The Day of the Seafarer is now being celebrated for third time, and our cause gathers greater support and grows in importance and relevance on each occasion. This is reflected in the increasing number of people from the maritime sector, and beyond, that want to participate in the campaign and to publicly thank seafarers for their service and the sacrifices that they make.

2013 is a landmark year for the seafaring community, as the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC2006) enters into force in August. This marks significant progress in the recognition of seafarers’ roles and the need to safeguard their well-being and the working conditions.

For shipping companies, seafarers are the embodiment of their business and they are a critical asset.

People within the maritime sector are familiar with the role of the seafarer. However, even they may not be completely aware of the sheer scale of effort that seafarers expend, and the physical and psychological challenges that they face. It is our responsibility, as those that are working within this sector and close to the seafaring community, to lead the efforts to highlight seafarers’ importance and to thank them for what they do.

Looking beyond the maritime sector, today’s consumers are increasingly demanding transparency across the supply chain.
However, shipping’s role remains relatively hidden to consumers outside of the supply chain. This year’s Day of the Seafarer campaign calls on all supply chain partners, including those beyond the maritime sector, to help highlight the sheer diversity and scale of products that travel by sea, which are used in everyday life, and to recognize the importance of the people that deliver them; more than 1.5 million seafarers.

Seafarers operate on the ‘front line’ of the shipping industry, and this year’s campaign theme, Faces of the Sea, aims to highlight the individuals that are often unseen, but who work to deliver more than 90% of the world’s goods. We will ask the seafarers themselves to show us snapshots of their daily life at sea, to give them a voice and share their story on a global stage, via social media.

This year’s theme, Faces of the Sea, aims to ensure that the efforts and sacrifices made by seafarers, often in lonely conditions, are recognized by the general public.

Establishing seafarers in the forefront of global awareness will take time and is a gradual process. But Day of the Seafarer aims to do just this, and to continue the proactive steps that are being taken by our progressive maritime partners to ensure that our seafarers receive the thanks, recognition and working standards that they truly deserve.