

Confederation of European ShipsMasters' Association

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On 20 March 2020

To Mrs Adina VALEAN
EU Commissioner for Transport

To Mr Henrik HOLOLEI – Mr Matthew BALDWIN
Mrs Magda KOPCZYNSKA – Mr Sandro SANTAMATO
Mr Sian PROUT – Mrs Daniela ROSCA
DG MOVE

to Mrs Maja MARKKOVIC KOSTELAC
EMSA Executive Director

Subject : Facilitating Crew Changes to keep World Trade moving throughout the Covid-19 Crisis

Dear Madam, Dear Sir,

COVID-19 pandemic changed the life on our Earth tremendously and we face immense challenges to continue our life and work. Europe as second continent hit by the virus is forced to take extraordinary measures to safeguard European population and economy. In that difficult situation we consider the importance of all governments to keep maritime trade moving by continuing to allow commercial ships access to ports worldwide and by facilitating the movement and rapid changeover of ships' crews.

On behalf of the European Confederation of Shipmasters' Associations (CESMA), representing more than five thousand European shipmasters I want to express our support to the letter of International Chamber Shipping and the International Transport Workers' Federation to United Nations International Labour Organization, United Nations International Maritime Organization, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and World Health Organization and to share our concerns about the stressed situation our colleagues face now on board commercial ships. The official governments have to fully understand that around 90% of global trade is transported by commercial shipping, which moves the world's food, energy and raw materials, as well as manufactured goods and components – including vital medical supplies and many products sold in supermarkets, items that are necessary (due to complex supply chains) for the preservation of many jobs in manufacturing – without which modern society simply cannot function. In this time of global crisis, it is more important than ever to keep supply chains open and maritime trade and transport moving. In particular, this means keeping the world's ports open for calls by visiting commercial ships, and facilitating crew changes and the movement of ships' crews with as few obstacles as possible.

Bearing in mind that about 40 percent of world tonnage is controlled by European shipowners and vast majority of ships are sailing to and from EU ports we ask responsible institutions in Europe to take into consideration the need the crew members on board the ships to reach and leave their working place (ships) as scheduled. In recent years the intensiveness of the work on board increased and fatigue is a vital issue in safety of navigation. In order to prevent incidents and accidents happen at sea during this difficult times and to ensure world economy and maritime trade operational we strongly ask You to develop proper procedures for crew changes in EU ports. Never mind that the boundaries are closed, there are ways the seamen to pass in transit to and from the ships and to go directly to and from their home countries with the appropriate control of their health condition following all the measures to prevent the coastal states from spread of COVID-19.

We remain at Your disposal to discuss the matter and to assist in solving the above mentioned important issue.

Respectfull regards

Capt ; H. ARDILLON
CESMA President

Copy to European Parliamentaries