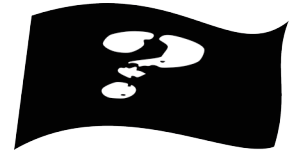


?

BLACKFLAG



Initiated by GSHW e.V. – The German umbrella organisation for traditional vessels in operation- www.gshw.de
www.blackflag.eu / info@blackflag.eu

Traditional Shipping

A maritime cultural phenomenon is struggling to survive

What is Traditional Shipping all about?

There is a wide range of old vessels:

- originals (steamers, sailing ships, fishing vessels, working boats)
- Converted ships (e.g. old freighters, tugs etc. that have been converted into sailing ships)
- Replicas (e.g. reconstructions from the time of the Hanseatic League)
- Reconstructions / look-alikes of old ships (e.g. classical types of sailing vessels such as brigs, barques, schooners, etc.)

There is a wide range of fields in which these vessels operate:

- preserving and putting on display historical ships and the way they were used in their day
- the passing-on of traditional shipping practices (steamer technology, Sail Training, seamanship)
- social and cultural projects, educational projects
- adding to the liveliness and colour of ports and local communities
- their popularity with the general public (e.g. as an interactive setting for port events)
- acting as a cradle of young professionals in the maritime sector
- serving as a source of and conduit for enjoyment, active leisure time pursuits and through offering opportunities to experience Nature

Problems

It is not easy to define the phenomena of traditional shipping nor to distinguish it from other sectors in the world of shipping.

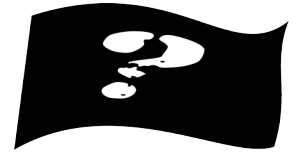
Traditional shipping acts balancing in between

- leisure time pursuits and professionalism
- private and institutional ownership
- aspiring to act as a cultural witness and the dynamic development as a distinct type of shipping in its own right
- the preservation of original vessels and modern safety and convenience requirements

The complexity of today's regulatory framework makes the lives of operators of traditional vessels extremely difficult. Because of the lack of legal security they often

?

BLACKFLAG



Initiated by GSHW e.V. – The German umbrella organisation for traditional vessels in operation- www.gshw.de
www.blackflag.eu / info@blackflag.eu

have to perform tight-rope acts between financial and organisational burdens and constraints that are becoming almost unbearable. Revenues from paying guests tend to just about cover overheads, if at all.

Because of their age, the way they were built or the way they are being operated, traditional vessels can often not comply with today's standards for commercial shipping. That is why, in many countries, specific safety concepts have been made-to-measure that ensure high safety standards also on traditional vessels. The fact that these concepts work is borne out by the low accident rate in the statistics for traditional vessels.

There is growing disagreement between European flag states as regards the mutual recognition of national provisions, however, and this encumbers cruises to foreign ports through waters that, although they belong to different states, are closely interconnected.

Most traditional vessels are now completely barred from calling at Danish ports and German authorities do no longer accept the national certificates of Dutch sailing vessels (<http://www.gshw.de/dk.html>).

Being limited to the respective national waters and cruising only in short term, however, runs counter to the operational concepts of most operators of traditional vessels and does not do justice to the fact that these vessels quite naturally used to crisscross the territorial waters countries in their former lives.

Many vessels and the projects connected with them will simply have to be given up on in the near future.

As a consequence, traditional vessels will no longer star as a part of the popular setting for port events.

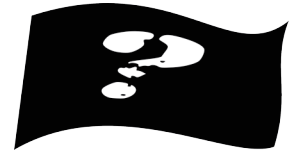
One of the criticisms levelled against the operators of traditional vessels is that they allegedly take business away from small-size commercial ships in coastal areas. However, this view disregards the fact that the latter tend to benefit considerably from the added liveliness and colour that the presence of traditional vessels affords to ports and local communities.

Also, guests who choose a cruise on a traditional vessel that lasts several days, tend to have expectations that are totally different from those of people who use modern passenger vessels.

If traditional vessels were to be prevented from cross-border cruises this could, in effect, bring about a competitive situation because operators of traditional vessels would be forced to try and survive commercially by offering short coastal trips.

Furthermore, this would mean an end to the passing-on of the traditional shipping practices applied on longer cruises – they would simply be a thing of the past.

For the reasons explained above it is high time that the issue of recognising traditional vessels in their own right be tackled in the international context.



Initiated by GSHW e.V. – The German umbrella organisation for traditional vessels in operation- www.gshw.de
www.blackflag.eu / info@blackflag.eu

Objectives and Possible Solutions

Traditional vessels need a secure legal basis upon which to operate.

There is an urgent need for politicians to actively support traditional shipping in the international sphere so as to give administrative bodies and national authorities the backing they require when trying to resolve existing problems.

It is necessary that a highly qualified body be set up, made up of representatives from the political level, from administrations and stakeholders of the affected ones, which takes care of the interests of traditional shipping in a creative and supportive way.

Germany

A clear commitment to the desirability of traditional vessels operating in an economic and legally secure environment is overdue.

The dynamic evolution of traditional shipping and its many different concepts should be appreciated. Traditional shipping should not be perceived as only having to do with floating museums.

The specific safety concepts for traditional vessels which have been drawn up should be further developed. Formalistic legal wrangling should not be allowed to get in their way (<http://www.gshw.de/richtlinie.html>).

Europe / International arena

The rules obtaining for modern passenger vessels cannot be translated one to one to fit traditional vessels and sailing ships. This needs to be acknowledged. Existing national concepts in this regard should be taken seriously and be mutually recognised.

The Council of Europe Recommendation no. 1486 on traditional vessels in operation should be acknowledged. The document quoted recommends adequate rules and mutual recognition of national concepts.

As an immediate first step the London Memorandum¹ talks should be revived. Since signing the most recent version of this agreement in 2005 the nine European signatory states have not reconvened in order to tackle existing problems.

Within the framework of international shipping rules and provisions sailing ships and traditional vessels should in the long term be granted a separate status. Thus, the objective of upholding national and regional particularities could be reconciled with the binding character of an internationally recognised certification system.

For further information please go to www.gshw.de

¹ Memorandum of Understanding on the Mutual Recognition of Certificates for the Safe Operation of Traditional Ships in European Waters and of Certificates of Competency for Crews on Traditional Ships. This can be used as a tool to make sure that the special status of traditional vessels receives recognition at the international level. The Memorandum is not being applied and has been lying idle since 2005 (<http://www.european-maritime-heritage.org/mou.aspx>)