workers

The year 2020 has been a difficult year for the maritime industry as much as it has been for all the world's industries. The Coronavirus disease-2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has caused changes in, and even the transformations of, many common maritime industry processes. We have seen the certifying of ships using remote inspection methods. We have seen the delivery of freight bill of lading to ships with the use of drones, signed and retrieved. We have witnessed the unprecedented isolation of seafarers who may not go ashore as authorities adopt the health safety policy of not entering ships. Such changes and transformations in 2020 are summarized below in terms of the affected main parties.

**Seafarers.** This has been the group most hit by the effects of the global restrictions imposed in the effort to contain the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. IMO has declared seafarers as the key workers of the world in 2020 because despite the serious COVID-19-related difficulties and threats they faced, seafarers bravely continued to work to carry 85% of the cargo that humanity needed. Despite all these, however, the public has failed to perceive the important role played by seafarers in this pandemic and to accordingly bestow upon them the respect they deserve. While they face each new day with new rules, regulations, and restrictions, the world has largely left them unsupported and vulnerable to the disproportionate practices adopted by authorities. During this pandemic, seafarers have to contend with unjustifiable regulations, such as visa restrictions and flight bans that imprison them to their ships beyond the legal contract periods of convention.

**Ship operators.** During this pandemic, ship operators have also been adversely affected. In the midst of the discussions on how to implement the IMO Low Sulfur Regulation at the beginning of 2020, the sudden drop in oil prices combined with the pandemic voided the proposed Scrubber solutions, leading to the lifting of restrictions on ships to directly use low-sulfur fuels. This has resulted in the imposition of various measures designed to address the corrosion that developed from the use of chemicals designed to reduce sulfur content in fuel.

**Ship owners.** Presently, ship owners who are concerned about the commercial life of their existing ships must deal with Energy Efficiency Existing Ship Index (EEXI) values. Investors who want to order new ships will have to contend for a while with the uncertainties relating to new technological innovations and new fuel types that are designed to reach the target values of the IMO Green House Gas Strategy.

**Maritime education.** In 2020, a wave of "distance education" transformation hit maritime education following the implementation of pandemic-related constraints. These changes considerably affected conventional education methodologies, with lecturers needing to utilize very new remote access technologies in order to reach their students. Large capital infrastructures of maritime education institutions fell into disuse. Simulator-based training infrastructures were transformed and opened to remote access for the use of students. New solution strategies were developed. On the other hand, students could not complete their internship on board ship period because ships were inaccessible, which has delayed their graduation. Under such difficult circumstances, the UK Hydrographic Office extended invaluable support to world maritime education: the British executive agency made available their digital nautical publications to various maritime education institutions.



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JEMS. 2020 proved to be a successful year for JEMS such that new targets have been set. Firstly, we announced that the ETA Marine Science Journal (JEMS) was selected for inclusion in the Clarivate Analytics' platform Web of Science - Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI) database. Herein, we would like to thank the Web of Science Editors and the Journal Onboarding Team for their support. Secondly, we forged an agreement to obtain professional support from Galenos Publishing House with the assistance of our official publisher, the UCTEA Chamber of Marine Engineers. The difference this professional support makes is already apparent with the publication of the first issue for 2021.

Finally, we are pleased to introduce JEMS 9 (1) to our valued followers. This issue contains valuable and qualified research studies that would hopefully contribute to the betterment of the maritime industry. I would like to extend my gratitude to this issue's authors, our reviewers, our editorial board, our section editors and associate editors who ensure quality by diligently adhering to our publication policies. We would like to thank LookUs Scientific and Galenos Publishing House for putting in great efforts in the preparation of this issue.