

Captain Matthew Schanck MSc FinSTR FMSAR

United Kingdom

Matthew is a proven strategic leader in the maritime sector and a qualified, experienced Captain and trainer in the field of maritime search and rescue (SAR). He has served for over 15 years as a Commander and instructor on coastal, offshore, and ocean-going SAR vessels and hovercraft in the UK and across Europe in a variety of maritime SAR contexts.

For the past eight years, he has worked as a maritime search and rescue consultant, working with government and non-government organisations worldwide to advance maritime SAR capabilities in areas such as maritime migration SAR, crew and commander competence, SAR governance, operational SAR scoping and implementation, risk and legal compliance, and SAR unit capability frameworks and processes. As one of Europe's leading maritime SAR experts, he has overseen and led multi-million-pound SAR projects, managing operations from tactical execution to strategic oversight with international NGOs and multi-state stakeholders in complex SAR settings, including the Mediterranean migration crisis.



He is an internationally recognised maritime search and rescue subject matter expert, having been called upon to provide expert evidence and analysis in several high-profile international SAR legal cases. These cases have involved migrant SAR, large-scale loss of life, mass casualty rescues, SAR operation implementation at operational, tactical, and strategic levels, interoperability in maritime SAR, and the interpretation of SAR law and regulation. He regularly appears in international media, offering expert commentary on notable SAR events, including the European migrant crisis, the foundering of the superyacht Bayesian in the Mediterranean, the loss of the Titan submersible in the North Atlantic and the MV Stena Immaculate and MV Solong collision in the North Sea. He is recognised by the European EFCA as an authorised Coastguard Operations Subject Matter Expert.

Matthew has been awarded Fellowships from both the Institute of Search and Technical Rescue and the Maritime Search and Rescue Council for his contributions to SAR. He currently serves as Chairman of the not-for-profit Maritime Search and Rescue Council, where he provides strategic direction and management for various global SAR projects. He is also the co-founder of the Maritime Emergency and Coastguard Policy Institute, where he leads evidence-based research and policy recommendations on maritime emergency response and SAR.

He holds a Master's of Science Degree in Emergency Management and Resilience from Coventry University, where he completed his thesis titled "Maritime Mass Rescue Operations: A Search and Rescue Surface Asset Suitability Framework for 21st Century Challenges". He is currently authoring the book "Maritime Search and Rescue: A Commander's Guide" which is due to be published in early 2026, and has professional interests in the integration of AI technology into SAR, conflicts between maritime law enforcement and maritime SAR policy, and research into SAR competency levels within the commercial maritime sector under STCW regulations. More information on his background and work can be found at www.mschanck.co.uk.