



Factsheet: International Conventions

What is the current policy/legal framework?

It is Government policy that the UK must comply with international law. The UK has ratified several international conventions relating to maritime employment, training and certification that place obligations on us which the Government must implement in policy, and in some cases legislation.

Following EU Exit and the loss of Section 2(2) of the European Communities Act 1972 (ECA) powers to implement EU obligations and deal with matters arising from them, Ministers no longer have powers to implement all foreseeable amendments to international maritime conventions.

Policy Intent

This measure does not amend Government policy but provides the powers to maintain compliance with international law by staying up to date with international maritime conventions.

How will it work?

The Clauses insert into the Merchant Shipping Act 1995 powers to make regulations giving effect to the Maritime Labour Convention and the Work in Fishing Convention, and to any other international agreement ratified in the UK, insofar as the agreement relates to maritime employment.

It provides powers to create criminal offences for the contravention of any of the provisions in the in the regulations.

Key Stats

Seafarers are crucial for the UK economy, keeping UK supply chains and maritime tourism traffic moving. The maritime sector directly contributed around £18.7 billion to UK gross value added (GVA) and directly supported around 227,000 jobs in 2019.¹ An estimated 24,100 UK seafarers were active at sea in 2023.²

Common questions

Why have you included a power to add new conventions to which the power would apply by Order?

We need flexibility to continue to implement our international commitments protecting seafarer employment rights and working conditions and to ensure we are up to date with requirements for training and certification to support the UK's dynamic maritime economy.

¹ [State of the Maritime Nation | Maritime UK](#)

² [Seafarers in the UK Shipping Industry: 2023 - GOV.UK](#)