

Abstract

The worldwide refugee problem, which has persisted for decades, can have far-reaching consequences for captains in the merchant navy. Therefore, by means of interviews and by consulting scientific reports and procedures, this thesis examined the current procedures and consequences of taking refugees on board.

Since captains are obliged to render maximum assistance to anyone in distress, unless if this would seriously endanger the ship and/or its crew, they should be adequately prepared for this. The study shows that the procedures of leading international maritime organisations are often too superficial and that the corporate sector offers insufficient transparency regarding rescue procedures. Consequently, a detailed standard procedure for the embarkation of drowning persons, with special attention to refugees, has been drawn up. This procedure was partly drawn up on the basis of the SOPs of the Belgian Naval Component and was supplemented and adapted where necessary to the needs of the merchant navy. Finally, the rights and obligations of captains and the rights of refugees were presented in a clear manner by means of aide-mémoires. In this way, the often lacking knowledge of captains could be refined before they have to decide whether or not to take a refugee on board.