

FLAGSHIP

**NEWS FROM
THE WORLD'S
LEADING SHIP
REGISTRY**

Time for openness on flag state quality

Liberia is one of thirteen flags which have just been given a clean bill of health by the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) in its flag state performance table. This means it has earned positive indicators from the ICS with regard to its performance in relation to port state control, convention ratification, recognised organisations, age of vessel, IMO attendance, and completion of STCW and ILO reports.

The ICS performance table underlines why it is now time to put an end to the outdated thinking which results in all open registers, irrespective of their safety record, being referred to pejoratively as 'flags of convenience.' The ICS itself says, 'There is nothing inherently unusual in an international ship registry system in which the owner of a ship may be located in a country other than the state whose flag the ship flies.' It also points out, quite rightly, that 'a balance has to be struck between the commercial advantages of selecting a particular flag and the need to discourage the use of flags that do not meet their international obligations.'

Liberia fully agrees with this, and endorses the ICS performance table as an effective way to encourage shipowners and operators to examine whether a flag state has sufficient substance, and to put pressure on flag administrations to effect any necessary improve-

ments, especially in relation to safety of life at sea, protection of the environment, and the provision of decent working and living conditions for seafarers.

LISCR CEO Scott Bergeron says, "There is no longer any need in shipping for the term 'flag of convenience'. It has purely negative connota-

tions, which is especially perverse in light of the positive indicators accorded to Liberia and to certain other open registries by the ICS. It would be more meaningful to refer instead - as does the ICS - to open registers, in order to distinguish them from national registers, many of which perform well below the level of the best open registries and yet enjoy an undeserved reputation for excellence. It would be more accurate - to refer simply to ship registries, and to judge

those registries on how they rate under independent performance monitoring guidelines, such as those produced by the ICS.

"The monitoring and policing of ship safety on an international basis is now tighter than ever before, and the book on registering ships under the flags of their domiciled owners has long since been rewritten. It is time the language of the industry was changed to reflect this."



Liberia fleet expansion continues

Liberia is the fastest-growing ship registry in the world. In the calendar year to end-December 2012, the Liberian Registry was bolstered by the new registration of 431 ships, aggregating more than 17.5m gross tons. As a result, the Registry closed the year with a fleet of 3,887 vessels totalling almost 131m gross tons, with an average age of 12.02 years. Liberia is committed to building further on its impressive growth with the addition of still more quality tonnage operated by responsible owners. No other fleet in the world is growing as fast while maintaining its pre-eminent reputation for quality and safety with recognised independent industry arbiters.



The 50,625 gt bulk carrier "Sunny Smile", built for Kawana Kaiun Co., Ltd. at Imabari Shipbuilding, Marugame, as number 29 of Imabari's LS NEXTER Series, joined the Liberian fleet in January 2013. The vessel is managed by Santoku Senpaku.

WHAT SHIPOWNERS ARE SAYING ABOUT THE LIBERIAN REGISTRY

“Such quality and customer-oriented service is rarely met anywhere else in the industry. Keep going!”



LET LISCR INTERVENE

The continuing effectiveness of Liberia's Detention Prevention Programme was recently illustrated when Port State Control authorities in China stipulated that a deficiency had to be corrected before a vessel was allowed to leave port. The deficiency stated, 'Electronic charts and publications system on board is not reliable and insufficient correction information to charts.....' The authorities demanded up-to-date paper publications. The vessel, which was on an urgent schedule, had on board up-to-date nautical publications, including Notice to Mariners, in digital format. The Liberian Administration issued a letter stating that SOLAS/V/27 allows for the use of electronic navigation publications and neither requires a back-up system nor up-to-date hard copies of nautical publications on board. The letter was forwarded to the Chinese harbour master, who immediately released the vessel.

Meeting the offshore regulatory challenge

The offshore industry continues to assume increasing importance in the maritime sector, with significant technological developments taking place to help develop, harness and exploit new and existing energy sources.

The Liberian Registry has extensive interests in the offshore industry, covering ships and support vessels engaged in the exploration and extraction of traditional and renewable energy sources. In December 2012 the Registry held the first of what is to be an annual Offshore Regulatory Seminar in Houston which brought together more than twenty offshore professionals from eleven different companies, including a representative from the International Association of Drilling Contractors (IADC). The Liberian Registry, meanwhile, was well-represented by five senior maritime experts.

The seminar addressed key issues affecting the offshore industry, including regulatory issues arising under MARPOL, SOLAS, the BWM convention, and MLC 2006, as well as safe manning and personnel qualification and certification.

The Liberian Registry is committed to ensuring that its owners are fully prepared to meet all the regulatory and compliance challenges they will face in the offshore sector.

Flag state role pivotal in combatting piracy

The responsibility for protecting merchant shipping from the threat of piracy is one which must be shared by industry and governments alike.

Liberia condemns piracy in all its forms. It has signed the Declaration Condemning Acts of Violence Against Seafarers, and has affirmed its commitment to supply to IMO all information which is provided to it following acts of piracy involving its ships. It has launched its own initiatives to help bridge the gap created by the limited availability of naval protection. The Registry also offers an electronic course designed to help crews avoid, deter or delay acts of piracy and comply with best management practice.

Liberia has led the way in promoting Best Management Practice, in concluding agreements with US and EU naval forces which allow naval detachments to board vessels flying its flag, and in creating clear lines of communication. It has encouraged personnel on board Liberian-flag ships to contact the Registry for advice, and it has issued appropriate guidance, including advice on the onboard deployment of armed security guards in high-risk waters. Furthermore, it has pushed for international guidelines on the deployment of such guards, properly developed and co-ordinated by IMO.

In recent months, there has been a discernible fall-off in the incidence of piracy attacks originating from Somalia against merchant shipping. Jorgen Palmbak, Director of Maritime Security at the Liberian Registry, explains, "The increased activity of the coalition forces in the areas of pirate concentration combined with the ship-owners' use of ship protection measures as recommended in the Best Management Practices for protection against Somalia based piracy and the use of armed security personnel has undoubtedly had an effect. In addition, the activities of the Puntland Maritime Police Force on land have made it increasingly difficult for pirates to launch their piracy missions."

"Per IMO directive, ISO has developed an ISO standard (ISO/PAS 28007) that establishes criteria for selecting companies that provide armed guards for ships. Liberia supports this initiative, not least because it helps keep out rogue pirate-hunters, avoids self-regulation and provides owners with a means to select – and flag state administrations a standard by which to audit – security providers."

"Shipping cannot afford to relax its efforts. Following the recent fall-off in Somalia-based attacks, the focus has now switched to other areas, notably West Africa. Development and support of unified efforts must continue in order to prevent piracy and to protect those at risk, otherwise the threat will grow and spread."



Pictured is a recent addition to the Liberian fleet, the 141635 gt container ship "CMA CGM MARGRIT," with a max TEU capacity of 13102. The vessel was built in 2012 at Hyundai Heavy Industries Co. Ltd., in South Korea, for E.R. Schiffahrt GmbH & Cie. KG.



New president and managing executive officer for Japan

LISCR appointed Takeshi Okamoto as president and managing executive officer of its dedicated office in Tokyo with effect from January 4, 2013. He succeeds Shigeki Fukuda, who will now assume the role of chairman of LISCR Japan, in which capacity he will continue to be active in the strategic management of the Registry.

Takeshi Okamoto joined the Liberian Registry from ClassNK in 2012 as director of LISCR's Tokyo office. During his time with ClassNK, one of the world's largest classification societies, he served as a member of the technical rulemaking team and as a manager for the handling of international issues such as IMO discussion, as well as a field surveyor and auditor for shipbuilding and ship operations in Hiroshima and Piraeus, Greece. Mr Okamoto is a graduate of Kyusyu University, where he earned his master's degree in naval architecture.

Mr. Okamoto says, "It is an honour to work for the Liberian Registry. Being part of the LISCR Tokyo staff and promoting the Liberian Registry in Japan is a rewarding challenge. I will strive to ensure that we continue to protect Liberian-flag vessels and their owners."

LISCR CEO Scott Bergeron says, "Japan is one of the world's largest shipowning nations, respected internationally for its high standards. It is a very significant and growing market for Liberia, with strong historical origins. We are delighted that Takeshi Okamoto has agreed to lead our Tokyo office, and we are most confident that his skills and experience, in addition to his long-standing ties to the Japanese shipping community through his work with ClassNK, will further strengthen and develop our Japanese team."

Corporate Registry supports charitable initiatives

It was Herbert Hoover who said that children are our most valuable resource, a view shared by all at the Liberian Corporate Registry, which last year hosted a toy drive in collaboration with the Toys for Tots campaign. Toys for Tots is a US Marine-hosted toy drive that has drop-off locations all over the US. In 2011, it distributed nearly 16 million toys to more than 7 million children.

Meanwhile, our Corporate team in Greece volunteered to provide baked goods to the homeless for Christmas 2012. As Greece's economic depression worsens, homelessness and hunger continue to be a problem for many people throughout the country, and our team in Piraeus took the initiative to support those especially in need.

The Corporate office in Zurich, meanwhile, demonstrated its support by donating to a local charity organisation, Stiftung Heilsarmee.



Pictured (left to right) are LISCR's Corporate Group: John Marshall, Theopia Hardwick, Elizabeth Goralski, Aaron Moore, Stephen Frey and Hilary Spilkin



Ship Registration Department, LISCR New York

Meet the Ship Registration Team

Shipping is an international business, and the Registry employs an internationally diverse range of people to handle its operation. The Registry's Ship Registration Department in New York City is a prime example of this. The team is composed of highly educated and motivated international people from China, Taiwan, Russia, the Czech Republic, Greece, Jamaica, Armenia, and Poland, as well as the US. An internationally diverse team is very appropriate for a company engaged in international shipping.

The Ship Registration Department is the front desk of the Liberian Registry. The Registry's New York team recognize that first impressions are lasting impressions, and they consider the department's role to be crucial to the company's image, and pivotal in ensuring that the Registry provides the best quality product on the market.

The Registry's New York office effectively operates as a Deputy Commissioner's Office (DCO) for the Republic of Liberia. Its comprised of three departments, covering vessel registration, mortgage registration, and vessel deletion. The Department's all-star team includes fourteen staff members (pictured from left to right in the photo above) including Natalya Prigova, Greg Maj, Danielle Lautermilch, Sonia Mohamed, Jennifer Liao, Latoya Brown, Sean Woolard, James Eleftheriades, Maria Tsortanidis, Hara Gisholt, Rudolf Vlcek, Yelia Liu, Oliver Brewster (not pictured), and Ani Voskanyan (not pictured).

Greg Maj, Chief Registrar and General Manager of the Registry's New York office, says "Quality of service is paramount in all we do. We are proactive at all times. Speed and dedication are our watchwords, and we go the extra mile when necessary to make sure that clients operating in different time zones get what they need at their opening of business."

The Ship Registration Department is a concerted effort and an example of successful teamwork. The employees are part of the same family, and work together to give the Registry's clients what they want, when they want it.



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Staying in touch

Everybody wants to be liked. But, in today's hi-tech world, this has taken on even greater significance. The Liberian Registry is present and active across all the main social media networks. So we encourage you to 'like' us on our Facebook page at facebook.com/LiberianShipRegistry, and to follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/LISCR_LLC. You can also find us on LinkedIn at linkedin/company/liscr or subscribe to our YouTube Channel at youtube.com/Liberian Registry.

We will be delighted to hear from you. And, call us old-fashioned, but we still invite you to call us on the phone, or to visit us in person. There are so many ways of staying in touch.



THE LIBERIAN REGISTRY WORLD-WIDE OFFICES

HEADQUARTERS

Virginia, USA

Tel: +1 703 790 3434

Scott Bergeron, Chief Executive Officer
info@liscr.com

New York, USA

Tel: +1 212 697 3434

Greg Maj, General Manager
registration@liscr.com

Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Tel: +9714 3452541

Sunil Jaitly, Regional Director
infoDubai@liscr.com

Hamburg, Germany

Tel: +49 40 35 00 4660

Suwarie Topaz, General Manager
Vice President, Global Marketing/
Business Development
info@liscr.de

Hong Kong

Tel: +852 2810 1068

William Wu, Executive VP
liscrfe@liscr.com.hk

London, UK

Tel: +44 20 7799 3434

Jonathan Spremulli, General Manager
info@liscr.co.uk

Monrovia, Liberia

Tel: +231 77 000 400

Joseph Keller, Executive Vice President
info@liscr.com

Piraeus, Greece

Tel: +30 210 4529670-2

Michalis Pantazopoulos, Senior Vice President
info@liscr.gr

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Tel: +21 2263 9044

Salvador Picolo
infoBrazil@liscr.com

Seoul, South Korea

Tel: +82 10 2910 9130

Chelios (Chi-Hun) Lee
info@liscr.kr

Shanghai

Tel: +86 21 6136 6005

Alex Ye
infoShanghai@liscr.com

Singapore

Tel: +65 6323 1048

Benson Peretti, General Manager
info@liscr.sg

Tokyo, Japan

Tel: +81 3 5419 7001

Shigeki Fukuda, President
info@liscr-japan.com

Zurich, Switzerland

Tel: +41 44 250 8650

Lea Frei, Corporate Manager
info@liscr.ch

After Hours

Emergency Contact

Tel: +1 703 963 6216

DutyOfficer@liscr.com

Editorial consultants

Merlin Corporate Communication



LIBERIAN REGISTRY

8619 Westwood Center Drive, Suite 300

Vienna, Virginia 22182 USA

www.liscr.com