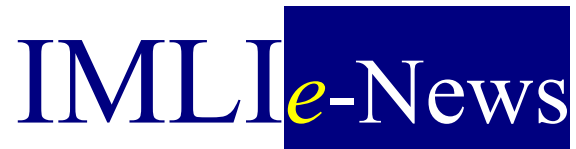


Circulated in more than 100 States to personalities in the legal and maritime professions



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***ITF Legal Adviser:***

***“The quality of the students from diverse backgrounds provides an opportunity for informed exchanges of differing views”***

Ms. Deirdre Fitzpatrick, practicing solicitor and legal adviser to the ITF (*International Transport Workers Federation*) recently delivered a set of lectures within the IMLI Course on Maritime Labor Law.



*Ms. Deirdre Fitzpatrick at IMLI .*

Ms. Fitzpatrick is a law graduate of Queens University, Belfast and a practicing solicitor admitted in Northern Ireland and England and Wales. She has been a legal adviser to the ITF since 1994 and throughout this period she has secured representation for claims of seafarers before courts around the world. She is also the co-editor of the book “***Seafarers' Rights***” (published in 2005).

During her visit at IMLI she was accompanied by Mr. Richard J. Dodson (*Dodson & Hooks Law Office– Louisiana –USA*) and Mr. Charles Briffa (*ITF Inspector, Malta*).

***Ms. Fitzpatrick, which were the highlights of your lectures at IMLI ?***

The most positive experience was the opportunity to introduce the students to the human side of shipping. The IMO is not directly concerned with seafarers' rights, but integral to the IMO's mandate is the Organisation's recognition of the so-called human element.

The human element is one of several key initiatives that underpin the current philosophy of the IMO and an awareness of these issues is essential when considering rules and regulations in any area of shipping.

***How do you see the role of the ITF in the international maritime community ?***

The ITF is a voice for the international seafarer and its FOC campaign acts as a counter to absurd market forces in maritime manpower. A large number of serious international owners, if they do not actually welcome the attentions of the ITF, recognise that if the union did not exist, there would be little to stop real exploitation proliferating, with decent employers handicapped by those who are unprincipled.

***Which are the most important (legal) problems facing seafarers in today's globalized world?***

Seafarers are exposed to several jurisdictions in their daily work. Typically, the FOC ship is owned in one country, registered in another, managed from a third country, it may have crew which hail from a variety of countries and it operates in the international arena. This complex web impacts greatly on the rights of seafarers. They face problems ascertaining their rights, identifying their employer, accessing courts and obtaining remedies. Currently seafarers are also facing a growing wave of criminalisation and denial of rights to shore leave.

The ITF engaged heavily in the process that led to the adoption of the new Maritime Labour Convention. It is a positive development for seafarers' rights and with the necessary will by Governments, could be an effective tool in practice with its regard for enforcement aspects.

***What is your impression about IMLI ?***

My impression of IMLI was a very positive one. The quality of the students from diverse backgrounds provided an opportunity for informed exchanges of differing views.

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