

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

WOMEN IN SHIPPING

International Women's Day (IWD) on March 8 is a global day that commemorates the cultural, political, and socioeconomic achievements of women. It is also a focal point in the women's rights movement, bringing attention to issues such as gender equality, reproductive rights, and violence and abuse against women.

You can question if such a day needs to exist. Unfortunately, a recent [survey carried out by Ipsos, in close collaboration with the Global Institute for Women's Leadership at King's College London](#), demonstrates it does. 20,524 people in 30 countries shared their view on topics related to gender and institutional bias, perceptions of gender equality, families and careers, and online harm.

Some of the key findings:

- Concerns about online abuse remain, with one in ten men saying it's acceptable to send someone unrequested explicit images
- Four in ten have experienced online abuse or seen sexist content but one in three believe many women overreact
- A third of men think feminism does more harm than good (32% global country average) and believe that traditional masculinity is under threat (33%).
- Gender-based violence is ranked as the most important issue facing women and girls: sexual harassment (29%), sexual violence (25%) and domestic abuse (23%) were considered the top issues.
- One in three people (35%) around the world believe childcare responsibilities can damage a woman's career more than a man's, and one in three women also say caring responsibilities have impacted their careers (31%).
- Women are more likely to perceive institutional gender bias than men, with educational and healthcare institutions perceived as the most equal – 52% considered that these treat women and men the same

Overall, the answers show that while much progress has been made in terms of attitudes towards women's rights, there is still a long way to go. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a [disproportionate impact on women](#) and threatens to roll back decades of hard-won progress on the fight against inequality between women and men. But even before the pandemic hit, women were more likely to be stuck in low-paid work and hampered by a parenthood pay gap. They were more likely to be furloughed, more likely to lose income, and more likely to work in the sectors that were hardest hit. Working from home also increased family duties for women, with mothers more likely to be interrupted and finding themselves with less time than fathers for their paid job. And of course, women are still paid less than men, a gender pay gap that has actually widened over the last year.

Invest in women

Yet, there is plenty of evidence that investing in women is the most effective way to lift communities, companies, and even countries. Parliaments with more women enact more

legislation on key social issues such as health, education, anti-discrimination, and child support. Peace agreements that include women are more durable. Strong positive correlations have been found between gender diversity in company size, as well as national policies for women's education, family leave, and the absence of discriminatory attitudes toward female executives.

With so much evidence showing the positive impact of gender diversity on firm performance, the argument for a more sustainable approach has become something of a no-brainer. Nevertheless, to achieve true gender diversity there needs to be a pipeline for women into corporate management, from elementary education through child-bearing years.

Women in Shipping

The difficult working conditions, physical labour, and long durations away at sea have traditionally made shipping a male-dominated business. But it has also been particularly slow to change. Real change takes time, and a step forward is often met with a shove backward. The 'boys club' mentality still exists and sexism, while rarely openly displayed these days, is nonetheless still prevalent.

However, things are slowly changing, and a growing number of players in the maritime sector are promoting balance on the gender scale. Even the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) plays a part. In 2021 The IMO adopted a resolution proclaiming an International Day for Women in Maritime, to be observed on 18 May every year. The IMO has been running a Women in Maritime programme since 1988, a time when few maritime training institutes even permitted female students. Since then, the IMO has supported access to maritime training and employment opportunities for women across the maritime sector.

How is Euronav doing?

In this case, we need to nuance the female representation on shore and onboard.

Onshore, Euronav performs well. The Euronav Supervisory Board is 60% female which is unusual in any context, least of all in shipping. Just under 30% of the executive officers are women and 20% of the senior management roles are taken up by women. Almost half of our middle managers are women and 83% of entry level positions are held by women. Half of all revenue generating staff are female. We have taken some steps. But don't take our word for it, take that of the [Bloomberg Gender Equality Index \(GEI\)](#). The GEI tracks the performance of public companies committed to disclosing their efforts to support gender equality through policy development, representation, and transparency. In 2021 Euronav submitted its 5th consecutive questionnaire resulting in a score of 62.84%, which is higher than the average score of the Transportation and Logistics sector of 47.61%. Moreover, Euronav is one of only three Belgian companies included in the GEI.

However, **onboard** it is a different story. Figures published in a [BIMCO/ ICS 2021 Seafarer workforce report](#) show that women still represent only 2.1% of the global seafarer workforce (which is an increase of 45.8% since 2015). Within Euronav, 2.4% (d.d. 2020) of our crew members are female., which is higher than the sectors average. Nevertheless, we, and the wider community, still have a long way to go.

We wanted to conclude this article with a testimonial of **Chief Officer Ms. Sofia Psychogyiopolou**.

"In the year 2022, I have managed to be in the 2% of women employed in shipping worldwide. The road to success was not easy, but my stubbornness and love for my job, brought me to the Chief Officer position today.



When I started, I could not imagine that I would get here, but the trust and support from my company EURONAV, helped me from the very beginning. My journey began in 2015 as Officer. The living conditions were difficult at first, as it is a traditionally male-dominated profession. Nevertheless, with patience and hard work, I quickly integrated into the environment and earned the respect of my colleagues. I have travelled to many places, met many cultures and seen incredible images at sea. This is the beauty of my profession. Many said I would not make it. 'Where are you going woman?' You see, the prevailing perception that women's priority is having a family.

Well, I will tell you today that what I have achieved and the reason I keep going is my family and mostly my son. By telling my own story today, I want to encourage other women to pursue their dreams, to believe in their strengths as we are equal to men, and to DARE! I dared and succeeded!"

Chief Officer Ms. Sofia Psychogyiopolou

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