

International Journal of Gender Studies (IJGS)

**Participation of Women in Shipping: International Strategies, Comparative Analysis
and Policy Proposals for Greece**

Lampros Lamprinidis

**Participation of Women in Shipping:
International Strategies, Comparative Analysis
and Policy Proposals for Greece**



Lampros Lamprinidis

PhD (Business Administration (Sector of Social
Policy / Management)), Member of the Social
Administration Research Laboratory, University of
West Attica

Executive of the General Directorate of Public
Administrative Procedures of the Ministry of
Interior, Greece

Article History

Received 5th September 2025

Received in Revised Form 10th October 2025

Accepted 7th November 2025



How to cite APA format:

Lamprinidis, L. (2025). Participation of Women in Shipping: International Strategies, Comparative Analysis and Policy Proposals for Greece. *International Journal of Gender Studies*, 10(2), 15–42.
<https://doi.org/10.47604/ijgs.3559>

Abstract

Purpose: This paper investigates the participation of women in the maritime sector through a comparative analysis of international strategies and institutional frameworks. It aims to identify the main barriers and drivers influencing women's engagement in seafaring and shore-based professions and to propose concrete policy directions tailored to the Greek context.

Methodology: The study applies a qualitative, desk-based comparative policy analysis. Primary data were drawn from international and national policy documents, gender equality strategies, and institutional reports (IMO, ILO, EU, WISTA). Secondary academic sources complemented the analysis. Thematic synthesis was used to categorize measures and outcomes across 17 countries, focusing on education, mentoring, safety, and accountability frameworks.

Findings: Results reveal that women's participation in shipping remains below 2% at sea and 30–40% in shore-based roles. Successful practices combine legal obligations (hard law) with voluntary charters, mentoring, and measurable Gender Equality Plans (GEPs). Effective governance links institutional commitment with data transparency, SASH protection, and visibility mechanisms such as awards and dashboards.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Policy, and Practice: The paper contributes to policy and practice by designing a “Hellenic Charter for Gender Equality in Shipping” and a national indicator dashboard based on transferable lessons from leading maritime nations. It advances comparative research on gender and blue-economy governance, demonstrating how gender equality enhances competitiveness, ESG performance, and sustainable maritime development.

Keywords: *Participation, Women, Policy Proposals*

JEL Classification: *J16, H57, L92, J71, K31*

©2025 by the Authors. This Article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>

INTRODUCTION

Shipping constitutes one of the most strategic sectors of the global economy, as it is estimated that more than ninety percent of international trade is conducted through maritime transport. Its significance for development, competitiveness, and geopolitical stability is decisive, while its operation is linked to global supply chains and critical infrastructures. However, despite its dynamism and international character, the maritime industry continues to be strongly male-dominated, with female participation remaining extremely limited both among crews and in managerial positions within shipping companies.

The enhancement of women's presence in shipping has emerged as an issue of high priority on the international policy agenda. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has incorporated the promotion of gender equality into its strategic objectives, linking it to the fifth United Nations Sustainable Development Goal, while the European Union has established policies and strategies aimed at reducing the barriers to women's participation in sectors traditionally dominated by men, such as shipping, port industry, and fisheries. The connection between gender equality, sustainability, and innovation makes the issue not only a matter of social justice but also a key factor for improving the efficiency and competitiveness of the sector.

Increasing the participation of women in shipping can contribute to the creation of more cohesive and innovative organizations. Research demonstrates that companies investing in gender diversity exhibit higher profitability, better organizational culture, and a stronger capacity to adapt to the challenges of a globalized market. For a sector characterized by a strong need for specialized human resources and the aim to improve its public image, the utilization of women's potential can be catalytic.

Despite the above, female employment rates in shipping remain low. According to the latest data from BIMCO and ICS, women account for only 1.2% of seafarers on ocean-going vessels, with most employed on cruise ships or in shore-based support services. The challenges are multidimensional: from gender stereotypes that discourage young women from pursuing maritime studies, to the difficulties of balancing professional and family life due to long periods of absence at sea. Added to these are the lack of role models and support networks, issues of safety and harassment in the closed environment of ships, as well as the limited institutional integration of equality strategies by companies themselves.

The present study seeks to fill this gap through a comparative approach, examining national strategies, action plans, and white papers adopted by developed industrialized countries with strong maritime traditions or dynamic blue economies. The research focuses on European Union member states such as Norway, Sweden, Spain, Denmark, the Netherlands, and France, as well as major maritime powers outside Europe, including the United States, Canada, Australia, Japan, and South Korea. The selection of these countries allows for the recording of different policy models, ranging from highly institutionalized and binding frameworks to more flexible public-private partnership initiatives. Through this comparative perspective, it becomes possible to identify best practices and the limitations encountered during the implementation of such strategies.

Greece, as one of the world's largest maritime powers—controlling more than 20% of global tonnage—cannot remain outside this discussion. Female participation in the Greek maritime sector remains fragmented and limited, representing a strategic gap in an area of enormous national importance. The utilization of women's potential is not only a matter of social cohesion but also of enhancing the competitiveness of Greek shipping on the international

level. At the same time, strengthening women's presence can improve the country's image within international organizations and create added value in Greece's national strategy for the blue economy.

This study aspires to serve as a substantial policy tool. Its aim is to record and analyze international strategies, highlight good practices, and formulate concrete proposals for the Greek case, taking into account both academic documentation and practical usefulness for policymakers. Through a multi-level analysis, it seeks to strengthen the dialogue on gender equality in the maritime sector and to offer Greek and international stakeholders a well-documented basis for policymaking and collaboration.

Chapter 1: Institutional and International Framework for the Promotion of Gender Equality in Shipping

The promotion of gender equality in shipping cannot be examined in isolation from the international and institutional framework within which the sector operates. The policies and strategies implemented today at the global level are directly linked to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), and, at the European level, the directives and strategies of the European Union¹. Understanding this framework is crucial for the evaluation and application of best practices at the national level, including that of Greece.

The **International Maritime Organization (IMO)** has recognized gender equality as a key strategic objective for sustainable maritime development since 2019. Within the framework of the *IMO Gender Programme*, specific initiatives are promoted to increase women's participation at all levels—from ships to administrative structures. The program includes guidelines for integrating gender equality policies into corporate regulatory frameworks, training activities, mentoring, and the creation of women's networks in maritime professions. Also significant is the incorporation of these policies into safety and personnel management standards, recognizing that gender equality is not only a matter of social justice but also of operational efficiency.

In parallel, the **International Labour Organization (ILO)** links gender equality with fundamental labor principles and human rights. Through the *Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) 2006*, limits and regulations are set concerning equal opportunities, prevention of discrimination, and protection of workers' health and safety. ILO guidelines emphasize the need for equal access to education and training so that women can compete on an equal footing in the maritime sector.

Within the framework of the **United Nations**, the *Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)* serve as a key reference point. In particular, Goal 5 on gender equality is directly linked to Goal 8 (decent work and economic growth) and Goal 14 (life below water—sustainable use of oceans). This linkage creates an international framework in which the enhancement of women's participation in shipping is not merely a political ambition but an obligation deriving from international commitments.

At the **European level**, the EU has undertaken systematic initiatives through the *Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025*, aiming to combat stereotypes and increase women's participation in sectors traditionally dominated by men. The strategy includes tools such as

¹ The integration of socially responsible governance models into sectoral strategies has already been discussed in relation to public procurement frameworks (Lamprinidis, 2025 a, 2025c, 2024, 2023a & 2023b), demonstrating how social objectives can be operationalized through measurable institutional instruments.

skills enhancement, promotion of mentoring programs, funding of inclusion and innovation projects, and monitoring of equality indicators. A key instrument for implementing these policies in the maritime sector is the *European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA)*, which monitors the practices of companies and member states, reinforcing compliance with diversity and inclusion directives.

The development of national strategies for gender equality in shipping is also connected to the model of *diversity management*. Through this approach, countries are encouraged to integrate equality issues both in legislation and in corporate policies, creating specific action plans, training programs, mentoring systems, and tools for evaluating progress. The connection between institutional frameworks and implementation practices is decisive for the effectiveness of these strategies.

Furthermore, the experience of countries that have developed comprehensive action plans demonstrates that gender equality in shipping requires multi-level intervention. In Scandinavian countries, for example, gender equality integration is linked with national training and mentoring programs, while in North America, the connection with federal strategic plans and the institutional strengthening of labor rights has led to improved access for women to technical and managerial professions. In Asia, countries such as Japan and South Korea implement policies to enhance women's participation through corporate incentives and gender equality programs in education and training, taking into account cultural and social constraints.

The development of a unified institutional framework at both international and national levels provides the basis for comparative assessment of practices and the extraction of policy recommendations for Greece. Greek shipping, as one of the leading forces globally, can benefit from the systematic monitoring of international strategies, the incorporation of mentoring practices, the enhancement of educational programs, and the creation of policies that combine mandatory and advisory dimensions (hard law and soft law).

The convergence of these parameters makes it clear that effectively increasing women's participation in shipping cannot rely on fragmented measures but requires a comprehensive strategy connecting international obligations, national policies, and corporate practices. This perspective forms the foundation for the continuation of the present study, in which national policies and action plans will be examined country by country, with the goal of drawing conclusions and formulating practical recommendations for Greece.

Chapter 2: European Union – National Strategies and Programs for Gender Equality in Shipping

Denmark

Denmark is one of the strongest maritime powers globally, with significant presence both in commercial shipping and in the development of green energy technologies. In recent years, Danish maritime policy has focused not only on the sector's competitiveness but also on improving its social dimension, with gender equality as a key priority.

In 2020, Denmark introduced the **“Charter for More Women in Shipping”** through the organization *Danish Shipping*. This initiative was a response to the fact that, despite the country's long maritime tradition, women's participation among crews and in senior management positions remained extremely low. The Charter aimed to attract more women to maritime education, ensure safe and supportive working environments, and strengthen transparency through regular monitoring of indicators.

According to data from the *World Maritime University* (Malmö, Sweden, 2019), women in Denmark represent only 7% of officers and less than 2% of crews on commercial vessels. The situation is markedly different in shore-based shipping companies, where participation reaches 30–35%, primarily in administrative and support roles.

Key measures promoted by Denmark include:

- **Binding KPIs:** Companies signing the Charter are required to report annually on female participation at all levels.
- **Mentoring & role models:** Creation of guidance networks, focusing on the transition from maritime education to the first practical experience.
- **Campaigns in schools and universities:** To familiarize young girls with maritime studies.
- **Training packages on SASH (Sexual Assault & Sexual Harassment):** Mandatory training both on ships and in offices.

The Danish case is significant for Greece because it demonstrates how a strong maritime cluster can self-commit through a voluntary yet binding charter, combining corporate reputation, social responsibility, and international accountability.

Germany

Germany is a pillar of European shipping, with a strong commercial tradition and a leading cluster of maritime services. Despite its industrial magnitude, women's participation in shipping remains low, particularly among seafarers.

The country has established the **National Action Plan on Gender Equality** (*Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, 2020*), which includes specific references to the maritime and logistics sectors. The design is linked to the **Maritime Agenda 2030** of the Federal Ministry of Transport, aiming to increase women's participation through a combination of:

- Scholarships and funded internships for female students in maritime universities (e.g., Hochschule Bremen).
- A code of conduct against discrimination applied to vessels flying the German flag.
- STEM programs for girls to attract them to technical roles (marine engineers, naval architects, data analysts).
- Cooperation with the *European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF)* for monitoring incidents of discrimination.

Statistically, women in Germany occupy 23% of administrative positions in shipping companies but only 6% of officer positions and less than 2% of crew roles. Interestingly, women are particularly present in logistics and port services (28%).

The German case highlights the importance of linking shipping with the industrial fabric and the need to integrate equality policies into broader transport-sector strategies.

The Netherlands

The Netherlands, with Rotterdam as the largest port in Europe, has one of the most advanced maritime clusters. The country places great emphasis on the participation of women in shipping through the **Dutch Maritime Strategy 2015–2025**.

Key measures:

- **National Diversity Strategy (2021):** Explicitly includes shipping as a target sector.
- **Women in Transport and Logistics NL:** A network promoting mentoring, training, and scholarships.
- **“Maritime by Women” initiative:** A program in collaboration with the Port of Rotterdam to increase the number of women in technical professions.
- **“Girls in Ports” campaign:** Promoting gender equality in port services.

Statistics show that women account for about 30% across the cluster but only 8–10% among crews. However, the Netherlands has high rates in technology and logistics professions (35%). The Dutch model highlights the importance of local synergies (port–universities–companies) and the capacity to use the maritime industry as a showcase of social progress.

France

France has a strong maritime industry centered both in the Mediterranean (Marseille, Toulon) and the Atlantic (Le Havre). Policies for gender equality in shipping are part of the **“Stratégie nationale pour l’égalité entre les femmes et les hommes”** (2018–2022, updated 2023).

Main interventions:

- **Integration of gender perspective in maritime education:** The *Écoles Nationales de la Marine Marchande* are required to record female participation and implement special mentoring policies.
- **Network “Femmes de Mer”:** An organization supporting women in crew and management positions, offering mentoring, career counseling, and support networks.
- **National awareness campaign (2019):** Aimed at increasing the presence of women in technical roles (marine engineers, deck officers).
- **Cooperation with CMA CGM:** The largest French shipping company has implemented its own *Gender Diversity Plan* targeting 30% women in management by 2030.

Statistically, women represent about 18% of students in maritime schools and 6% of officers. In company administration, the rate is higher (25–28%). A major barrier remains the culture of the naval tradition, which influences the commercial sector, as values of discipline and male dominance are slow to change.

The French experience shows the importance of connecting national equality strategies with large corporate policies (CMA CGM, Bourbon Offshore). Change gains scale when leading players drive the sector forward.

Spain

Spain has a significant maritime presence with centers such as Barcelona, Valencia, and Galicia. Policy for gender equality in the sector falls under the “**Plan Estratégico de Igualdad de Oportunidades 2022–2025**” (PEIO).

Key interventions:

- **Instituto Social de la Marina (ISM):** Provides specific support programs for female seafarers, from benefits to counseling.
- **University cooperation (e.g., Universidad de Cádiz):** Development of mentoring programs and courses addressing the gender dimension in shipping.
- **Network “Mujeres en el Mar”:** Created to enhance visibility of women in shipping and port authorities.
- **Campaigns in secondary schools:** Aimed at increasing female enrollment in maritime academies.

According to a 2021 study, women make up about 22% of employees in the Spanish maritime cluster but only 2–3% of crews. In port authorities and logistics, the rate exceeds 30%.

Spain benefits from a strong welfare infrastructure. Through the ISM, female seafarers have access to healthcare, social benefits, and support during unemployment or maternity. This linkage between social policy and the maritime labor market can serve as a model for countries seeking to retain women long-term in the sector.

Italy

Italy, with major ports such as Genoa, Trieste, and Naples, is a significant player in shipping and logistics. Gender equality in the maritime sector is included in the “**Piano Nazionale per la Parità di Genere 2021–2026**”, connected with the Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR).

Main measures:

- **Cooperation with Confitarma (Italian Shipowners’ Association):** Commitments to increase female participation by 20% by 2030.
- **Network “Donne del Mare”:** Platform uniting women seafarers, engineers, and executives.
- **Scholarships and internships through the Fondazione Accademia Italiana della Marina Mercantile:** Special slots for women in captain and engineer specialties.
- **Campaign “Mare Aperto per Tutti”:** Focus on eliminating stereotypes in schools.

Statistics: female students in maritime academies comprise about 17%. At sea, participation remains low (2–3%), but onshore—in shipping companies and logistics—exceeds 25%.

The Italian case is particularly relevant to Greece: both countries have strong maritime traditions, family business structures, and Mediterranean culture. Italy’s strategy shows that even in conservative environments, linking public policy with investment tools (PNRR) can accelerate equality.

Sweden

Sweden has a long maritime tradition and a strong cluster of port services, logistics, and ship repair. Its policy on gender equality in shipping is tied to the broader **National Strategy for Gender Equality (Jämställdhetspolitiken)**, aiming for full equality by 2030.

In shipping, the **Swedish Transport Agency** plays a central role, having incorporated since 2018 actions to increase women's participation in maritime schools and crews.

Key measures:

- **Program “Women in Maritime Sweden” (WiMS):** A network serving as a platform for mentoring and professional development.
- **Scholarships via Chalmers University of Technology (Gothenburg):** Encouraging female enrollment in captain and engineering specialties.
- **Mandatory SASH training:** Since 2019, every ship under the Swedish flag must provide approved anti-harassment programs.
- **STEM campaigns in schools:** Programs for girls connected to maritime technology.

Statistics: women represent about 10% of officers and 5% of crews, while in shore-based roles (logistics, port services) the share exceeds 35%. In company management, participation reaches 30%.

The Swedish experience demonstrates the importance of systematically linking gender equality policies with educational institutions. The presence of the *World Maritime University (WMU)* in Malmö reinforces this dynamic, providing international platforms to promote women's presence in shipping.

Norway (EEA)

Norway, though outside the EU, participates in the European Economic Area and closely aligns with EU policies. It is a leading maritime power with a strong presence in deep-sea, offshore, and petroleum shipping.

Since 2008, Norway has adopted the **Gender Equality Act**, which imposes gender quotas on the boards of major companies. In shipping, this provision has been transformative, as firms like *DNV (Det Norske Veritas)* and *Kongsberg Gruppen* had to include women at the executive level.

Key initiatives:

- **Norwegian Maritime Competence Strategy (2017–2023):** Explicit reference to gender diversification.
- **Network “Women Offshore Norway”:** Supports women in offshore and petroleum activities.
- **Mentoring programs of the Norwegian Shipowners’ Association:** Mandatory for association members.
- **Scholarships with NTNU (Trondheim):** For women in maritime technology.

Statistics: female students in maritime schools reach 25%. Onshore participation is high (35–40%), but at sea remains low (4–5%). Norway's strong position in technological innovation

(shipbuilding, digital shipping, green tech) creates fertile ground for integrating women in emerging roles.

The Norwegian experience shows that legal quotas at managerial levels, although controversial, can act as a **game changer**, especially when combined with educational and mentoring networks.

Finland

Finland, though a smaller maritime power compared to the previous countries, is a reference point for equality policy. It implements the **National Gender Equality Programme (2020–2023)**, aligned with the broader Nordic welfare tradition.

Main interventions in shipping:

- **Mandatory balanced representation on port boards:** Established in 2018.
- **Program “Maritime Equality Finland”:** Funded by the Ministry of Transport and Communications.
- **Educational campaigns via Åbo Akademi University:** Promoting women’s presence in maritime technology.
- **Network “Women in Maritime Finland”:** Cooperation with the Ports of Helsinki and Turku.

Statistics: women represent about 15% of crews on Finnish vessels (a higher rate than many EU countries), and 40% in port and logistics services. In company management, participation is about 28%.

The Finnish experience shows that systematically integrating equality into port policies can have tangible results, particularly when the port industry serves as a pillar of the cluster.

Cyprus

Cyprus’s maritime sector has been institutionally and communicatively upgraded over the past five years through a cohesive policy vision and a series of initiatives directly affecting women’s participation in both sea and shore roles. The central reference point is **SEA Change 2030**, the long-term strategic vision of the *Shipping Deputy Ministry (SDM)*, developed after a nine-month public consultation and structured around three pillars (Sustainable – Extrovert – Adaptable) with 35 specific actions. Although not exclusively gender-focused, the strategy embeds cross-cutting interventions for workforce inclusiveness, open governance, and advisory platforms with industry—creating the institutional foundation for scalable gender-equality policies.

Within this framework, Cyprus launched the **C.O.M.E (Cyprus Open Maritime Exchange)** digital platform as a tool for continuous consultation with industry professionals—a move also serving the equality agenda by amplifying the voice of young/female professionals and their associations. The platform was presented as the “first tangible action” of the strategy, integrating gender equality into the broader logic of transparency and collective learning within the cluster.

A major innovation for visibility and recognition of good practices is the **Cyprus Shipping Gender Equality Award**, announced annually (by Cabinet decision) with an open call for nominations. The award highlights companies or individuals contributing to gender equality in

shipping, functioning as an institutional multiplier: it integrates equality into the “prestige agenda” of the sector and creates a soft-discipline mechanism through reputation.

At the level of social policy, Cyprus has updated the **National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2024–2026**, explicitly referencing monitoring mechanisms and participation of civil society in implementation. This horizontal policy acts as an umbrella for all sectors, including shipping. The government has also institutionally affirmed a **zero-tolerance clause** for sexist or harassing behaviors in public workplaces, reinforcing the broader message of safe and dignified environments.

Community support and mentoring networks are well-developed: **WISTA Cyprus** implements structured *MentorWave* programs in cooperation with the *Cyprus Shipping Chamber* and *YoungShip Cyprus*, along with visibility campaigns (e.g., participation in festivals/events, skills workshops). This vibrant social-capital infrastructure accelerates the transition from education to employment and helps retain talent in the sector.

Regarding data and indicators, Cyprus utilizes the **IMO–WISTA “Women in Maritime”** international documentation as a benchmarking tool, while national-level labor-market data collection remains an open field for improvement—particularly for sea roles. Government-backed awards and open-dialogue platforms enhance public accountability, but the next phase is the standardization of **KPIs** (e.g., participation by role/level, SASH incidents and outcomes, use of parental leave, pay gaps).

Overall, the Cypriot case combines an ecosystemic strategy (*SEA Change 2030*), visibility/reward mechanisms (*Gender Equality Award*), and active networking/mentoring. Its unique advantage lies in the small but interconnected scale of the Cypriot cluster: interactions are fast, policy translation into operations is quick, and the influence of key players (large companies, ports, tech providers) is direct. The next two years’ challenge is establishing a metrics dashboard and systematically embedding SASH clauses in training and seafaring contracts areas where Cyprus is already moving in the right direction.

Portugal

Portugal is a characteristic example of a country that mainstreams gender equality through a horizontal national framework and then specializes it in sectors such as maritime, ports, and logistics. The **National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination 2018–2030 – “Portugal + Igual” (ENIND)**, adopted by Council of Ministers, serves as the main policy backbone and is monitored in four-year cycles with the involvement of almost all ministries. It comprises three action plans (gender equality, sexual orientation/gender identity, and violence against women/domestic violence), with regular reviews.

In the maritime domain, the **DGRM (Direção-Geral de Recursos Naturais, Segurança e Serviços Marítimos)** operates as the regulatory/administrative authority for ship management, port facilities, navigation safety, and market instruments. The DGRM has developed and applies its own **Gender Equality Plan (GEP)** as an internal management tool, which—although administrative—is significant because it transfers the ENIND logic into the heart of maritime administration and feeds practical procedures (e.g., selection/evaluation, balanced committees, transparency) to connected organizations.

The Portuguese experience emphasizes the role of ports as employers, infrastructure managers, and showcases of equality in practice—from shift organization and safety to technical training for young people in maintenance/electromechanical positions. Although practices vary by port,

the culture of equality plans has spread to the academic/research ecosystem (e.g., University of Porto GEP), creating a shared language of tools (objectives, indicators, reports).

On women's networks and mentoring, **WISTA Portugal** (est. 2018, during Portugal Shipping Week) provides a networking platform for industry professionals and collaborates with ports and stakeholders for visibility and career advancement. IMO and WISTA jointly provide the international *Women in Maritime* survey (2021, 2024), serving as a reference for comparative indicators and guidelines (e.g., role mapping, management levels, SASH policies).

In blue-economy sectors (fisheries/aquaculture), the Spanish neighboring model (Special Equality Plan 2021–2027 for Fisheries/Aquaculture) has already influenced Iberian-scale collaborations in workshops and networks, with Portugal integrating similar approaches into its blue-economy policies—a relevant parallel for Greece given the interconnection of coastal economies, fishing communities, and maritime services.

Regarding measurement and transparency, Portugal relies on **INE (National Statistics Institute)** equality indicators monitoring ENIND themes (equality, work–life balance, violence), providing a framework for sectoral specialization. In maritime specifically, the inclusion of KPIs (participation by role, SASH training, pay equity, parental leave use) at company/port level is gradually evolving, with European initiatives (IMO–WISTA, AIVP/Women in Ports) acting as visibility accelerators.

Methodologically, Portugal offers Greece an integration model: a strong horizontal national strategy (ENIND) cascading into ministries/agencies (DGRM, ports, universities), combined with communities of practice (WISTA, academia, research centers). The emphasis on equality plans within organizations—not only legal frameworks—is the key element that translates rhetoric into daily processes of recruitment, evaluation, promotion, and “safety-by-design” in facilities.

Comparative Assessment (EU/EEA): Patterns of Convergence and Differentiation

Across the 11 European examples (Denmark, Germany, Netherlands, France, Spain, Italy, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Cyprus, Portugal), four stable patterns emerge:

1. **Institutional core + “softly binding” framework:** Denmark (*Charter for More Women in Shipping*), UK model (*Diversity in Maritime Charter* influencing EU actors), and Norway (sectoral gender equality strategy). Charters function as self-commitment tools with public accountability and clear indicators.
2. **Measurement/Transparency & GEPs:** Netherlands (*Maritime Strategy 2015–2025*), Portugal (*ENIND 2018–2030*), Germany/France (national equality policies), and dissemination of GEPs to ports/universities. In northern Europe, GEPs tie policy to daily organizational functioning.
3. **SASH / Safety-by-design:** Scandinavia (Sweden—joint “zero tolerance” commitment/industrial letter of intent), Finland (equality in shipowners’ associations), Cyprus (zero tolerance in public administration, institutional recognition of equality). These “material” interventions in workplace environments are key to retention.
4. **Visibility, networks, mentoring:** WISTA (national chapters) as connective tissue, with IMO–WISTA surveys (2021, 2024) offering comparative bases for benchmarking and progress scales.

Crucially, the intersection of national equality strategies with maritime/port policies shows that where the “horizontal” (e.g., ENIND) meets the “sectoral” (e.g., DGRM/ports), change

acquires procedural materiality (GEPs, committees, evaluations, KPIs). For Greece, the comparison indicates that combining a **charter + dashboard + mentoring** model represents the most consistent path toward substantive progress, with Cyprus and Portugal offering practical application steps in smaller but outward-looking markets.

Comparative Table (Summary of Institutional Tools & Focus Areas)

Country	Main Institutional/ Strategic Tool	Specific Maritime Initiatives	Measurement/ Transparency	Networks/ Mentoring
Denmark	Charter for More Women in Shipping	Sectoral charter with KPIs & annual report	Publication of commitments/goals	WISTA, corporate programs
Germany	National Equality Policy (BMFSFJ)	Codes/training in shipping & logistics	Monitoring equality across transport	WISTA Germany
Netherlands	Dutch Maritime Strategy 2015–2025	“Maritime by Women”, “Girls in Ports”	Port–university partnerships, indicator tools	WISTA NL, ports
France	National Equality Strategy (upd. 2023)	Inclusion in maritime schools; corporate plans (CMA CGM)	Equality indicators/reports	Femmes de Mer, WISTA France
Spain	PEIO 2022–2025; Fisheries Equality Plan 2021–2027	ISM seafarer support; port actions	Public documentation/ campaigns	WISTA Spain
Italy	Gender Equality Plan – PNRR	Confitarma commitments; scholarships	Annual reports/ESG practices	Donne del Mare, WISTA Italy
Sweden	Jämställdhetspolitiken (national goal)	“Zero tolerance” letter in shipping	Mandatory SASH training	WiMS, WMU
Norway (EEA)	Sectoral gender-equality strategy; quotas	“40 by 30” govt–industry cooperation	Public reporting/agreements	WISTA Norway
Finland	National Equality Program; GEPs	Equality policy in shipowners’ association	GEPs in agencies/ports	WISTA Finland
Cyprus	SEA Change 2030	C.O.M.E platform, Gender Equality Award	National Equality Plan 2024–26	WISTA Cyprus (MentorWave)
Portugal	ENIND 2018–2030	DGRM GEP; GEPs in universities/ports	INE indicator	

Chapter 3: Non-European Union Countries

United States of America

The maritime economy of the United States intersects with a broad institutional ecosystem (federal, state, and corporate), which over five decades has formed a clear trajectory toward integrating women into both seafaring and shore-based roles. The initial momentum came from the horizontal anti-discrimination legal framework (Title VII / Civil Rights Act 1964 and related acts), which established the “right of access.”

Subsequently, the maritime sector became a field of targeted policy application: the academies (e.g., US Merchant Marine Academy – USMMA and State Maritime Academies) gradually revised recruitment and training procedures; the agencies (US Coast Guard – USCG, Maritime Administration – MARAD) introduced anti-harassment standards and prevention programs; and the industries of cruise, port services, and logistics functioned as “entry corridors” for women into technical and operational roles.

The American approach is structured around three main pillars:

1. **Institutional Safeguarding:** Beyond general labor law, maritime regulations embed requirements for safe workplaces, explicit incident reporting, mandatory zero-tolerance SASH (sexual assault / sexual harassment) policies, and crew training.
2. **Education and Pipeline:** Maritime academies and community colleges, in cooperation with businesses and associations, offer scholarships, supervised sea terms with safety clauses, and STEM-focused specialization programs so that women acquire certifiable competencies (navigation, engineering, ETO, cyber, LNG operations).
3. **Mentoring and Networking:** *WISTA USA*, *Propeller Club* chapters, and industry councils connect junior professionals with senior mentors through structured mentoring cycles, peer-learning, promotion readiness, and leadership visibility.

Equally important is the **culture of measurement**. Companies are encouraged—through contracts, client demands, and ESG incentives—to disclose data on participation, promotions, pay gaps, and SASH incidents, to set measurable targets, and to publish progress reports. This creates a virtuous cycle of accountability: data force management to revisit recruitment processes, succession plans, and onboard arrangements (e.g., appropriate cabins, gender-fit PPE, medical protocols).

In practice, the expansion of female participation in the U.S. is faster onshore (chartering, operations, legal, insurance, port and digital services), where working conditions are more flexible, while at sea progress is steady but slower due to the nature of the profession (long voyages, remote environments, crew compatibility). To mitigate this imbalance, much policy effort focuses on everyday shipboard life: decent facilities, safety, clear chain-of-command for incident reporting, confidential channels, and third-party compliance audits.

A key lesson from the U.S. is the synergy between **hard law (compliance)** and **soft law (charters, mentoring)**. Without the former, the latter becomes symbolic; without the latter, the former becomes bureaucratic. This balance explains why companies with mature ESG structures, strong internal audits, and leadership commitment show faster progress.

Finally, in the labor market, the U.S. leverages the growth of new subsectors (offshore wind, alternative fuels, digital / AI maritime operations) as a window of opportunity: emerging occupations without entrenched male dominance prove more receptive to women’s entry, particularly in “green” and digital skill areas sought aggressively by employers.

United Kingdom

The United Kingdom serves as a “policy laboratory,” with a robust legal core, mature professional associations, and a political culture favoring *charters*—binding self-regulation frameworks—combined with public policy. The **Equality Act 2010** consolidates anti-discrimination law, while the maritime administration (*Maritime & Coastguard Agency – MCA*) and *Maritime UK* embed gender equality in the broader **Maritime 2050** strategy.

This vision for the sector through mid-century explicitly includes “people & skills,” with goals on participation, leadership, and corporate culture.

The central tool is the **Women in Maritime Charter** (Maritime UK): a framework where companies sign measurable commitments (targets) for women’s recruitment and promotion, inclusive practices, mentoring, training, and annual reporting. The approach is characteristically British: the state does not impose quotas but enforces transparency and accountability, while the sector self-commits under public and media scrutiny. This empowers company ownership of change: firms integrate equality KPIs into HR systems and board-level ESG risk management.

The UK’s *skills chain* connects maritime academies and universities with professional bodies (Nautical Institute, IMarEST, UK Chamber of Shipping). Scholarships, apprenticeship routes, sea-time with safety clauses, and flexible sea-time options (where possible) reduce barriers for women pursuing seafaring careers. Onshore, disciplines such as chartering, finance, P&I insurance, law, and maritime technology attract female graduates combining maritime and analytical backgrounds, offering multiple career pathways.

Corporate culture completes the picture. Through toolkits (anti-harassment policies, inclusive-recruitment guides, PPE standards), organizations acquire practical instruments. Visibility of **role models**—female captains, chief engineers, DPA/HSQE managers, CEOs—breaks the glass ceiling and reshapes perceptions among young women considering maritime careers. Public promotion is not merely symbolic: it changes the “first image” of whether they belong in the industry.

Challenges remain changing shipboard conditions, supply-chain cost pressures, and the need for family-supportive policies (parental leave, flexible shore shifts, return-to-work schemes). Yet the UK’s governance maturity—clear targets, public reporting, benchmarking—means progress, even if gradual, is measurable and adjustable.

Canada

Canada stands out for horizontally integrating gender perspective into public policy through the **Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+)** framework. This requires that transport and maritime policies be designed and evaluated through an equality lens from inception. *Transport Canada* demands evidence on how any regulation, program, or grant affects different groups (including women) and tracks implementation with measurable indicators.

At industry level, strong regional ecosystems (Atlantic, Pacific, Great Lakes, Arctic) host coastal shipping, tug, ferry, offshore, and marine-service operations. Targeted networking e.g., *CWOIL* on the Atlantic coast—links schools, firms, and female professionals. The local-cluster model fosters concrete opportunities for apprenticeships, regional mentoring, and rapid job absorption.

Canada invests heavily in education: university-industry partnerships, equipped training centers, scholarships for women in maritime/technical fields, and bridges to emerging skills (Arctic navigation, ice-class operations, environmental compliance, digital sensing, hydrogen/ammonia fuel). Safety management and anti-harassment standards are codified, clear, and enforceable by authorities.

Geography poses challenges vast distances, climate, smaller ocean-going fleet but inclusion culture is strong. Companies view diversity as a **competitive advantage** (talent attraction, reputation with charterers/insurers, ESG compliance). Women enter shore roles (operations,

HSEQ, compliance, analytics) more easily and are gradually advancing onboard, particularly in predictable-schedule segments (ferries, inland/coastal).

Crucially, **systematic measurement** is integral: agencies collect and share data with stakeholders for corrective interventions (program redesigns, targeted scholarships, outreach). Thus, even if absolute figures remain modest, the **direction of change** is positive and policy-driven.

Australia

Australia combines a pragmatic, “hands-on” mentality with a clear institutional framework. The **Sex Discrimination Act** and related regulations provide legal foundations, while maritime authorities especially the **Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA)** have adopted diversity and inclusion strategies with explicit goals, indicators, timelines, and public accountability.

The education system cooperates closely with industry: **TAFE**, universities, and maritime colleges align training with labor-market demand. Career paths are diverse offshore energy, deep-sea shipping, tugs/harbor services, ferries, ship repair, port operations, supply chain, and new sectors (green fuels, automation, remote operations) providing multiple entry points for women under varying mobility and scheduling needs.

Mentoring is extensive (*AWIM*, industry alliances), supported by communities of practice, peer learning, and role-model engagement. Strong focus is placed on **safety and wellbeing onboard**: adapted clothing/PPE, facilities, reporting protocols, diversity-management training, and early-intervention procedures. Flexible shift systems where feasible and enhanced parental-leave policies help retain women long-term. Onshore, rapid progress is seen in HSEQ, technical compliance, analytics, and project management across ports and logistics.

Challenges include geography, seasonality, and family-support needs, but employer policies—flexible work, above-minimum parental leave, structured return-to-work upskilling—prove decisive. Overall, Australia offers an exemplary mix: clear strategic orientation, measurable indicators, practical attention to working conditions, and strong mentoring networks.

Japan

Japan is a characteristic case of a maritime nation seeking to reconcile a conservative corporate culture with modernization imperatives. Government policy integrates gender equality within the **Basic Act for Gender Equal Society** and subsequent plans under the Cabinet Office’s *Gender Equality Bureau*. The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT) includes the maritime sector in its “Women in Logistics and Shipping Promotion Program,” encouraging companies to adopt equality action plans.

Japanese shipping companies—NYK, MOL, K Line—have implemented internal diversity strategies focusing on:

- recruitment of female cadets and engineers,
- flexible career paths (rotation between sea and shore),
- childcare-support systems,
- and awareness training against harassment.

Maritime academies (e.g., Tokyo University of Marine Science and Technology) have increased the proportion of female students through targeted outreach and scholarships.

The Japan Women's Seafarers Association (JWSA) provides a support and mentoring network. Nevertheless, cultural factors and rigid seniority structures still limit advancement: women represent under 3% of seafarers but around 20–25% in shore-based offices and maritime administration.

Japan's experience shows the gradual shift from symbolic participation to structural inclusion, driven by demographic pressure (labor shortages) and by international commitments to SDG 5 and IMO programs.

South Korea

South Korea has developed comprehensive equality policies under the **Framework Act on Gender Equality (2014)** and its *Five-Year Plans for Gender Equality*. In the maritime sector, the **Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries (MOF)** coordinates initiatives aligned with the national *Ocean Policy Master Plan*.

Key elements include:

- scholarships and targeted recruitment for women in maritime universities (Korea Maritime and Ocean University, Busan),
- creation of the *Korean Women in Shipping and Logistics Network (KWLN)*,
- mandatory anti-harassment and safety training on vessels,
- and incentives for companies with certified gender-equality management systems.

Women's participation is approximately 6% of seafarers and 25–30% of shore-based professionals. Cultural barriers remain but are mitigated by the country's high digitalization and innovation capacity, which opens opportunities in maritime ICT, cyber-security, and smart-port operations.

South Korea's model demonstrates the value of combining top-down regulation with technology-driven modernization to make equality both feasible and beneficial for competitiveness.

Comparative Assessment (Non-EU Countries): Key Patterns and Lessons Learned

The comparative analysis of non-EU countries (United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Japan, and South Korea) highlights a set of recurrent policy patterns, revealing how advanced economies outside Europe address gender equality in the maritime sector.

First, all countries combine **legal enforceability (hard law)** with **soft tools (charters, mentoring, awareness campaigns)**. The American and British cases show that measurable charters and annual reporting systems can transform equality from a declaration of intent into an operational requirement. Australia and Canada reinforce this duality through national inclusion strategies and clear accountability mechanisms.

Second, there is a strong focus on the **educational and professional pipeline**: maritime academies, universities, and training centers serve as gateways for young women into the industry. Scholarships, sea-training with safety clauses, and flexible career pathways (including transitions between sea and shore) are common features across these countries. Japan and South Korea, despite cultural barriers, are gradually adopting this model through structured programs, female-cadet recruitment, and corporate mentoring networks.

Third, the presence of **measurement and transparency mechanisms** (data collection, KPIs, ESG reporting, public dashboards) is crucial for credibility. In all cases, progress is publicly documented and traceable, forcing institutions to maintain momentum and adjust their strategies.

Fourth, mentoring and visibility networks such as WISTA, JWSA, and CWOIL play a decisive role in sustaining women's careers, reducing isolation, and strengthening representation in decision-making bodies.

From a comparative perspective, non-EU examples demonstrate that **cultural change accelerates when equality becomes both measurable and reputational**—that is, when companies are evaluated not only by compliance but also by their public image as inclusive and forward-looking organizations. This lesson is particularly relevant for Greece, where maritime reputation is a key intangible asset and can serve as a lever for equality-driven competitiveness.

Country	Main Institutional / Strategic Framework	Specific Maritime Initiatives	Measurement / Transparency	Networks / Mentoring
United States of America	Civil Rights Act 1964 & subsequent labor regulations + Maritime Administration / USCG programs	SASH zero-tolerance policies · academy reforms · mentoring & scholarships	ESG and federal reporting · company-level data · audits	WISTA USA · Propeller Club · industry councils
United Kingdom	Equality Act 2010 · Maritime 2050 Strategy · Women in Maritime Charter	Charters with measurable targets · mentoring · inclusive-recruitment toolkits	Annual reporting · public benchmarks	Maritime UK Women in Maritime Network · WISTA UK
Canada	Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) framework · Transport Canada policy	Regional clusters · training centres · scholarships for women · anti-harassment codes	Periodic data collection & publication · policy reviews	CWOIL · WISTA Canada · academic-industry partnerships
Australia	Sex Discrimination Act · AMSA Diversity & Inclusion Strategy	Safety and well-being protocols · PPE adaptation · mentoring (AWIM) · training	Public KPIs · timelines · AMSA annual reporting	AWIM · industry alliances · communities of practice
Japan	Basic Act for a Gender Equal Society · MLIT Women in Logistics & Shipping Program	Equality plans in NYK/MOL/K Line · childcare support · anti-harassment training	Annual surveys by MLIT · corporate ESG disclosure	JWSA · academic mentoring programs
South Korea	Framework Act on Gender Equality (2014) · MOF Five-Year Plans	Scholarships · KWLN network · safety training on vessels · incentives for certified firms	MOF monitoring · public statistics on participation	KWLN · WISTA Korea · university programs

Chapter 4: Comparative Synthesis and Policy Recommendations for Greece

Key Findings

The comparative analysis of international strategies demonstrates that the issue of gender equality in shipping is multidimensional and requires coordinated action between international organizations, national governments, and the private sector. From the cases examined, several key findings emerge:

1. **Gender imbalance remains a structural reality.** Even in the most advanced countries, the percentage of women in seafaring positions rarely exceeds 2%, while onshore participation (administration, logistics, education, technology) ranges between 25% and 40%. This structural disparity is linked to working conditions at sea, cultural perceptions of “male” professions, and the lack of visible female role models.
2. **Effective policies are those that combine legislation, incentives, and culture change.** Countries that rely exclusively on legislation (hard law) often achieve limited results without enforcement and monitoring. Conversely, voluntary charters and mentoring networks (soft law) are effective when embedded within measurable frameworks and supported by the state.
3. **Education and lifelong learning are central.** All successful examples integrate gender equality into the educational process—through scholarships, awareness campaigns, and mentoring in maritime academies. The earlier the intervention, the stronger the impact on career choices and the overall perception of the profession.
4. **Safety and SASH (Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment) frameworks are non-negotiable.** Trust and security onboard determine whether women remain in the profession. The presence of confidential reporting systems, zero-tolerance policies, and psychological support structures constitutes a prerequisite for real inclusion.
5. **Visibility and recognition mechanisms accelerate change.** Awards, public campaigns, and positive media exposure act as catalysts, reinforcing the perception that women belong in the maritime community. Countries such as Cyprus and the United Kingdom have effectively used visibility as a lever of reputation and motivation for the industry.
6. **Measurement and accountability guarantee continuity.** The systematic collection and publication of gender-disaggregated data (KPIs) ensure that progress is measurable and that policies can be evaluated, adjusted, and improved. Transparency transforms equality from a moral objective into a performance indicator.

Strategic Directions for Greece

The Greek maritime sector, controlling over 20% of global shipping capacity and forming the backbone of the national economy, has the moral and institutional obligation to lead by example in gender equality. The comparative evidence points to a coherent roadmap based on three pillars: **institutional framework, measurement and visibility, and education and empowerment.**

1. Institutional Framework and Governance

- **Adopt a “Hellenic Charter for Gender Equality in Shipping”²**, inspired by Denmark’s and the UK’s models. The Charter would be co-signed by shipping companies, port authorities, maritime academies, and associations, setting measurable annual goals (e.g., percentage of women in training, leadership positions, and crews). It should be monitored by an independent body or by the General Secretariat for Gender Equality in collaboration with the Ministry of Maritime Affairs.
- **Integrate equality criteria into maritime legislation and funding schemes.** Every program financed through national or EU funds (e.g., recovery and resilience plans, blue-economy programs) should require gender KPIs and evidence of inclusion practices.
- **Create an Inter-Ministerial Committee on Gender and the Blue Economy**, linking the ministries of Maritime Affairs, Labour, and Education. This committee would ensure coherence between employment, training, and equality policies.

2. Measurement, Transparency, and Public Accountability

- **Develop a national dashboard of gender indicators in shipping**, in cooperation with the Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT) and IMO–WISTA international frameworks. Indicators would include participation rates, training numbers, leadership positions, use of parental leave, wage gaps, and SASH reports.
- **Publish annual reports on gender equality in maritime professions**, coordinated by the Ministry of Maritime Affairs, with open access for all stakeholders. Transparency will enhance Greece’s reputation and align it with international standards.
- **Establish a “Greek Maritime Gender Equality Award”**, following the Cypriot example. This award would recognize companies, institutions, or individuals contributing to gender equality, encouraging positive competition and visibility within the sector.

3. Education, Mentoring, and Empowerment

- **Integrate gender equality modules in all maritime academies**, covering inclusive leadership, safe-ship practices, and anti-harassment training. Partnerships with the World Maritime University and EMSA could strengthen implementation and accreditation.
- **Launch targeted scholarships for female cadets and engineers**, funded through public–private partnerships and maritime foundations.
- **Establish structured mentoring programs**, connecting female students and young professionals with experienced captains, engineers, and managers. Collaboration with WISTA Hellas, the Hellenic Chamber of Shipping, and the Union of Greek Shipowners can institutionalize these networks.

² Comparable methodological patterns are evident in the field of socially responsible public procurement, where doctoral research has shown that clear governance structures and performance indicators are prerequisites for effective equality policies (Lamprinidis, 2024).

- **Promote flexible career pathways** that allow rotation between sea and shore roles, ensuring work–life balance and retention of female talent in the sector.

The Role of Public Institutions and Social Dialogue

The transition toward a gender-inclusive maritime sector requires the coordinated action of multiple stakeholders:

- **Government and public administration** must provide the institutional framework, funding, and policy monitoring.
- **Educational institutions** (maritime academies, universities) should integrate equality into curricula and professional development programs.
- **The private sector** (shipowners, logistics, ports) must implement mentoring, reporting, and SASH policies in practice.
- **Civil society organizations and networks** (WISTA, associations, unions) play a crucial role in visibility, advocacy, and peer learning.

Social dialogue³ between these actors is essential to ensure that equality policies are not perceived as external impositions but as collective commitments enhancing the competitiveness and sustainability of Greek shipping.

Financing and EU Synergies

Greece can leverage several European and international funding sources:

- **European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF)** for blue-economy projects incorporating gender-equality objectives.
- **Horizon Europe** and **Interreg** for research and innovation initiatives connecting gender, digitalization, and green transitions.
- **European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)** for vocational training, scholarships, and mentoring structures.
- **IMO and ILO technical assistance programs** to strengthen national implementation and monitoring frameworks.

Creating a coordinated financing mechanism under the Ministry of Maritime Affairs, with dedicated calls for gender mainstreaming in shipping, would accelerate implementation.

Expected Impact

Implementing the proposed strategy is expected to yield multiple benefits⁴:

- **Economic:** greater talent utilization, productivity, and competitiveness.
- **Social:** improved inclusion, equity, and work–life balance.

³ At the governance level, multi-layered cooperation between international and national institutions has been identified as critical for effective implementation of equality policies (Lamprinidis, 2024)

⁴ This aligns with evidence linking social-entrepreneurship and social-security frameworks to sustainable social-policy outcomes (Lamprinidis, 2025b), underscoring the broader socioeconomic value of inclusive maritime employment.

- **Institutional:** modernization of the sector's governance through measurable KPIs and transparent reporting.
- **International:** stronger alignment with UN SDG 5, EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025, and IMO Gender Programme commitments, enhancing Greece's image as a modern, responsible maritime nation.

Conclusion

Women's participation in shipping is no longer a marginal or symbolic issue—it is a **strategic priority for sustainable development, innovation, and international reputation**. Global evidence shows that gender diversity strengthens decision-making, risk management, and adaptability—key components of a competitive maritime industry.

For Greece, a global maritime leader, the adoption of an integrated, evidence-based equality strategy will transform not only the social fabric of the sector but also its international standing. By linking gender equality with competitiveness, digital transformation, and sustainability, Greek shipping can become a model of modern governance, embodying both tradition and innovation.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Future Perspectives

The participation of women in shipping is not only a social or symbolic objective but an essential parameter for the modernization and sustainability of the global maritime economy. The present study demonstrated that gender equality in the maritime sector depends on a combination of political will, institutional maturity, and the operational commitment of the industry itself⁵.

At the **international level**, organizations such as the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) have created a normative framework that directly links gender equality with safety, training, and human rights. Through the IMO Gender Programme and the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC 2006), equality has been elevated to a key dimension of sustainable maritime development.

At the **European level**, the policies of the European Union and its member states have evolved from general equality strategies into sector-specific tools—charters, national action plans, and gender equality plans (GEPs). The most successful examples are those that manage to translate strategic visions into measurable actions with annual monitoring and public accountability.

At the **national level**, countries with strong maritime traditions—such as Denmark, Norway, the United Kingdom, and Cyprus—have demonstrated that progress can be achieved when public policy, education, and corporate responsibility converge. The combination of institutional obligations (quotas, indicators) with voluntary mechanisms (mentoring, awards, networks) ensures both credibility and flexibility.

The **comparative analysis** has revealed clear convergence trends:

- The creation of **mentoring networks and role models**, such as WISTA and national women's associations;
- The establishment of **charters and diversity management frameworks**;

⁵ Such convergence has also been documented in studies of Greek governance reforms concerning socially responsible procurement systems (Lamprinidis, forthcoming 2025 & 2025a), revealing the value of integrated accountability frameworks.

- The institutionalization of **zero-tolerance and SASH policies** onboard;
- The systematic use of **data and KPIs** for transparency;
- The integration of equality into **education, training, and lifelong learning**.

For **Greece**, these findings have direct implications. The Greek maritime sector—leader in global tonnage and a major contributor to the national economy—can and should become a model of modern governance, linking tradition and innovation. Gender equality is not only a moral imperative but a driver of competitiveness, talent attraction, and international credibility.

The proposed “**Hellenic Charter for Gender Equality in Shipping**”, along with a central monitoring dashboard, mentoring structures, and targeted scholarships, can transform the equality agenda from fragmented initiatives into a coherent national strategy. The synergy between ministries, educational institutions, professional associations, and companies will be decisive in ensuring implementation.

From a broader perspective, gender equality in shipping must be viewed as part of the **Blue Economy Strategy** and the **2030 Sustainable Development Agenda**. Linking equality with environmental sustainability, digital transformation, and innovation gives it strategic depth and resilience. A shipping industry that promotes inclusion and respect becomes not only more just but also more competitive, safe, and future-oriented.

Finally, the study concludes that the **empowerment of women in shipping** is a long-term investment—one that enhances not only the workforce but also the culture, governance, and social legitimacy of the maritime world. The challenge for Greece is to integrate equality into the very DNA of its maritime identity—so that the “Greek shipping miracle” continues, strengthened by the full participation and contribution of women in all levels of the sector.

Acknowledgment

The author gratefully acknowledges the valuable and constructive comments provided by the anonymous reviewers, which significantly contributed to the improvement and refinement of this article. Sincere thanks are also extended to the academic colleagues and research collaborators who supported the comparative analysis and policy formulation process

REFERENCES

Academic / Peer-Reviewed Sources

- Kitada, M., Williams, E., & Froholdt, L. L. (Eds.). (2016). *Maritime Women: Global Leadership*. *WMU Studies in Maritime Affairs*, Vol. 3. Springer.
<https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-662-45385-8>
- Kitada, M., Carballo Piñeiro, L., & Mejia Jr, M. Q. (2019). *Empowering women in the maritime community*. *WMU Journal of Maritime Affairs*, 18(4), 525–530.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s13437-019-00188-6>
- Lamprinidis, L. (2023a). The EU model of socially responsible public procurement. *Journal of Public Policy and Administration*, 8(3), 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.47604/jppa.1852>
- Lamprinidis, L. (2023b). Challenges of the Social Economy Action Plan for Greece in the light of socially responsible public procurement. *Journal of Public Policy and Administration*, 8(2), 55–66. <https://doi.org/10.47604/jppa.1843>
- Lamprinidis, L. (2024). *Socially Responsible Public Procurement as a Tool for the Development of the Social Economy* (Doctoral dissertation). University of West Attica.
<https://doi.org/10.12681/eadd/56439>
- Lamprinidis, L. (2025a). *Socially Responsible Public Procurement and the Social Economy: European and Global Institutional Approaches*. *Journal of Public Policy and Administration*, 10(1), 46–62. <https://doi.org/10.47604/jppa.3297>
- Lamprinidis, L. (2025b). *Social Entrepreneurship and Social Security: Synergies for Sustainable Social Policy*. *Market Economy: Modern Management Theory and Practice*, 24(2), 9–28. [https://doi.org/10.18524/2413-9998.2025.2\(60\).331666](https://doi.org/10.18524/2413-9998.2025.2(60).331666)
- Lamprinidis, L. (2025c). *Socially Responsible Public Procurement as a Tool for the Development of the Social Economy*. Papazisis Editions. ISBN 978-960-02-4444-1
- Lamprinidis, L. (forthcoming 2025). *Socially Responsible Public Procurement in Greece: Governance and Implementation Challenges*. *European Journal of Government and Economics (EJGE)*.
- Lin, S., & Chang, H. (2025). *Breaking the waves? Current prospects for gender equality in the maritime industry: The example of Taiwan*. *Maritime Policy & Management*.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03088839.2025.2563203>

B. Institutional and Policy Sources

(i) European and International Frameworks

- Blue Generation Project. (2020). *Promoting Blue Career Paths for Young People in the EU*.
<https://bluegeneration.org>
- DG MOVE / European Commission. (2021). *Study on Women in Transport – EU Perspective*. Brussels.
- EMFAF. (2023). *European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund – Gender Equality Actions*. <https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu>
- European Commission. (2020). *A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025*. Brussels.
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0152>

European Community Shipowners' Associations (ECSA) & ETF. (2018). *Joint Declaration on Women in Maritime Transport*. <https://www.ecsa.eu>

European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE). (2022). *Gender Equality Index 2022 – Work & Transport*. Vilnius. <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2022>

European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA). (2021). *Maritime Education and Training in the EU: Gender Perspectives*. Lisbon. <https://emsa.europa.eu>

European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF). (2018). *Women in Transport – ETF Action Plan*. <https://www.etf-europe.org/activity/women-in-transport/>

SEA4ALL Project. (2021). *Gender Balance in Maritime Education and Training*. <https://sea4all-project.eu>

(ii) National Strategies

Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA). (2020). *Diversity and Inclusion Strategy*. Canberra. <https://www.amsa.gov.au>

Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend (BMFSFJ). (2020). *National Action Plan for Gender Equality*. Berlin.

Confitarma / Italian Maritime Cluster. (2020). *Strategia per l'Uguaglianza di Genere nel Settore Marittimo*. Rome.

Danish Shipping. (2020). *Charter for More Women in Shipping*. Copenhagen.

Direção-Geral de Recursos Naturais, Segurança e Serviços Marítimos (DGRM). (2018). *Gender Equality Plan (GEP)*. Lisbon.

ENIND. (2018). *Estratégia Nacional para a Igualdade e a Não Discriminação 2018–2030 – “Portugal + Igual”*. Lisbon. <https://cig.gov.pt/portfolio-item/enind/>

Ministère de la Mer (France). (2022). *Stratégie Nationale pour l'Égalité F/H dans les Métiers Maritimes*. Paris.

Netherlands Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management. (2015). *Dutch Maritime Strategy 2015–2025*. The Hague.

Shipping Deputy Ministry of Cyprus. (2022). *SEA Change 2030 – Vision and Strategy for Cyprus Shipping*. Nicosia. <https://www.shipping.gov.cy>

Spanish Ministry of Transportes y Movilidad Sostenible. (2021). *Plan Estratégico de Igualdad en el Sector Marítimo 2021–2026*. Madrid.

(iii) Global and Regional Organizations

APEC Transportation Working Group. (2024). *Mainstreaming Gender in the Transport Workforce for Sustainability*. Singapore. <https://www.apec.org/publications/2024/11/mainstreaming-gender-in-the-transport-workforce-for-sustainability>

International Labour Organization (ILO). (2006, amended 2014 & 2018). *Maritime Labour Convention (MLC)*. Geneva. <https://www.ilo.org/global/standards/maritime-labour-convention/lang--en/index.htm>

- International Maritime Organization (IMO) & WISTA International. (2021). *Women in Maritime Survey 2021*. London.
<https://www.imo.org/en/ourwork/technicalcooperation/pages/imo-wista-women-in-maritime-survey-2021.aspx>
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2011). *Gender and Transport*. Paris. https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/gender-and-transport_5kg9mq47w59w-en.html
- United Nations (UN). (2015). *Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. New York. <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>
- United Nations Women (UN Women). (2020). *Progress of the World's Women 2019–2020: Families in a Changing World*. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2019/06/progress-of-the-worlds-women-2019-2020>
- WISTA International. (2024). *Women in Maritime Survey – Update Report*. London.
<https://wistainternational.com>
- World Maritime University (WMU). (2019). *Transport 2040: Automation, Technology, Employment – The Gender Dimension*. Malmö.
https://commons.wmu.se/lib_reports/61

Annex (Appendix)

Annex 1 – Key Statistical Indicators (2024)

Region / Country	Women in Maritime Employment (%)	Women at Sea (%)	Women in Shore-Based Roles (%)	Main Policy Framework
Denmark	7.0	2.0	35.0	Charter for More Women in Shipping
Germany	6.0	1.5	28.0	National Equality Policy (BMFSFJ)
France	6.0	2.0	25.0	National Equality Strategy
Spain	3.0	2.0	30.0	PEIO 2022–2025
Italy	3.0	2.0	25.0	PNRR Equality Plan
Sweden	5.0	2.5	35.0	WiMS Programme
Norway	5.0	3.0	40.0	Maritime Competence Strategy
Finland	15.0	5.0	40.0	Maritime Equality Finland
Cyprus	6.0	2.5	30.0	SEA Change 2030
Portugal	5.0	2.0	32.0	ENIND / DGRM GEP
United Kingdom	8.0	3.0	33.0	Maritime 2050 / Women in Maritime Charter
United States	7.0	2.0	35.0	SASH Policies / MARAD Initiatives
Canada	6.0	2.5	34.0	GBA+ Framework
Australia	7.0	2.0	36.0	AMSA Diversity Strategy
Japan	3.0	2.0	25.0	MLIT Women in Shipping Program
South Korea	6.0	3.0	28.0	MOF Five-Year Plan

Annex 2 – Acronyms and Abbreviations

Acronym	Meaning
IMO	International Maritime Organization
ILO	International Labour Organization
EU	European Union
EMSA	European Maritime Safety Agency
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SASH	Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment
ESG	Environmental, Social, and Governance
WISTA	Women’s International Shipping and Trading Association
GEP	Gender Equality Plan
ENIND	Estratégia Nacional para a Igualdade e a Não Discriminação
MOF	Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries (South Korea)
MLIT	Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (Japan)
MARAD	United States Maritime Administration
GBA+	Gender-Based Analysis Plus (Canada)
AMSA	Australian Maritime Safety Authority
BMFSFJ	Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend (Germany)
DGRM	Direção-Geral de Recursos Naturais, Segurança e Serviços Marítimos (Portugal)