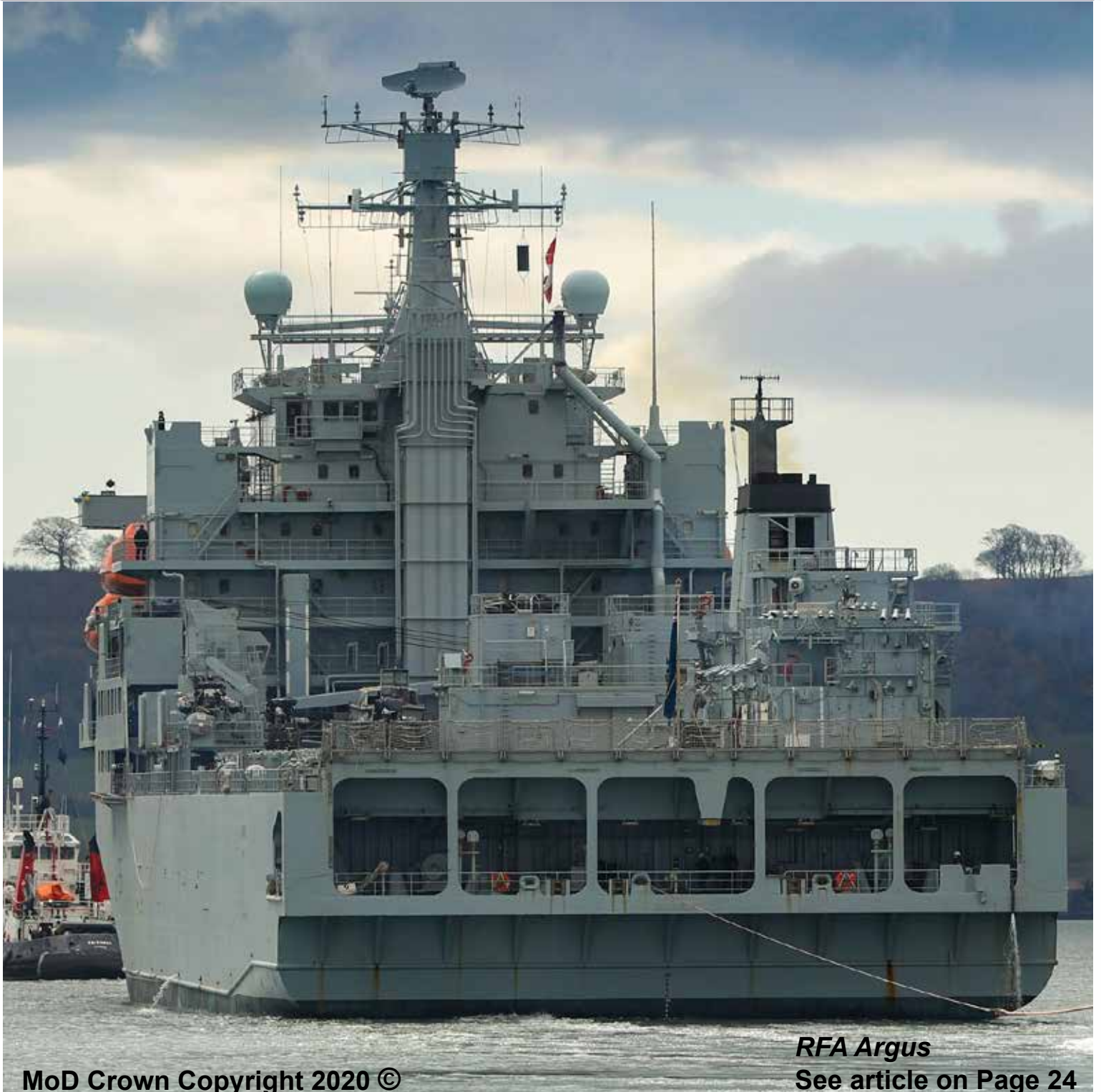


Number 31, May 2020

IFSMA

NEWSLETTER

The Shipmasters' International Voice



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RFA Argus
See article on Page 24



Contents

Secretary General's report	2
Editor's note	3
The IMO Digest	3
IMO Partnerships and Projects	3
IMO 2020 sulphur limit implementation - carriage ban enters into force	4
IMO and port State inspection authorities set pragmatic approach to support global supply chain	5
IMO Council 31	6
Customs and ports urged to maintain flow of critical goods during pandemic	7
IMO and FAO partnership to tackle maritime litter	7
The IMO Secretary General's message to seafarers	8
COVID-19 pandemic	9
US 2nd Fleet conducts NAVEUR convoy exercise in the Atlantic	9
Get on board with the safe handling of chemicals	10
USS <i>Ross</i> conducts rescue at sea	11
Global tank container fleet reaches 652,350 units	12
ClassNK Consulting Service Co Ltd. (NKCS)	12
Development of Hydrography	13
IFAN calls on owners to pay their way on navigation dues	14
Fairplay Towage Group starts a new service in Spain	15
Coronavirus - How to beat it	16
COVID-19 IMO Secretary General's Brief & Transcript	16
Opening up the Northern Sea Route	17
Crewing service boss warns:	18
DNV GL's remote surveys surge	19
New distance learning course on the IGF Code	19
Statement on 25 March by UNCTAD Secretary-General, Dr Mukhisa Kituyi	20
Updated maritime security guidance: West Africa and Gulf of Guinea	22
Repatriation of seafarers	23
RFA <i>Argus</i> is Caribbean bound	24
To reduce risks under COVID-19 emergency US Coast Guard oversees disembarkation of 250,000 from cruise ships	25
Seafarers UK COVID-19 Emergency Appeal	26
WMO is concerned about impact of COVID-19 on observing systems	26
Powering large ships	28
Indian Register of Shipping (IRClass) classes its first vessel under Lebanese Flag	28
European Shippers' Council COVID-19 measures	29
Bahamas Registry latest	29
Pandemic masks true picture of sulphur 2020 compliance	30
Use of Remote Surveys to beat Coronavirus restrictions	31
ABB to power South Asia's first LNG hybrid tug for efficient and sustainable operations	31
COVID-19 exit and recovery strategy	32
Crew change plan shipping alliance's collective call Government action needed	33
Piracy and armed robbery a threat to ships' crews, warns IMB	36
ESPO and FEPORT urge Members States to enable crew changes in all ports	37
US Coast Guard medevac	38
UK Government financial support for ferries	38
Solving the crew-change challenge with difficulty	39
US Coast Guard monitors increased presence of tankers	40
From the IFSMA Office	40

Secretary General's Report

We are in very strange times, the like of which none of us will have seen or witnessed before. Those of us that work ashore are lucky enough to be able to work from home where most nations have their people isolating themselves and restricted in what they are allowed to do. It must be a very difficult time for all of you mariners out at sea as you carry on as normal keeping the trade flowing around the world. However, I do understand that it is not easy being separated from your families and wondering if they are safe and well and with you unable to help in any way other than to keep doing your job. The biggest problems for you to cope with are what is it going to be like in the next port of call, trying to keep you and your crew safe from infections brought on from ashore, and wondering when all is going to return to normal so that you can change crews and have some time off at home.

You will be pleased to hear that although work at the IMO has been stopped until further notice, Paul and I have had plenty to do keeping you informed of the latest news. I represent IFSMA as part of a Group of over 20 influential maritime international governmental organisations and non-governmental organisations (IGOs and NGOs) known as the COVID-19 Maritime Industry Advisory Group. This group worked with the IMO Secretary General to release an Open Letter, found on our website, urging nations to recognise mariners and those that work in the industry keeping trade moving as essential workers and to find ways to facilitate crew changes around the world. This was followed by a letter from ICS and ITF with a proposed certificate for the use of crew members, on company headed paper, to use when travelling to/from crew changes. Sadly, none of this has so far had much influence, but led by the ICS the Group is liaising with key nations and the aviation authority, IATA, to try to see how we can get crew changes back up and running. The Group is very conscious that whilst being on a ship is a safe place to be compared with what is happening ashore, many of you are having your tour of duty extended, but we recognise the dangers of fatigue and I know that this is something at the forefront of your mind as the shipmaster. The Group hopes to put together a set of protocols to be followed for crew changes around the world and to try and get Nations to help facilitate this. The aviation industry is keen to help and we might be able to utilise the spare seats that are not in use as many passenger planes are now being used to carry freight.

The Group also has a meeting with the IMO Secretary General next week to try and get the UN's help in influencing the nations' maritime administrations to work together to allow speedy crew changes in the near future. IFSMA will be represented at this meeting by me and your President Captain Hans Sande from the Norwegian Maritime Officers' Association and you can rest assured we will be

putting over the position of the mariner very robustly. I will keep you informed of the progress we make as and when I have news.

I also recognise your concerns from some reports I have received of poor hygiene discipline from workers coming onboard when in port. IFSMA was able to influence a change to the vetting and inspection process on some ships to get their certificates extended by six months so that you do not have to go through unnecessary inspections. We are also working with the International Association of Classification Societies (IACS) look at other areas that require routine inspections. Again, Paul will try and keep you informed of issues and changes as we get them and these will all go onto our website.

There are many other issues in hand. Please rest assured we are working hard on your behalf and the shipping and management companies and all of our Group are very conscious of the difficulty of your situation onboard. The last initiative coming out of the Industry Group is that we are concerned that the media and the general public in most of our nations do not understand the importance of the Maritime Industry in keeping the essential goods flowing around the world. We are doing everything we can to raise the awareness in the Nations. The date of 1 May is recognised in many countries around the world as International Workers' Day, Labour Day or May Day. This is a day which is used to celebrate and recognise the contribution made by workers across the world. To recognise the contribution made by workers across the world. At this difficult time for the world we want to ensure that the contribution made by seafarers is not forgotten. Therefore, we want to encourage as many ships as possible across the world, who are in a port or harbour, to sound their horns or whistles (as is safe to do so) at 1200 local time on 1 May 2020. The ICS is asking all its companies, shipowners, managers, port operators and any relevant stakeholder to encourage ships captains to action this gesture. So please

ALL SHIPS IN PORT SOUND YOUR HORNS ON 1 MAY 2020

To all of you, whether at home ashore or onboard keep safe and rest assured we are all working hard to support you. Don't forget that if you have any issues or concerns that you can bring to my attention that you think would be useful for me in my work on your behalf, please do let me know.

Editor's Note

In April we learnt that Turkey's Directorate General of Coastal Safety was inviting tenders for the upgrading and renovation of 89 lighthouses in Turkish waters.

It is understood the project involves work on many structures throughout the DG's area of responsibility from Hopa on the Black Sea to İskenderun in the Mediterranean, and from the Aegean to the Sea of Marmara. Inspection will be required in order to establish current conditions of the

light stations. Some of those aids to navigation are located on land while others were built offshore and many are of historic importance.

Interested parties were invited to prepare an assessment of the current state of the structures and proposals for renovation.

This is a complex task and emphasises the responsibilities placed upon a State to ensure the safety of navigation and the provision of a reliable service for the world's mariners in its waters which are by no means hazard free. (See SOLAS Ch V Regulation 13)

The Ottomans built more than 200 lighthouses to guide sailors from the Red Sea to Romania during their reign.

The IMO digest

A summary of some of the news received from the IMO Media service in recent weeks.

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Partnerships and Projects

New IMO department will tackle key global issues through innovative partnerships

A new department has been established within the IMO Secretariat to focus on supporting Member States to tackle key global issues in the context of international shipping and help promote sustainable development. This was reported by IMO Media on 28 February.



Jose Matheickal heads the new department at IMO: Partnerships and Projects.

IMO has a long and successful track record of matching the requirements of developing and less-developed countries with resources made available by a range of governmental, institutional and corporate donors. Energy efficiency, climate change, protecting biodiversity, preventing marine pollution, maritime safety and security are just some of the areas that have been covered.

The new department will build on this to help tackle these and other key global challenges, within a maritime context, through innovative partnerships and long-term projects. Decarbonisation, marine plastic litter and biofouling are among the topic areas already being addressed by IMO's major projects.

IMO Secretary-General Kitack Lim commented; *'For the benefits of sustainable development to be evenly spread, all countries must be able to play a full and active part in maritime activities. Building partnerships is key to this. This new department will help that to happen. It is very much in line with my vision of a "Voyage Together", where no one is left behind when it comes to the effective implementation of IMO's global standards.'*



Youngso Kim will lead the partnership's function within the new structure.

Operational from 1 March 2020, the Department for Partnerships and Projects will enhance and strengthen partnerships with external stakeholders and donor agencies to tackle some of the major global challenges which impinge on today's maritime world.

It becomes the focal point for developing partnerships and coordinating long-term donor-funded projects, as well as implementing IMO's resource mobilization strategy to strengthen its Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme.

The new department reflects IMO's strong and continuing commitment to helping its Member States achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, and implement the Organization's regulatory framework.

It will serve as a gateway for partnership opportunities with a wide range of external partners, including IMO Member States, UN agencies, financial institutions, NGOs, IGOs and the private sector. A key objective will be to increase IMO's existing portfolio of donor-supported long-term pro-

jects supporting its technical cooperation objectives.

It will promote a culture of collaboration and innovation, creating broader engagement and partnerships with maritime and ocean-related stakeholders.

With the new department, the existing Partnerships and Resource Mobilization team within IMO's Technical Cooperation Division and the Major Projects team in the Marine Environment Division come together under a single umbrella. The resultant synergy and harmonization is designed to ensure that IMO Member States are better served.

The new department will be headed by Jose Matheickal, who brings more than 15 years' experience of leading and coordinating major projects at IMO, supported by Youngso Kim, who will lead the partnership's function within the new structure.

IMO 2020 sulphur limit implementation - carriage ban enters into force

According to a statement issued by IMO Media on 3 March consistent implementation of the IMO 2020 regulation which limits sulphur in ships fuel oil was enhanced from 1 March 2020, with the entry into force of a rule to ban the carriage of non-compliant fuel oil.

The IMO 2020 regulation limits sulphur in ships' fuel oil to a maximum 0.50%. This regulation has been in force globally since 1 January 2020¹, under IMO's MARPOL treaty, with benefits for the environment and human health from a reduction in sulphur oxides in the air.



The complementary International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from ships (MARPOL) amendment prohibits the carriage of non-compliant fuel oil for combustion purposes for propulsion or operation on board a ship – unless the ship has an approved exhaust gas cleaning system ("scrubber") fitted.

It is understood that this amendment does not change in any way the 0.50% limit which has been in force since 1 January 2020. It is intended as an additional measure to support consistent implementation and compliance and provide a means for effective enforcement by States, particularly port State control.

In designated emission control areas (ECAs), the maximum sulphur limit in fuel oil is 0.10 % (the four ECAs are: the Baltic Sea area; the North Sea area; the North American area (covering designated coastal areas off the United States and Canada); and the United States Caribbean Sea area (around Puerto Rico and the United States Virgin Islands)).

1 www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/HotTopics/Pages/Sulphur-2020.aspx

IMO and port State inspection authorities set pragmatic approach to support global supply chain

The port state control (PSC) regimes which carry out inspections onboard ships to monitor and enforce compliance with international regulations have highlighted their commitment to ensuring shipping continues to trade safely, securely and efficiently during the coronavirus pandemic, while respecting the important role of seafarers as key workers and protecting the environment. This was reported by the IMO Media service on 1 April.

Representatives of the ten PSC regimes which cover the world's oceans met on 8 April in an online video meeting called by the IMO.

PSC regimes reported that while the number of physical on-board ship inspections has reduced considerably, in order to protect Port State Control officers and seafarers, the regimes continue to work to target high-risk ships which may be substandard.

Regimes reported taking a "pragmatic, practical and flexible" approach, recognizing that exemptions, waivers and extensions to certificates have been granted by many flag states. The PSC regimes expressed a general desire for such practices to be standardized and harmonized.

The PSC regimes agreed on the need to work together to develop harmonized port state control practices and policies to ensure a consistent approach across the world and also welcomed the coordinating role of IMO.

Many IMO Member States, as flag States, have communicated information to IMO on their guidance in relation to certificate extensions and related matters. Some of the port State control regimes have already issued guidance and information on conducting ship inspections during the COVID-19 pandemic. These will also be shared on the IMO website.

IMO Secretary-General Kitack Lim reiterated his message that the maritime industry continues to be a vital artery for the global economy and highlighted the need for all involved to work collaboratively to address practical issues caused by the unprecedented global situation. He welcomed the prevailing spirit of cooperation, collaboration and solidarity in these challenging times – when shipping is more important than ever in the global supply chain.

In a joint statement, the port State control regimes and IMO highlighted the unprecedented impact of the COVID-19 crisis and recognized the need to maintain crucial sea trade supply chains, including the flow of vital medical supplies, critical agricultural products, and other goods and services.



'The respective roles of flag States and port States to solve this crisis, in terms of supporting maritime trade, are paramount, and can also be significantly assisted by the industry. At the same time, the safety of life at sea, the protection of the marine environment and the respect of seafarers as keyworkers must remain shared priorities,' the statement said.

On the invitation by the Secretary-General, the meeting on PSC inspections on during the COVID-19 pandemic was attended by representatives of the ten Port State Control (PSC) regimes, namely the United States Coast Guard, the Viña del Mar Agreement and the Abuja, Black Sea, Caribbean, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean, Paris, Riyadh and Tokyo Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) on port State control, as well as from the IMO Secretariat.

Coronavirus information for shipping and seafarers

Advice and information circulated by IMO, including information from Member States and recommendations issued by IMO, can be found on the page here: <https://tinyurl.com/tscce87>

Port State Control regional regimes

Areas of responsibility of the nine regional regimes cover:

- (i) the waters of the European coastal States and the North Atlantic basin from North America to parts of Europe and the north Atlantic (Paris MoU);
- (ii) Asia and part of the Pacific Ocean (Tokyo MoU);
- (iii) Latin America (Acuerdo de Viña del Mar);
- (iv) Caribbean (Caribbean MoU);
- (v) West and Central Africa (Abuja MoU);
- (vi) Black Sea (Black Sea MoU);
- (vii) the southern part of the Mediterranean Sea (Mediterranean MoU);
- (viii) Indian Ocean (Indian Ocean MoU);
- (ix) Persian Gulf (Riyadh MoU).

The United States Coast Guard maintains the tenth PSC regime.

Action urged to keep shipping flowing

On 17 April IMO reported that the 31st Extraordinary Session of the Council was held by correspondence, due to the unusual circumstances as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This was the first IMO meeting not held live in the history of the organization.

Solidarity in the pandemic

The Council joined IMO Secretary-General Kitack Lim in expressing its solidarity with all Member States and other stakeholders during the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic and commended them for their concerted efforts to contain the spread of the virus. The Council also expressed its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his swift action in response to the pandemic, while ensuring the continuation of the work of the Organization.



Action urged to keep shipping flowing

The Council expressed its appreciation to the crew, seafarers, shore-based workers, and personnel of the maritime and aviation communities for enabling international trade to continue in the face of the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recognizing that the ability of shipping services and seafarers to deliver vital goods, including medical equipment to the populations around the world was critical in responding to the pandemic, the Council:

- urged flag and port States to ensure the smooth operation of maritime traffic and availability of shipping services for world commerce, for the benefit of humanity;
- further urged flag and port States to ensure the welfare of seafarers, in particular that their rights to wages, shore leave, sick leave, access to medical assistance, food supplies and repatriation were preserved;
- endorsed a practical and pragmatic approach for re-

pairs, survey and certification and licensing of seafarers; and

- encouraged Governments to share best practices in keeping workers in the maritime transport sector safe from COVID-19, while taking into account national circumstances.

The Council also requested Member States to submit proposals to the 32nd Extraordinary Session of the Council on measures to ensure that shipping services were not unnecessarily disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

32nd Extraordinary Session to approve revised schedule of meetings

The Council decided to convene the 32nd extraordinary session of the Council, by correspondence, at an appropriate time, as and when it appears that the Organization will be able to resume normal operations. The 32nd session will be invited to approve the revised schedule of meetings postponed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Measures to ensure continuity of operations endorsed

The Council endorsed and commended the actions taken by the IMO Secretary-General, in his capacity as the chief administrative officer of the Organization, and the Secretariat in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and endorsed future actions, as appropriate, to ensure public safety and the continuity of operations of the Organization.

Future meetings and the IMO Secretariat

The Council requested the Secretary-General to submit reports to a future session of the Council on: (i) the establishment of a system that enables IMO staff to work remotely without affecting their productivity and (ii) the possibility of holding meetings by teleconference, including the development of relevant procedures for such meetings, by the Council, and related budgetary implications, in view of the uncertainty of the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Budgetary implications

The Council requested the Secretary-General to provide a preliminary analysis of the budgetary impact of the COVID-19 pandemic to the 32nd extraordinary session of the Council, by correspondence, acknowledging that the Secretary-General would endeavour to effect the maximum economies in the budget. The Council also requested the Secretary-General to provide a final report on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Organization to the 124th session of the Council.

Council participation

All 40 Members of the Council were deemed “present” via correspondence. The following observer delegations also participated in the session by correspondence: Colombia, Cook Islands, Finland, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Marshall Islands, Saudi Arabia and Vanuatu.

Customs and ports urged to maintain flow of critical goods during pandemic

Trade by sea must continue to flow to maintain the continued provision of essential goods, including vital medical supplies, during the unprecedented global situation arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. This was the message of a joint statement from the heads of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the World Customs Organization (WCO), issued on 17 April.

A coordinated and proactive approach

IMO Secretary-General Kitack Lim and WCO Secretary General Dr Kunio Mikuriya strongly urged customs administrations and port state authorities, together with all other concerned agencies, to establish a coordinated and proactive approach to maintaining the integrity of the global supply chain so that the flow of vital goods by sea is not unnecessarily disrupted.



Photo: IMO ©

The joint statement noted that ports are being closed and ships denied entry, as travel is curtailed and borders closed to slow the spread of the disease and mitigate its impacts. Such restrictions, it says, may interrupt much-needed aid and technical support, and have negative social and economic effects on the countries concerned.

It is critical that customs administrations and port state authorities continue to facilitate the cross-border movement of vital medical supplies and equipment, critical agricultural products, and other goods, to help minimize the overall impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on economies and societies, the joint statement said.

Importance of communication

The two organizations emphasized the utmost importance of communication, coordination and cooperation at both national and local levels, between ships, port facilities, customs administrations and other competent authorities.

Customs and port administrations are urged to work together to resolve disruptions to the global supply chain, to support the health and well-being of all people.

The joint statement also referred to recommendations and guidance already issued by the two Organizations.

Recommendations

In particular, IMO has distributed a series of recommendations for governments and relevant national authorities,

proposed by a broad cross-section of global industry associations representing the maritime transportation sector, including a specific call for governments to designate professional seafarers and marine personnel, regardless of their nationality, as key workers providing an essential service.

(See briefing here: <https://tinyurl.com/y9a9s2el>)

The joint statement comes as the demand for, and the movement of, relief goods (such as supplies, medicines and medical equipment) across borders is increasing dramatically.

- The full text of the joint statement can be downloaded here: <https://tinyurl.com/yafd5eco>
- IMO COVID-19 page here: <https://tinyurl.com/tscce87>
- WCO website: <https://tinyurl.com/y8z75ohh>

IMO and FAO partnership to tackle maritime litter

Partnerships are essential in tackling the global issue of marine plastic litter. The IMO and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) have formally signed an agreement to move forward and jointly implement the GloLitter Partnerships Project, initially launched in December 2019, with funding from Norway, to prevent and reduce marine plastic litter from shipping and fisheries.

This agreement, reported by IMO on 15 April, specifies how the agencies will jointly execute the project and marks the next step towards many strategic partnerships anticipated under the project. Both agencies will now reach out to their respective fields to strengthen cooperation, not least private sector participation through a Global Industry Alliance.



The GloLitter project will help developing countries to identify opportunities to prevent and reduce marine litter,

including plastic litter, from within the maritime transport and fisheries sectors, and to decrease the use of plastics in these industries. It will identify opportunities to re-use and recycle plastics. It will directly help to achieve one of the specific targets in the global Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)* 14 - to 'prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution, by 2025'.

This agreement was signed on 14 April 2020 by Dr Jose Matheickal, Chief of the Department of Partnerships and Projects, IMO, and Roberto Ridolfi, Assistant Director General of FAO.

Countries have been invited to submit their expressions of interest to be part of the project by 30 April.

More about the project

Plastic litter in the oceans is recognised as a major environmental problem. The GloLitter Partnerships Project aims to help shipping and fisheries move to a low-plastics future. GloLitter will assist developing countries identify opportunities to prevent and reduce marine litter, including plastic litter, from within the maritime transport and fisheries sectors, and to decrease the use of plastics in these industries, including identifying opportunities to re-use and recycle plastics.

This project will consider the availability and adequacy of port reception facilities. It will look at enhancing awareness of the marine plastics issue within the shipping and fisheries sectors, including seafarers and fishers; and encourage fishing gear to be marked so it can be traced back to its owner if discarded.

These and other actions to reduce plastic litter have already been identified in IMO's Action Plan to address marine plastic litter from ships, adopted in 2018.

The GloLitter project will develop guidance documents, training material and toolkits to help enforce existing regulations, including IMO's International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) Annex V.

Since 1988, this has prohibited the discharge of plastics, including discarded fishing gear, into the sea from ships.

*See: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg14>

The IMO Secretary General's message to seafarers

'You are not alone. You are not forgotten.' So said IMO Secretary-General Kitack Lim in a moving personal message to seafarers everywhere, assuring them that IMO understands the unique problems they face during the coronavirus pandemic and has been working tirelessly at

all levels to find solutions for them. This was published on 20 April.

Hundreds of ship sailings have been cancelled as trade has been reduced in line with the slowing global economy and ports all over the world have either closed or drastically cut their operations.

But restrictions on travel and personal movement adopted by most countries have left many seafarers stranded on board ships, unable to disembark or be replaced by relief crews. Others find themselves stuck in hotels, without pay and unable to get flights home.



Estimates suggest that, every month, 100,000 seafarers finish their contracts and would normally be flown home – but the coronavirus has had a huge negative impact on this repatriation process.

Since the start of the global lockdown, IMO has been in urgent contact with trade unions, seafarer welfare organizations, ship owners, governments and fellow

U N agencies, especially the ILO, to try and find solutions.

Mr Lim said he had been: '*deeply touched by the many stories we have heard from individual seafarers of the challenges, hardships and sacrifices that seafarers have made to keep the global supply chain moving while helping the global population.*'

He noted the difficulties the maritime industry has faced in conducting crew changeovers, providing medical care for sick and injured crew and allowing for shore leave, and added: '*the inability to resupply or repatriate crews concerns me greatly.*'

Describing seafarers as being in the front line of the global fight against the pandemic, Mr Lim said: '*All of us at IMO understand the challenges you face.*'

He added: '*To all seafarers, my message to you is strong and clear: We are listening. We hear you.*'

Secretary-General Lim has written to all IMO Member States, urging them to recognize all seafarers as key workers, remove any barriers to their documentation and lift national travel restrictions so that they can get home on conclusion of their contracts, and rejoin their families. And, wherever possible, IMO staff have been working round the clock to help bring individual cases to a speedy resolution.

COVID-19 pandemic

Joint Statement by IMO-WHO-ILO

- **Medical certificates of seafarers**
- **Ship sanitation certificates**
- **Medical care of seafarers**
- **Latest statement on seafarer matters – on the IMO COVID-19 page**

Downloadable at: <https://tinyurl.com/tscce87>

Joint Statement by IMO-WHO-ILO

Circular Letter No.4204/Add.10 (22 April 2020) - Joint Statement IMO-WHO-ILO on medical certificates of seafarers, ship sanitation certificates and medical care of seafarers in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Downloadable at: <https://tinyurl.com/y7dcj9wy>

Key points

The IHO, the WHO and the ILO have urged Governments to facilitate trade by ship and allow crew movements during the coronavirus pandemic, while protecting seafarers to ensure they can continue to deliver vital goods, including medical supplies and food.



The joint statement sets out requirements and recommendations, including provisions for medical care and extensions of medical certificates of seafarers, and exempting inspectors and key personnel responsible for ship inspections and issuing Ship Sanitation Certificates from national restrictions on movement.

The statement asks for

- Physicians responsible for medical examination of seafarers to be considered exempt from national restrictions of movement.
- Inspectors and key personnel responsible for ship inspections and issue of Ship Sanitation Certificates to be exempt from national restrictions of movement.

This statement notes that more than two-thirds of countries globally are implementing restrictions on international traffic, including flight suspensions and port closures.

In the words of the joint statement: *'In this context, we strongly encourage Governments to facilitate ships' move-*

ments, including docking, crew changes, ship inspection and issuance of ship sanitation certificates during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The three organizations, IMO, WHO and ILO, said: *'We further call upon Governments to ensure that information regarding suspension of port services and other measures introduced in response to COVID-19 is quickly and effectively communicated to international shipping and all relevant stakeholders.'*

US 2nd Fleet conducts NAVEUR convoy exercise in the Atlantic

In news issued on 28 February it was learnt that the US 2nd Fleet, on behalf of US Naval Forces Europe, and in conjunction with Military Sealift Command (MSC), was conducting convoy operations across the Atlantic, employing the guided-missile cruiser USS *Vella Gulf* (CG 72) alongside USNS *Benavidez*, and the vehicle carriers mv *Resolve*, and mv *Patriot*.



Sealift remains the primary method for transporting military equipment, supplies, and material around the world. With the return to peer competition and access to sea lanes no longer guaranteed, it is important that the US Navy and MSC train together in order to ensure the successful delivery and sustainment of combat power necessary for the joint force to fight and win anywhere around the globe.

In the words of Captain Hans E Lynch, Commodore Military Sealift Command Atlantic: *'In a real world conflict, much of the military equipment must still go by sealift, which makes convoy operations a critical skill set to maintain and practice. In the last five years, there has been an increased*

emphasis on including Merchant Marine shipping in large scale exercises to enhance tactical proficiency. Exercises that incorporate convoy operations are an extension of that ongoing tactical training.' This exercise will simulate an opposed transit, testing the fleets' abilities to safely cross the Atlantic while testing new ways of conducting a convoy in today's environment.

As we well know convoy operations were critical during both World Wars as the primary method for moving troops and military equipment, supplies and material to Europe. After the Second World War convoys became less prevalent in the Atlantic theatre, although still practiced in other areas of operation.

Vice-Admiral Andrew Lewis, commander US 2nd Fleet added: 'The Atlantic is a battlespace that cannot be ignored. We need to be prepared to operate at the high end alongside our allies, partners and adversaries alike as soon as we are underway.'



A convoy comprising the Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Vella Gulf (CG 72), right, the vehicle carrier mv Resolve (US-flag, 49,443gt), centre, and the Military Sea Lift Command (MSC) roll-on roll-off cargo ship USNS Benavidez (T-AKR 306) steam in formation. This exercise simulates an opposed transit, testing the fleets' abilities to safely cross the Atlantic while testing new ways of conducting a convoy in today's maritime environment.

US Navy Photos by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Andrew Waters/
Released USN ©

During operations in the Atlantic, Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Dwight D Eisenhower (CVN 69), along with P-8s from VP-4 and a US submarine, cleared the maritime battlespace prior to the transit of the Vella Gulf-escorted MSC convoy.

Commander NAVEUR, Admiral James G Foggo III reflected: 'The coordination between NAVEUR, 2nd Fleet, and 6th Fleet are indicative of a seamless Atlantic Ocean. This exercise allows us to sharpen our ability to move critical resources across the Atlantic, from the United States to Europe.'

He continued: 'As I have said before, logistics is the sixth domain of warfare, and a critical part of any successful operation or exercise. The transatlantic bridge is just as

important today for moving troops and military equipment, supplies and material from the United States to Europe as it has been at any point in history.'

The USN's 2nd Fleet and 6th Fleet work together to ensure the security of sea-lanes of communication in the Atlantic. If called upon, the Department of Defense's sealift transportation fleet expects to move approximately 90% of required assets from the US to the theatre of conflict. The safest and quickest way to get needed materials to the front lines is via maritime convoy.

'We, as a Navy, are inherently linked with the broader maritime industry and this exercise provides a great opportunity to train like we fight,' said Captain Andrew Fitzpatrick, commander, USS Vella Gulf. He added: 'Practising convoy operations flexes a blue-water, high-end skill for the first time in many years, enabling us all to operate on, above, and below the sea in a contested environment.'

MSC operates approximately 110 non-combatant, civilian-crewed ships that replenish US Navy ships, conduct specialized missions, strategically preposition combat cargo at sea around the world and move military cargo and supplies used by deployed US forces and coalition partners.

Commander Second Fleet (C2F) exercises operational authorities over assigned ships, aircraft, and landing forces on the East Coast and the Atlantic. When directed, C2F conducts exercises and operations within the US European Command Area of Responsibility (AOR) as an expeditionary fleet, providing NAVEUR an additional manoeuvre arm to operate forces dynamically in theatre.

NAVEUR, headquartered in Naples, Italy, conducts the full spectrum of joint and naval operations, often in concert with Allied and interagency partners, in order to advance US national interests and security and stability in Europe.

Editor's note: This article is based on material kindly provided by Commander, US 2nd Fleet Public Affairs.

Get on board with the safe handling of chemicals

Maritime NZ has reminding operators of their (NZ) Health & Safety at Work Act (2015*) duties to identify 'reasonably foreseeable risks', such as chemicals used on board, and to control these risks 'as far as practicable', including being ready for emergencies.

This reminder issued in the NZ Maritime journal SeaCHANGE Issue 66, which provides a focus on what's new and changing in the maritime sector, follows recent chemical-related inspection findings as well as an accident in which a man suffered a chemical burn to his eye while cleaning a meal press on a deep sea factory trawler.

The man wasn't following established procedures or wearing the proper personal protective equipment when a caustic cleaning chemical seeped through the goggle seal

and into his eye. This resulted in temporary loss of vision and required treatment ashore.

Some operators have recently provided their ships with a neutralising agent (Diphoterine) for first-aid of chemical injuries. This product neutralises many harmful chemicals even inside the body's affected cells, quickly alleviating pain and preventing further harm.

Advice from New Zealand Maritime is as follows:

- Make sure all crew members have easy access to Safety Data Sheets and that these are kept up to date.
- Ensure all chemicals are stored safely – and, if possible, restrict access to authorised people.
- Fully assess tasks before procuring personal protection equipment (PPE) and introduce processes to prevent improper PPE being used.
- Make sure all crew members are aware of the risks associated with chemicals as well as your vessel's first aid steps.
- Provide specific training courses for crew members using or handling hazardous substances.
- Consider carrying a proprietary first aid neutralising solution, such as Diphoterine. Or make sure you have other suitable first aid measures in place such as an emergency eye wash station.

Editor's note: This text is based with thanks on Maritime New Zealand's journal *Sea CHANGE* edition No 66 available here: <https://tinyurl.com/r327ttt>

*For more on the New Zealand HASWA see: <https://tinyurl.com/tyeysvm>

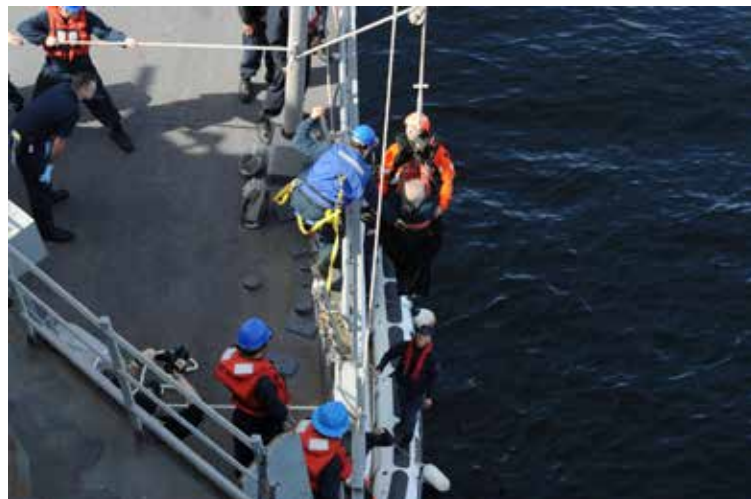
USS Ross conducts rescue at sea

According to US Naval Forces Europe-Africa/US 6th Fleet Public Affairs the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS *Ross* (DDG 71) conducted lifesaving emergency SAR operations for a civilian Turkish vessel in the Sea of Marmara while conducting her southbound transit from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean Sea on 3 March.

Late on the morning of that day lookouts onboard *Ross* spotted smoke plumes rising from a small vessel in the Sea of Marmara. *Ross* quickly deployed her small boat, outfitted with two search-and-rescue swimmers and one corpsman, to rescue distressed crew members and render assistance. US Sailors were able to rescue three mariners. Additionally, *Ross* crew members recovered two deceased mariners.

The crew members were brought aboard and provided immediate medical attention. *Ross* coordinated with the Turkish Coast Guard to transfer the rescued crew mem-

bers ashore. A fleet of Turkish patrol craft guarded *Ross* from the surrounding traffic as *Ross* lowered all crew members onto a Turkish SAR craft to return them ashore for further medical attention.



The Arleigh Burke class guided-missile destroyer USS Ross (DDG 71) conducts SAR operations in response to a disaster at sea in the Sea of Marmara.

US Navy photos by USS Ross (DDG 71) Public Affairs.

Photo: USN ©.

Commander J D John, commanding officer of USS *Ross* commented: *'In accordance with international law of the sea and maritime custom, the US Navy assists mariners in distress, just as any other as any other mariner would. This demonstrates the multi-mission capability of Ross and our ability to respond rapidly to any situation.'*

The US Navy routinely operates in the Black Sea consistent with international law, including the Montreux Convention.

US 6th Fleet with HQ in Naples conducts the full spectrum of joint and naval operations, often in concert with allied, and interagency partners, in order to advance US national interests and security and stability in Europe and Africa.

Global tank container fleet reaches 652,350 units

ITCO, the International Tank Container Organisation, has published its 8th Annual Tank Container Fleet Survey. This year's survey estimates that, as at 1 January 2020, the global tank container fleet had reached 652,350 units worldwide, compared to the figure of 604,700 on 1 January 2019, a year-on-year growth of 7.88%.

Reflecting the downturn in trading conditions experienced by many sectors of the container shipping industry, the number of tank containers produced last year (2019) was lower than in 2018. In 2019, a total of 54,650 tank containers were built, compared to 59,700 in 2018, a decrease of some 5000 units over the previous year.

The complete survey can be downloaded from the ITCO website: www.itco.org

The survey shows how, numerically, the industry continues to be dominated on a global level by a relatively small number of major tank container operators and leasing companies. The top ten operators account for over 235,000 tanks representing over 56% of the global operators' fleet of 381,700 units. The top ten leasing companies account for 240,000 tanks, about 80% of the total leasing fleet of 305,615. The top three leasing companies account for 154,000 tanks, over 50% of the total leasing company fleet.



Commenting on the results of the Survey, Reg Lee, ITCO President, noted: *'While the increase in tank container production in 2019 was lower than the previous year, the market has continued to expand due to a large extent to the continued successful conversion of certain cargoes*

previously shipped in drums or transported in chemical tankers to tank containers. In addition, China continued to see significant growth in the use of tank containers for domestic transport of bulk liquids, while inter-Asia, especially South East Asia, tank container operations continue to develop strongly.'

He continued: *'In 2019, the majority of new tanks were purchased by leasing companies mainly to service the equipment requirements of tank container operators. As more leasing company tank containers become available, the industry has seen the growth in the number of third party logistics providers (3PLs) and (4PLs) entering the market; these companies often have little, or no, accredited infrastructure to support their growing fleet of tanks, which we can assume they have taken on because of the low lease rates on offer, and on a shorter lease period.'*

Commenting on the future development of the industry, Lee continued: *'While the main aim of this Survey is to meet the data and information requirements of a wide range of stakeholders, ITCO has another reason for publishing it. ITCO is aware that one of the most important issues facing the tank container industry is how to ensure the successful development and education of a new generation of personnel (management and staff) entering this sector of the shipping industry.'*

'All ITCO Members face the challenge of recruiting staff who can participate in the development of their businesses, introduce new ideas and technology, and ensure the long-term future of their companies.'

'It is an important aspect of ITCO's role as an organisation representing the interests of its members to create an environment which can attract a new generation of professionals. Within this, ITCO has a responsibility to support its members with the tools to provide training and education.'

As part of its mission to attract a new generation of professionals to the tank container industry, ITCO has recently donated a tank (illustrated, ITCO ©) to the Shanghai Maritime University, which will be used for educational and training purposes.

ClassNK Consulting Service Co Ltd. (NKCS)

Launch of Cyber security training (e-learning)

It was reported from Tokyo on 10 March that NKCS had launched a cyber security training service (e-learning), developed in cooperation with KDDI Corporation and KDDI Digital Security Inc (KDS).

(See: www.kddi.com/english/).

It is understood that the programme:

- Is focusing on the maritime industries.
- Supports Japanese and English and provides a certificate of completion after a comprehension test. This

certificate can be used for an education record of Cyber Security Management Systems.

- Is available anywhere and anytime via smart device and PC.
- Is certified by ClassNK in compliance with the *Guidelines on Cyber Security Onboard Ships Version 3*, produced and supported by BIMCO.

Background

Recently, the increasing use of many solutions using Big Data and the IoT technologies has brought us benefits but it has also introduced cyber risks among maritime industries.



Under these circumstances, it is seen as an important first step towards cyber safety for those who are engaged in ship operation and other related industries to gain proper knowledge.

At NKCS, KDDI and KDS staff offer a training programme combining the companies' expertise in offshore and on-shore operations.

Development of Hydrography

UK Government and Southern Africa and Islands

It was reported from London on 22 February that the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) and UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO) are working with the Southern Africa and Islands Hydrographic Commission to establish regulations and legislation that promote the growth of the region's ocean economy.

Across the world there is increasing reliance on the oceans: with dependence on them for food, energy and livelihoods.

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), increasing dependence on this resource will mean the global ocean economy – which includes activities ranging from shipping and fishing to renewables – will grow to reach \$3 trillion dollars in 2030.

This growth will have a significant effect on the countries that line Southern Africa's coastline. In Madagascar, which is situated on the Indian Ocean trade route that links Australia, Asia and the Middle East, ports and shipping lanes will experience an exponential increase in shipping traffic. The planting of mangroves along the eastern coast, has the potential to generate increased income for coastal communities while helping to mitigate the effects of climate change. In South Africa, government investment in

marine infrastructure through Operation Phakisa* has the potential to create an estimated one million jobs by 2033.

Legislation and regulations that guide the sharing of maritime information – including up-to-date bathymetry (seabed mapping data), tides, navigational warnings and observations – will be key to helping these countries manage this change, as well as unlocking further potential to grow their economy in a sustainable way.



Photo: www.gov.uk ©

It is understood that they can underpin effective marine spatial planning, allowing governments and commercial counterparts to unlock economic potential, deliver effective protection of marine species and contribute to global conservation. They support navigational safety, giving mariners the information they need to reduce the likelihood of groundings that could lead to loss of life and the degradation of delicate marine environments. Furthermore, they support the sharing of vital security information that is key to reducing the threat of piracy and illegal fishing in the region.

Earlier in the year the UK Hydrographic Office and Foreign & Commonwealth Office worked with partners across Southern Africa to develop this regulation and legislation during a five-day seminar.

Led by government experts in maritime safety, seabed mapping and ocean science, sessions covered:

- Hydrographic Services and the development of a Hydrographic Governance Implementation Plan – These sessions promoted compliance with international obligations, identifying activities that improve the sharing of Maritime Safety Information and advice on how to maintain safety of navigation through seabed mapping. Sessions also led to discussions on the wider use of the data to support marine spatial planning, maritime infrastructure development, environmental protection and management of resources; all fundamental activities for developing a sustainable blue economy.
- The creation of regional peer support networks – these

sessions promoted the sharing of knowledge and best practice, whilst identifying activities, dependencies, costs and success measures that improve the sharing of hydrographic information and reduce maritime risk to life and delicate marine environments.

Commenting on the programme, Ian Davies, International Hydrographic Programmes Manager said: *'This seminar was a fantastic opportunity to work with partners from UK government and around Southern Africa to help build sustainable and resilient marine economies for the future.'*

'The oceans are vital for providing these states with resources, security and livelihoods, so it is vital that we not only help them understand and monitor these areas, but also learn how to protect them through the development of strong governance and appropriate legislation.'

* See: <https://tinyurl.com/tklopw7>

IFAN calls on owners to pay their way on navigation dues

Arabian Gulf / Persian Gulf

The board of the International Foundation for Aids to Navigation (IFAN) has met in London and highlighted the issue of non-payment of navigational dues as critical to the ongoing modernisation and provision of aids to navigation in the Gulf region.



Peter Stanley, CEO of IFAN.

The Middle East Navigation Aids Service (MENAS, a subsidiary of IFAN) has been providing these services since 1911 as no state owns the aids to navigation in the joint waters of the Gulf. This service is funded exclusively by payment of navigation dues, and the sustainability of the existing service, on which the shipping industry depends, is totally dependent on receipt of these dues.

The board, which is made up of the senior executives of

some of the world's largest ship owners, confirmed that plans to recapitalise DGPS (Differential Global Positioning System) services in the Gulf will be funded from these navigational dues from ship owners.

Alan Marsh, newly elected Chairman of IFAN, said the Foundation and its sister organisation the MENAS, were committed to providing world class aids to navigation, including maritime safety broadcasts to seafarers in the region.

He stressed it was essential that users fully contributed to the running cost of the services provided by MENAS.



The MENAS service craft Relume

Peter Stanley, CEO of IFAN, commented: *'MENAS will continue to provide services but sadly shipowners may not even know that these are provided by MENAS and some question the need to pay Nav Dues whilst transiting these highly important and congested waters.'*

'Nav Dues are essential to ensure MENAS can continue to provide Aids to Navigation in the region while there is no alternative service provider or navigational system providing as accurate a service. All ships in the area share the benefit of these well-maintained nav aids.'

MENAS is currently the Gulf region's leading innovator in the development, fabrication, supply and maintenance of aids to navigation. Operating from its main base in Bahrain and a support base in Abu Dhabi, MENAS owns and maintains an extensive network of buoys, lighthouses and DGPS transmitters.

It also provides essential information and advice such as the issue of Notices to Mariners, advising on hazards to shipping and co-ordinating additions to navigation charts for the Gulf.

Each month over 2,000 vessels rely upon MENAS equipment and services.

MENAS is an associate member of the International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA) which has agreed to partner MENAS in the provision of training port authority personnel to the regions starting in the Third Quarter of this year.

Background

For over 100 years MENAS has played a major role in

the safety of shipping in the Gulf and in the development of Aids to Navigation (AtoN) infrastructure throughout the Gulf States. Formerly named the Persian Gulf Lighting Service, it was established to be the responsible authority for aids to navigation in the region.

Aids to Navigation (AtoN)

MENAS owns and maintains an extensive network of navigation beacons, buoys and lighthouses across the Gulf and its approaches. It also provides maintenance services and quality management practices for AtoNs considered essential for international shipping and owned by governmental and port authorities throughout the Gulf.

DGPS and AIS

Since 1997 MENAS established and continues to operate a free-to-air differential global positioning system (DGPS) for the region.



Installation and maintenance by MENAS.

An upgraded service as well as complimentary terrestrial-based services are being developed, the latter still dependent on international protocols being developed and agreed.

The company has deployed Automatic Identification System (AIS) equipment across its equipment network to both enhance the service to mariners and improve performance monitoring of AtoNs: The MENAS Operations Centre in Bahrain records status, performance and reliability of AtoNs using the AIS system and satellite-based Vega Web monitoring.

Navtex

MENAS is the Acting Sub-Area Co-ordinator for NAVAR-EA IX (the Arabian Gulf and its Approaches) co-ordinating a NAVTEX service within the framework of the WWNWS system established jointly by the IHO and IMO. NAVTEX is an international automated direct-printing service for promulgation of navigational and meteorological warnings and urgent information to ships. The system fulfils an integral role in the Global Maritime Distress and Safety

System (GMDSS) developed by the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

Notices to Mariners

Notices to Mariners provide essential, up to date information and advice to mariners navigating within the Gulf. Subjects include (but are not limited to) notification of works and events, which may impact on navigation of a permanent or semi-permanent nature. Each Notice specifies the original source of the information and refers to the British Admiralty Chart(s) affected by the Notice. MENAS also issues a monthly Summary of its Notices to Mariners, which ensures dissemination of information to all major hydrographic offices worldwide.

Fairplay Towage Group starts a new service in Spain

On 13 March the Fairplay Towage Group announced that it had been awarded the licence to operate harbour tugs in the port Las Palmas / Gran Canary and extended its operational area now into Spanish waters for the first time.

Walter Collet MD and spokesman of Fairplay Towage Group: *'We are confident, that this expansion into Spanish waters will be appreciated by our international clients. The preparation and the necessary documentation of our application under Spanish rules was quite challenging. The conditions to be met are considerably higher compared to other jurisdictions in Europe, however our Fairplay Team and legal consultants handled all aspects of the licensing process very focused and professional.'*

Collet added: *'Our tugs all named after landmarks on the Canary Islands already performed the first assistances in the Port of Las Palmas. The fleet currently consists of four modern tugs under Spanish flag manned by Spanish sailors under a local Spanish contract. This setup allows us to offer to our clients an attractive and competitive package for harbour towage and for the first time clients have a choice in the Port of Las Palmas.'*



'Currently the licence Conditions for the surrounding waters at Lanzarote, Tenerife and Fuerteventura are under review. Once the conditions have been published Fairplay Towage Group will comply with such conditions in order to work in the entire Canary Islands region. At the same time we are of course monitoring the developments on the Spanish mainland.'

The Fairplay Towage Group activities are handled by the

Spanish outfit Odiel Towage SLU. The office located in Las Palmas is also coordinating the local harbour towage operations.

The Fairplay Towage Group operates a fleet of more than 100 tugs and ranks among the leading European tugowners. It is headquartered in Germany with branches in Poland, Belgium, Netherlands and Bulgaria. After the successful takeover of the German Bugsier Group in 2017 Fairplay Towage Group is also a leading O & G Service Provider in the North Sea and the Baltic. The Group also operates several Oil Recovery vessels and the Emergency Towing Vessels (ETV) in Germany and the Netherlands as part of the European Coastal Protection Scheme.

Coronavirus – How to beat it

In the wake of the pandemic COVID-19, leading maritime training companies Seagull Maritime and Videotel have launched a new programme called: *Coronavirus- How to Beat it*.

It is understood that this is available free to the maritime industry.

The programme outlines the common symptoms that seafarers need to be aware of and details the key precautions that individuals onboard can take to minimise the spread of this highly contagious virus.

Frequent hand washing is one of the ways to reduce infection and the programme demonstrates the correct way to thoroughly wash hands using liquid soap and warm water.



Symptoms



Sneeze

Furthermore, the programme also gives advice to crew on the procedures to follow onboard if they think they have become infected, to reduce the likelihood of spreading the infection.

In the words of Raal Harris, Videotel's Managing Director: *'The spread of COVID-19 has had serious implications for our seafarers and for the maritime industry a whole, with some port call restrictions, delayed crew changeovers and container shortages which are hampering the supply chain and causing severe disruption to the world economy. So, producing this programme seemed the obvious thing for us to do to help minimise the contagion.'*

A link to the programme is to be found here:

<https://tinyurl.com/rdhutbv>

COVID-19 IMO SG briefing

IMO Secretary-General Kitack Lim stresses vital need to maintain commerce by sea and protect seafarers' welfare in face of the Coronavirus shut down.

His 3 minute 20 second video briefing issued on 20 March is available here: <https://youtu.be/JDu9yvQWhrY>

COVID-19 IMO SG briefing

TRANSCRIPT

IMO Secretary-General stresses vital need to maintain commerce by sea and protect seafarers' welfare in face of coronavirus shut down.

See video here: <<https://youtu.be/JDu9yvQWhrY>>

'The spread of the coronavirus has placed the entire world in an unprecedented situation. To slow the spread of the disease and mitigate its impacts, travel is being curtailed and borders are being closed. Transport hubs are being affected. Ports are being closed and ships denied entry.

'In these difficult times, the ability for shipping services and seafarers to deliver vital goods, including medical supplies and foodstuffs, will be central to responding to, and eventually overcoming, this pandemic.

'It is, therefore, crucially important that the flow of commerce by sea should not be unnecessarily disrupted. At the same time, the safety of life at sea and protection of the marine environment must also remain paramount.

'One of the goals of the IMO, as stated in its Convention, is to ensure availability of shipping services to the commerce of the world, for the benefit of humanity. I urge all IMO Member States to bear this in mind when framing their policy decisions with regard to the coronavirus. Defeating the virus must be the first priority, but global trade, in a safe, secure and environmentally friendly manner must be able to continue, too.

'We must also remember the hundreds of thousands of seafarers on ships. They are, unwittingly, on the front line of this global calamity. Their professionalism ensures that the goods we all need are delivered – safely and with minimal impact on our precious environment. These are people, usually far from home and family. Their own health and welfare is as important as that of anyone else.'

'Again, I urge a practical and pragmatic approach, in these unusual times, to issues like crew changeovers, resupply, repairs, survey and certification and licensing of seafarers.'

'Together with our industry partners and colleagues in the World Health Organization, IMO has been developing and issuing practical advice and guidance on a variety of technical and operational matters related to the coronavirus. You can find this on our website, and we will be updating this as appropriate as the situation develops.'

'I will personally be initiating a series of meetings and consultations with leaders from shipping, ports and other key related sectors so that we can all better understand the issues being faced and develop sensible, practical and unified solutions.'

'I have spoken many times of our "voyage together". Never has the spirit of those words been more important than it is now.'

Opening up the Northern Sea Route

Fast L-Band satellite network speed

Passage through northern shipping routes and Arctic waters has received a boost following the doubling of the connectivity speed of the Iridium Certus™ network. This was reported by maritime communications specialist IEC Telecom from Norway on 23 March.

As the shortest sea route between Europe and the Asia-Pacific region, the Northern Sea Route holds immense potential to compete with conventional trade passages. There has been a significant increase in maritime traffic across the main transport corridors in the Arctic, Northern Sea Route in the Russian Federation, the Northwest Passage in Canada as well as the Arctic Bridge from Canada to Europe. It has been reported that in the Canadian Arctic, traffic tripled between 1990 and 2015. Moreover, cargo volume in the Northern Sea Route increased by 40% between 2016 and 2017.

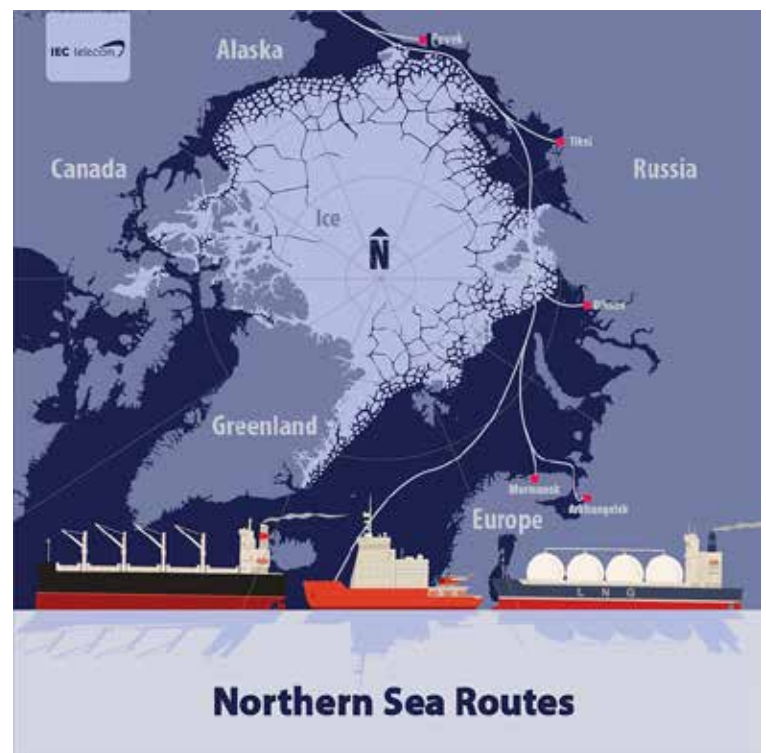
With the Iridium Certus™ 700 service becoming commercially available at speeds of 700 kbps, said to be the fastest L-band speed in the industry, Iridium's network with pole-to-pole coverage can only serve to further unlock new opportunities for fleets operating in northern waters. Fishing fleets, commercial ships, and other vessels transiting Arctic waters can benefit from enhanced connectivity in these remote and potentially hazardous waters.

Many of IEC Telecom's clients operating in the Northern

Sea region have recently switched to the Iridium Certus service. Explained Alf Stian Mauritz, Managing Director, IEC Telecom Norway: 'Vessels operating in this region require robust solutions that can be relied upon under harsh weather conditions.'

'Iridium Certus is the only global network able to meet these requirements. With this new speed northern operators can share greater levels of data with their shore offices, avail VOIP calls, and access faster email exchange.'

It is understood that Iridium Certus™ 700 will also be beneficial to the oil and gas sector, which has been expanding in the Arctic region. With more than 40 billion barrels of oil produced over the past 40 years and 184 active rigs in 2018, the industry is increasingly focusing on innovative ways to reduce costs with sustainable practices. Satellite-based technologies are excellent drivers of operational efficiency with optimized navigation, decreased fuel consumption, and better crew welfare options.



Upgrading to Iridium Certus™ 700 requires no new hardware for existing users. Added Mauritz: 'As an Iridium Master Distributor, not only does IEC Telecom offer its customers the expertise required to transition to this service, we also provide a completely compatible network management solution, OneGate. With our technical support services, customers get better visibility over their remote satellite assets. Such solutions can help operators in the Northern region enhance their crew welfare options, access reliable cyber security and filtration, and even customize cloud-based features.'

Powered by a sophisticated global constellation of 66 cross-linked Low-Earth Orbit (LEO) satellites, the Iridium® network provides high-quality voice and data connections, enabling partner companies such as IEC Telecom to deliver an innovative and rich portfolio of reliable solutions across the globe.

When Iridium completed its constellation upgrade in early 2019, it replaced all its satellites and upgraded the supporting ground infrastructure. This enabled the launch of Iridium Certus®, a multi-service platform that delivers speciality broadband services. At only 780 kilometres from the Earth, the proximity of Iridium's LEO network means a shorter transmission path, stronger signals, lower latency, and shorter registration time than GEO satellites. Each Iridium satellite is linked with up to four others, creating a dynamic network that routes traffic among its satellites to ensure global coverage, even where traditional local systems are unavailable.

IEC Telecom's strategic partnership with Iridium further strengthens its commitment to delivering connectivity services no matter where its customers are located.

Crewing service boss warns:

Better to leave crew onboard than risk catching virus during changeovers

A crew specialist has urged ship operators to exercise caution when making crew changeovers while the coronavirus outbreak continues to rampage across the globe.

Responding to industry calls for seafarers to be given special travel dispensation, Henrik Jensen, managing director of Danica Crewing Services, warned that crew face a bigger risk of catching the virus while they travel to and from postings using public transport.

He advised that it is better to extend contracts where possible and warned that merchant vessels are ill-equipped to care for seriously ill seafarers.

Jensen commented: *'I understand why the ITF, ICS and others are arguing that seafarers should continue to travel to and from vessels for regular crew changeovers. However, with a potential 100,000 seafarers transiting each month, I do not believe this is the best approach at this time.'*

He explained pointing out that the MLC* does allow a maximum term of 12 months at sea: *'Some vessel operators think it is stressful for crew to stay onboard for longer and better for them to go home – I disagree.'*

'That may well be the case for crew who have completed postings of more than nine months, such as many Filipino ratings do. However, for those with contract lengths of four to seven months, or less, I think it is not a problem to stay longer, rather than risk becoming infected as they transit home, or to jeopardise the health of those remaining by potentially bringing infected seafarers on to the vessel in replacement.'

Jensen warned that the risk to seafarers falling ill at sea is far greater than for those coming ashore: *'If the home-bound seafarer gets infected then hopefully the medical care systems in their home country will be able to cope. What really concerns me is what will happen to an infected*

seafarer onboard.'

He continued: *'Firstly, no commercial vessels are equipped to deal with a crew member seriously ill from coronavirus Covid-19 who may be in need of ventilation and intensive care. Help could be very far away if the vessel is on a long voyage – and even may not be readily available in port. Secondly, if the virus comes onboard then it will almost certainly affect several persons, if not the entire crew. Will the ship then be able to operate in a safe way? How can vessel operators provide medical care to an entire crew far out at sea?'*

'In my opinion, the safest way – although inconvenient and potentially stressful for the individual seafarer – is to halt the crew changes until the situation is under better control.'



Henrik Jensen,
Danica Managing Director

He added that measures should be put in place to mitigate the problems faced by seafarers undertaking long postings. *'Owners need to bear in mind that some seafarers may start to suffer from fatigue and that it might be necessary to adjust the crew's workload where possible,'* he said.

Jensen acknowledged seafarers could face unpleasant situations while the virus spreads among the population at home. He went on: *'Owners should prepare for the unfortunate – but inevitable – situation where some of the onboard seafarers' relatives will become ill or even pass away and, sadly, it will not be possible to repatriate the seafarer as it normally would be done.'*

'In Danica we have set-up contingency plans to deal with such situations, which include ensuring that external experts in mental health and well-being are ready to speak with the seafarers and relatives in their native language if needed and to give advice on how to cope with the stress.'

In conclusion Jensen commented: *'These are difficult times and we must all pull together and make sacrifices to help each other. The world owes seafarers a great debt in keeping international trade – especially food and medicines – flowing.'*

About Danica

Danica is a boutique-style crewing service provider con-

necting shipping companies with highly competent seafarers through trustworthy crewing services exceeding the highest industry standards.

With HQ in Hamburg, the company has its own network of manning agencies across Eastern Europe. With the first office established in Odessa in 2008, Danica now also boasts offices in Saint Petersburg, Vladivostok and Nakhodka in Russia and in Klaipeda in Lithuania.

Presently, Danica deploys more than 1,400 seafarers to a wide range of international vessels owned by well-established, financially sound ship owners.

Led by Founder and Managing Director Henrik Jensen, Danica connects vessel owners via a single point of contact to a large pool of competent officers and ratings. Ukraine is the world's third largest provider of ships' officers with some 36,000 experienced officers working for foreign shipowners and managers, while Russia is the fourth largest provider with 27,000 officers.

Danica's crewing services range from the supply of highly competent crews on a single-position basis, to a full crew management provision by which it takes care of the full crew management of an entire fleet of vessels on a cost or fixed lump sum basis for the budget year.

Together with Scanmar – its partner in the Philippines – Danica can offer a full crewing package with a mixed crew from Eastern Europe and the Philippines.

*See: <https://tinyurl.com/sgrnb4h>

DNV GL's remote surveys surge

15,000 completed since launch

The impact of the global COVID-19 crisis has reinforced the value of DNV GL's industry first remote survey services. With some 15,000 surveys and inspections undertaken since the launch in October 2018, customers have benefited from greater flexibility and efficiency through the continued digitalization and integration of DNV GL's class services. This was reported by DNV GL jointly in Hamburg and Høvik, on 26 March

At DNV GL it is vital its customers continue to operate and deliver without disruptions to class services, and at the same time it is essential not to compromise the safety of crews and surveyors. While offices, surveyors and experts remain to be in operation, remote surveys have provided the flexibility customers need, with global round the clock coverage, and improved efficiency through reduced travel times and increased availability.

In the words of Knut Ørbeck-Nilssen, CEO, DNV GL – Maritime *'In these challenging times we are seeing the benefits of the full scope of digitalization initiatives that we have been building up over the past few years.*

'The use of remote surveys has meant that we have been able to limit disruptions to customer operations resulting

from travel bans or quarantines involving our surveyors. Ship operators are able to receive immediately updated and verified electronic certificates, which make their business dealing with class, authorities and vendors much more efficient.

'This has all been backed by expert teams in the regions and through our DATE hubs, which cover technical and survey requests around the globe 24/7 and have solved 500,000 cases since the launch of the service five years ago.'



DNV GL introduced remote surveys in October 2018. More than 15,000 surveys have been completed remotely since then.

Remote surveys were first rolled out by DNV GL in October of 2018 and have been gaining in popularity ever since.

In 2019, for some survey types, up to 25% of all surveys were conducted remotely, with more than one third of customers having utilised the service at least once.

According to DNV GL customers are able to request remote surveys around the clock, independent of port calls, location, and time zone. Remote surveys are being offered both through DNV GL's global DATE (Direct Access to Technical Experts) service, delivered through expert teams from Høvik, Singapore, Hamburg, Houston and Piraëus, and via regional offices.

About Remote Surveys

Remote surveys and inspection mean that for a range of surveys, a DNV GL surveyor will not be required to travel to the vessel. Instead, by using an online connection or video streaming link, a dedicated team of remote surveyors can provide support to vessels anywhere in the world with documentation, images, video (streaming or recordings), and input provided by the customer and crew on-board.

Some periodical survey items can also be handled remotely, subject to flag acceptance, where required.

New distance learning course on the IGF Code*

Videotel launch

Leading maritime e-learning training provider Videotel, has launched the world's first fully approved online learn-

ing course on the use of gases or other low-flashpoint fuels covered within the IGF Code.

The Code, which came into force on 1 January 2017, aims to minimise risk to the ship, its crew and the environment by acknowledging the special nature of any gaseous fuels that are being loaded, stored and burned.



More and more vessels are using gases or low flash-point fuels.

New minimum requirements for the training and qualifications of masters, officers, ratings and other personnel on board ships are also addressed in the Code. Any seafarer responsible for designated safety duties associated with the care, use or emergency response to fuel on board ships which are subject to the IGF Code, must now complete an approved course of basic training.

In the words of Raal Harris, MD of Videotel: *'The use of gas as a fuel on ships has increased in recent years due to the sulphur cap and targets set by the IMO to reduce GHG emissions by 50% by 2050, when compared to 2008. So, this distance learning course comes at an appropriate time to help seafarers get up to speed with the handling and management of these fuel types.'*

'There is no pre-requisite sea service needed to enrol on this course or to be awarded a certificate of training.'



Videotel provides courses allowing thousands of seafarers globally to study for and obtain certificates in a variety of STCW and other subjects by distance learning. The company is part of the newly formed Ocean Technologies Group which also includes Seagull Maritime, Tero Marine and COEX.

The combined services of Seagull Maritime and Videotel provide e-learning programmes to around one million seafarers and supply them with learning, education and a diverse range of ship safety and operational information.

Ocean Technologies Group is dedicated to accelerating the potential of innovative companies that serve the maritime industry and helping them to meet the challenges of 21st century shipping.

The new IGF Code training programme can be found on the Videotel website here: <https://videotel.com>

* International Code of Safety for Ships Using Gases or Other Low-flashpoint Fuels (IGF Code).

Statement on 25 March by UNCTAD Secretary-General, Dr Mukhisa Kituyi

Coronavirus: Let's keep ships moving, ports open and cross-border trade flowing

Note: There is a series of related links to be found at the foot of this article*

'As the world battles the coronavirus pandemic, the global maritime transport industry is playing a critical role in the response.'

'A call by the industry to all governments to keep maritime trade moving by allowing commercial ships continued access to ports worldwide and by facilitating the rapid changeover of ships' crews should not go unheeded.'

'Around 80% 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, according to UNCTAD statistics.'

'This includes vital medical supplies, which are sorely needed at this time, and items that are necessary for the preservation of many jobs in manufacturing – without which modern society cannot function.'

'In this time of global crisis, it is more important than ever to keep supply chains open and to allow maritime trade and cross-border transport to continue.'

'This means keeping the world's ports open for ship calls and the movement of ships' crews with as few obstacles as possible.'

'Transit needs to be facilitated, too. Landlocked countries need access to food and medical supplies through neighbouring countries' seaports.'

'Shipping and ports hold the world economy together. They connect countries, markets, businesses and people, on a scale not otherwise possible.'

'A vast array of goods and commodities are transported by sea to meet the demands of industrial and manufacturing sectors, energy needs, as well as business and consumer requirements.'



'These range from raw materials such as coal and iron ore, oil, gas carried as bulk, to manufactured goods of intermediate and finished products carried in containers.'

'Facing the current pandemic, cross-border movements of relief goods such as food and medical supplies will increase dramatically.'

'Restrictions on trade and cross-border transport may interrupt needed aid and technical support. It could disrupt businesses and have negative social and economic effects on the affected countries.'

'Governments should therefore continue to facilitate movement of not only relief goods, but goods in general, to minimize the negative impact of the COVID-19 outbreak.'

'To ensure that vital goods reach consumers and hospitals in destination countries, responsible agencies should coordinate and cooperate within and among countries so that indispensable goods reach the populations in coastal and landlocked countries alike.'

'At the extraordinary G20 Leaders Summit on the COVID-19 pandemic, which meets virtually this week, world leaders should embrace the call made by the shipping industry to keep maritime trade moving by allowing continued access to ports worldwide and the rapid changeover of ships' crews.'

Support seafarers and port operators, take measured steps

'Amidst the current outbreak, seafarers have come under increased checks and scrutiny in various ports.'

'Many port states have imposed local regulations, travel and quarantine restrictions, precluding free access to sea-

farers. Some operators have suspended crew changes aboard ships to lessen their social interactions.'

'While observing necessary health protocols, ports should treat seafarers as key workers and afford them the same flexibilities currently given to aircrew and health workers in boarding and leaving ships, as some 100,000 shipping crew members need to change shift every month.'

'Port operators also need to be ready given the potential risks to public health and the economy, if their key role in the transit of goods is affected by the spread of the virus.'

'Port workers are facing the danger of contracting COVID-19, and many ports are not ready if a critical mass of workers become sick.'

'In several ports – especially in hard-hit regions like Europe – goods in transit are already affected, and essential medicine and equipment are being held up.'

'Without functioning ports, cargoes including those with life-saving supplies cannot be transported to where they are needed.'

'As they meet virtually this week (week commencing 22 March), G20 leaders have an important opportunity to protect the free movement of all goods by affirming the smooth functioning of their shipping, ports and transit industries.'



'All available technological trade and transport facilitation solutions should be used to reduce the burden posed by COVID-19 on maritime and cross-border trade.'

'We cannot afford to compound the health and economic challenge facing us.'

***Readers may wish to be aware of the related links here:**

- **Coronavirus (COVID-19) : News, Analysis and Resources**

See here: <https://tinyurl.com/qutsoxl>

- **Review of Maritime Transport (Series)**

See here: <https://tinyurl.com/tprrd8t>

- **Maritime Transport Statistics**

See here: <https://tinyurl.com/tbxssq4>

- **Seafarer supply, quinquennial, 2015**

See here: <https://tinyurl.com/uanj8y3>

- **Transport and Trade Facilitation Newsletter**

See here: <https://tinyurl.com/umes9bc>

Updated maritime security guidance: West Africa and the Gulf of Guinea

Industry organisations, supported by government and military organisations, have worked together to produce a new publication that will help mariners detect, deter and delay external threats to their safety.

Best Management Practices to Enhance Maritime Security for Vessels & Mariners Operating Off the Coast of West Africa including the Gulf of Guinea (BMP WA) consolidates and enhances existing guidance for specific threats in this region, it has been reported.



International
Chamber of Shipping



INTERCARGO
International Association of Dry Cargo Shipowners



INTERTANKO



The publication is free to download from 'Free resources' here: www.ics-shipping.org/ which also provides links to other maritime security information useful to mariners.

It is understood that printed copies of the publication will be available later in the year.

Industry organisations are reported to have welcomed the publication.

In the words of Angus Frew, Secretary General & CEO, BIMCO: *'Due to the regrettable lack of efficient law enforcement especially in Eastern Gulf of Guinea, this consolidated antipiracy guidance is a must-read for seafarers operating within reach of Nigerian pirates.'*

Guy Platten, Secretary General, ICS, commented: *'It is unacceptable that pirate attacks in the Gulf of Guinea continue to threaten the lives of our seafarers, especially at a time when we are also having to fend off the threat from COVID-19. This publication shows the shipping industry's firm commitment to the safety and welfare of the men and women who move world trade, and ending the blight of piracy in the region once and for all.'*

Dr Kostas G Gkonis, Secretary General, INTERCARGO, added: *'The safety of seafarers is our top priority. Seafarers need our support and with this publication, supplemented by adequate training, we hope seafarers should feel and be safer. Their feedback would also be much welcome for the industry to improve the offered guidance.'*

To quote Katharina Stanzel, Managing Director, INTERTANKO: *'Insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea continues to blight the lives of seafarers working in the region. This new BMP, tailored specifically for local conditions, provides guidance and advice to mitigate the threat. While it is just one small part of a solution, the key remains in the hands of the region.'*

Finally, Rob Drysdale, Director, OCIMF, said: *'This publi-*

cation offers practical mitigation measures to keep seafarers & vessels safe, a must read for all.'

The organisations which developed the publication

These are: BIMCO, INTERCARGO, INTERTANKO, ICS and OCIMF.

BIMCO is the world's largest international shipping association, with around 1,900 members in more than 120 countries. BIMCO's global membership includes shipowners, operators, managers, brokers, agents and P&I clubs.

The International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) is the

principal international trade association for the shipping industry, representing shipowners and operators in all sectors and trades. ICS membership comprises national shipowners' associations in Asia, Europe and the Americas whose member shipping companies operate over 80% of the world's merchant tonnage. Established in 1921, ICS is concerned with all technical, legal, employment affairs and policy issues that may affect international shipping. It represents shipowners with the various intergovernmental regulatory bodies that impact on shipping, including the International Maritime Organization (IMO). ICS also develops best practices and guidance, including a wide range of publications and free resources that are used by ship operators globally.

INTERCARGO, the International Association of Dry Cargo Shipowners (www.intercargoo.org), represents the interests of quality dry cargo shipowners, the dry bulk sector being the largest shipping sector in terms of number of ships and deadweight. INTERCARGO convened for the first time in 1980 in London and has been participating with consultative status at the International Maritime Organization (IMO) since 1993. INTERCARGO provides the forum where dry bulk shipowners, managers and operators are informed about, discuss and share concerns on key topics and regulatory challenges, especially in relation to safety, the environment and operational excellence.

INTERTANKO is the International Association of Independent Tanker Owners, a forum where the industry meets, policies are discussed and best practices developed. INTERTANKO has been the voice of independent tanker owners since 1970, ensuring that the liquid energy that keeps the world turning is shipped safely, responsibly and competitively.

The Oil Companies International Marine Forum (OCIMF) is a voluntary association of oil companies with an interest in the shipment and terminal operations for the handling of crude oil, oil products, petrochemicals and

gas. OCIMF focuses exclusively on preventing harm to people and the environment by promoting best practice in the design, construction and operation of tankers, barges and offshore vessels and their interfaces with terminals.

www.ocimf.org

Repatriation of seafarers

Almost 1,000 seafarers repatriated by Philippines crewing specialist as coronavirus impacts global shipping

Almost 1,000 seafarers stranded on cruise ships around the globe due to the Covid-19 coronavirus pandemic are in the process of being repatriated to the Philippines. This was reported from Manila on 1 April.



Repatriated seafarers travel to begin their compulsory quarantine in Manila.

CF Sharp Crew that day flew 445 seafarers into Manila on flights arranged by Norwegian Cruise Lines. A further 454 crew members were due to arrive home the following day.

In the words of Roger Storey, Managing Director, CF Sharp Crew Management, Singapore: *'Seafarers are a key priority and we, along with our clients, are putting all our efforts into bringing them home and reuniting them with their loved ones at this difficult time.'*

A speedy route through airport

It is understood that crew members who arrived on 1 April did not pass through the airport building but instead were collected by buses waiting on the tarmac and taken straight to the Manila hotel where they will undergo compulsory quarantine. They were met there by CF Sharp staff who explained the rules to them and provided support.

Storey praised the company's cruise lines clients for their support in assisting seafarers to get home. He reported on 1 April: *'Norwegian Cruise Lines arranged two sweepster flights, which fortunately were not impeded by any red tape, and we have been able to fly in 445 seafarers today with 454 seafarers arriving tomorrow (2 April). We have reserved places for them all to undertake their compulsory 14-day quarantine.'*

The Philippines-headquartered crew specialist already

has 100 crew members currently undertaking a period of 14 days isolation in Manila before they may be reunited with their families.



Repatriated seafarers begin their compulsory quarantine.

Most merchant ships have suspended crew changes for the immediate future and Storey says his firm is working with seafarers to enable them to obtain financial aid from the Philippine Government's Support for Seafarers scheme, administered by the Overseas Workers' Welfare Administration (OWWA).

With the majority of airlines drastically reducing their flights and all embassies suspending operations until further notice Storey added that CF Sharp has suspended its crewing operations and all shore employees' efforts are currently focused on supporting the company's at-risk crew to return home.

The vast majority of Sharp's staff in the Philippines are now working from home. Meanwhile the company's offices in Manila are again being deep cleaned.



Repatriated seafarer arrives in Manila.

Strict enforcement

Strictly enforced restrictions in the Philippines require people to self-isolate and observe curfews. Residents need approval from their local Barangay (village/district office) in order to leave their place of residence and there are frequent check-points where travellers must justify the reason for their journey.

Proof of legitimate business travel must include company

ID as well as a covering letter explaining the reason for the travel.

Finally, Storey advised: *'Returning Filipino seafarers need to be made aware of the changes to normal life and business and of course the necessity of keeping safe and avoiding unnecessary risks of exposure to Covid-19. We are all working together to keep everyone safe.'*

RFA Argus is Caribbean bound

On 2 April RFA *Argus* (A135) set sail for the Caribbean in preparation to support British Overseas Territories during the forthcoming hurricane season and will be able to support the response to the Covid-19 pandemic if required.



RFA *Argus'* deployment to the Caribbean had been scheduled for the hurricane season, but she will now be able to play a part in ensuring the UK Government is ready to support the Overseas Territories.

The Royal Fleet Auxiliary* left Devonport with sailors and Royal Marines on board to assist the United Kingdom in its efforts to defeat the pandemic at home and overseas.



Minister of State for Defence Jeremy Quinn, responsible for the Overseas Territories, said: *'The Armed Forces are taking decisive and coordinated action both at home and overseas to respond to the Covid-19 outbreak. The Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary have worked hard to ensure that RFA Argus is ready for the hurricane season in the Caribbean and now also able to support the UK's Overseas Territories during the pandemic.'*

'The deployment of this ship is just one way the UK Government is supporting communities at home and overseas as together we face the biggest public health emergency in a generation.'

Argus is carrying aid from the UK Department for International Development and to provide water and ration packs where needed. She is also equipped with materials to repair damage and clear blocked roads in support of local emergency services.

If required, a medical team could later join *Argus* in the Caribbean to support the UK Government's response to Covid-19 in the Overseas Territories.



On 2 April, amid the global Coronavirus pandemic, RFA Argus set sail from HM Naval Base Devonport for the Caribbean to offer aid and support to British Overseas Territories during the hurricane season.

The RFA's CO Captain Terence Barke commented: *'RFA Argus' ship's company, consisting of both Royal Fleet Auxiliary and Royal Navy personnel, will rise to this challenge. We understand that there are people in need in the UK Overseas Territories who require our support.'*

Deploying on board RFA *Argus* are Royal Marines, Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary sailors and aviators from 815 Naval Air Squadron and 845 Naval Air Squadron.

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* *The UK's Royal Fleet Auxiliary is a Merchant Navy organisation that is made up of civilian-crewed ships operated by the Ministry of Defence. It provides vital and highly valued logistical and operational support to the Royal Navy and Royal Marines.*

A committed team of personnel makes sure the Royal Navy and Royal Marines are well supplied and well supported, providing medical care, transporting kit, fuel and other essentials all over the world.

In addition the RFA provides humanitarian aid, undertakes counter piracy patrols, counter narcotic operations and defence diplomacy together with assisting in the prevention of conflict or the safeguarding the flow of international trade.

To reduce risks under COVID-19 emergency US Coast Guard oversees disembarkation of 250,000 from cruise ships

Medevac'd 31

On 2 April cruise ships *Zaandam* and *Rotterdam* disembarked more than 1,200 passengers in Port Everglades, Florida. These developments, combined with one remaining disembarkation being coordinated, represents the processing of more than 120 vessels in the last three weeks to remove 250,000 passengers from cruise ships due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This was reported by USCG HQ Media service from Washington.



A Coast Guard Station Fort Lauderdale boat crew escorts the cruise ship *Zaandam* to Port Everglades on 2 April. The Coast Guard has been assisting in escorting cruise ships and cruise ship tenders in and out of the Ports of Miami and Everglades.

US Coast Guard photo by CPO Charly Hengen
US Coast Guard District 7

US Coast Guard, under guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and working with Department of Homeland Security partners Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), as well as state and local entities from multiple port jurisdictions, facilitated the safe landing, screening, quarantine and repatriation of these passengers in a manner that has prevented further spread of the COVID-19 virus. Many passengers were brought to safe harbour in the United States when international ports refused entry.

Most of the cruise line industry announced a voluntarily suspension of cruise ship operations from US ports of call on 13 March and the CDC issued a "No Sail" Order on 14 March to all cruise ships that had not voluntarily suspended operations.

In the words of Vice-Admiral Dan Abel, Coast Guard Deputy Commandant for Operations: *'We commend the decision by the cruise industry to cease operations. However, pausing a global tourist industry does not happen instantaneously or easily.'*

'The Federal, state, local and industry cooperation to achieve this feat truly represents the whole-of-nation approach directed by the President and is essential to fighting the spread of this virus and working to minimize the loss of life.'



A Coast Guard Station Miami Beach boat crew escorts the cruise ship *Costa Favolosa* cruise ship tender to shore on 30 March. The Coast Guard has been assisting in escorting cruise ships and cruise ship tenders in and out of the ports of Miami and Everglades.

US Coast Guard photo by CPO Charly Hengen.
US Coast Guard District 7.

Drawdown of passenger operations is a major milestone, but it does not eliminate US Government concerns for cruise ships and their crews, it was reported.



EMS crew transport a *Grand Princess* passenger in her mid-70s from the Coast Guard Cutter *Tern* at Coast Guard Sector San Francisco on 7 March. The Cutter *Tern* was dispatched to transport a passenger with a medical condition not related to COVID-19 and her husband to awaiting EMS and CDC personnel Saturday morning.

US Coast Guard photo by PO 3rd Class Taylor Bacon.
US Coast Guard District 11

At the time of the USCG statement (3 April) there were 114 cruise ships, carrying 93,000 crew members, either in or near US ports and waters. This includes 73 cruise ships, with 52,000 crew members, moored or anchored in US ports and anchorages. Another 41 cruise ships, with 41,000 crew members, are underway and still in the vicinity of the United States. The cruise industry has an ongoing obligation for the care, safety and welfare of their seafarers.

The Coast Guard is a lifesaving service, and since 7 March, when COVID-19 cases on cruise ships operating around the US escalated, the service has enabled 31 life-saving medevacs.

Seafarers UK COVID-19 Emergency Appeal

Seafarers UK is a charity that has been helping those in the maritime community for over 100 years, by providing vital support to seafarers in need and their families.

This aid has been achieved by grants to organisations and projects across the Merchant Navy, the Fishing Fleets, the Royal Navy and Royal Marines.

In 2019 Seafarers UK awarded 53 grants totalling £2.2m to 43 maritime welfare charities.

Emergency appeal

On 3 April Seafarers UK made an open appeal on the world wide web to draw attention to the unprecedented times when the effects of COVID-19 are being felt all over the world with the seafaring community being no exception.

As an island nation, the UK is particularly dependent on its seafarers to keep the UK supplied with food, medicine, fuel and other essential supplies. As such, the Government has acknowledged the importance of those who work in the supply chain during the COVID-19 pandemic and has officially designated seafarers as key workers.

As the world fights the Coronavirus pandemic seafarers are silently playing a vital role in keeping the nation afloat, under extremely challenging and unpredictable conditions.

Seafarers abandoned

It is understood that there have been an increasing number of reports of crews being abandoned in foreign ports, without money or food, and unable to fly home.

Restrictions on crew changes and quarantine periods have separated many seafarers from their families for even longer, at what is already a distressing and unsettling time.

Port restrictions

Many ports now prevent shore-leave thus denying access to shore-based facilities, including welfare services, with crews being left unassisted on board and having to rely on charitable support or even local pity, it is reported.

This is leaving many seafarers feeling isolated, depressed, worried about their families back at home, and extremely anxious about when they can see their loved ones again. It has never been more important for seafarers to have somewhere to turn for support.

With thousands of seafarers working tirelessly at the forefront of supporting the nation through this crisis, Seafarers UK has appealed for help to enable the charity to support seafarers and their families during this global emergency.

How support helps key charity workers

Seafarers UK's funding supports essential helplines such as Seafarers Advice & Information Line (SAIL*) to provide a free telephone service to merchant seafarers and fishers, and SeafarerHelp**, a 24/7 confidential and free helpline for seafarers of any nationality or religion and their families.

Port welfare services

Where possible Seafarers UK staff continue to provide vital support for seafarers stranded in ports and cruise terminals.

In the UK seafarers' centres at Tilbury and DP World London Gateway London, managed by Queen Victoria Seamen's Rest, are currently looking after 300 seafarers, who are not able to return home or join another ship.

How to donate: Donations may be made here:

<https://tinyurl.com/wv78gxx>

* <http://sailine.org.uk>

** <https://www.seafarerhelp.org/en/>

WMO is concerned about impact of COVID-19 on observing system

On 1 April from Geneva the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) reported that it was concerned about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the quantity and quality of weather observations and forecasts, as well as atmospheric and climate monitoring.

WMO's Global Observing System serves as a backbone for all weather and climate services and products provided by the 193 WMO Member states and territories to their citizens. It provides observations on the state of the atmosphere and ocean surface from land-, marine- and space-based instruments. This data is used for the preparation of weather analyses, forecasts, advisories and warnings.

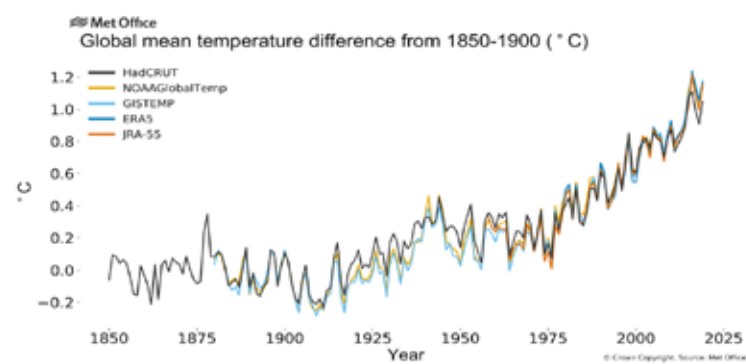
In the words of WMO Secretary-General Petteri Taalas: *'National Meteorological and Hydrological Services continue to perform their essential 24/7 functions despite the severe challenges posed by the Coronavirus pandemic. We salute their dedication to protecting lives and property but we are mindful of the increasing constraints on capacity and resources.'*

'The impacts of climate change and growing amount of weather-related disasters continue. The COVID-19 pandemic poses an additional challenge, and may exacerbate multi-hazard risks at a single country level. Therefore it is essential that governments pay attention to their national early warning and weather observing capacities despite the COVID-19 crisis.'

Large parts of the observing system, for instance its satellite components and many ground-based observing

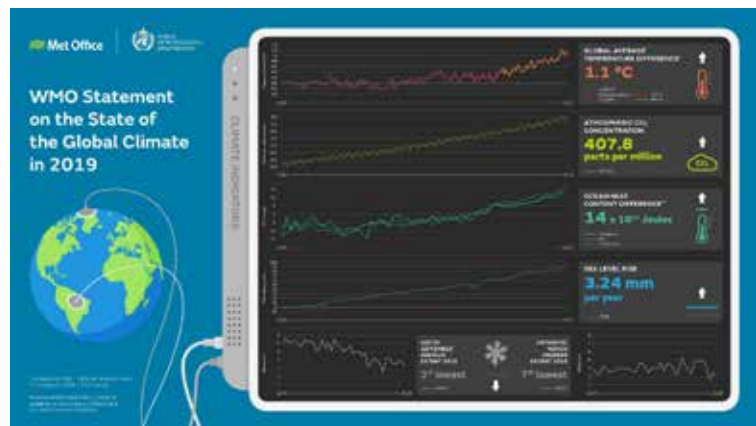
networks, are either partly or fully automated. They are therefore expected to continue functioning without significant degradation for several weeks, in some cases even longer. But if the pandemic lasts more than a few weeks, then missing repair, maintenance and supply work, and missing redeployments will become of increasing concern.

Some parts of the observing system are already affected. Most notably the significant decrease in air traffic has had a clear impact. In-flight measurements of ambient temperature and wind speed and direction are a very important source of information for both weather prediction and climate monitoring.



Meteorological data from aircraft

Commercial airliners contribute to the Aircraft Meteorological Data Relay programme (AMDAR), which uses onboard sensors, computers and communications systems to collect, process, format and transmit meteorological observations to ground stations via satellite or radio links.



In some parts of the world, in particular over Europe, the decrease in the number of measurements over the last couple of weeks (to 4 April) has been dramatic. The countries affiliated with EUMETNET, a collaboration between the 31 national weather services in Europe, are currently discussing ways to boost the short-term capabilities of other parts of their observing networks in order to partly mitigate this loss of aircraft observations.

The AMDAR observing system has traditionally produced over 700,000 high-quality observations per day of air temperature and wind speed and direction, together with the required positional and temporal information, and with an increasing number of humidity and turbulence measure-

ments being made.

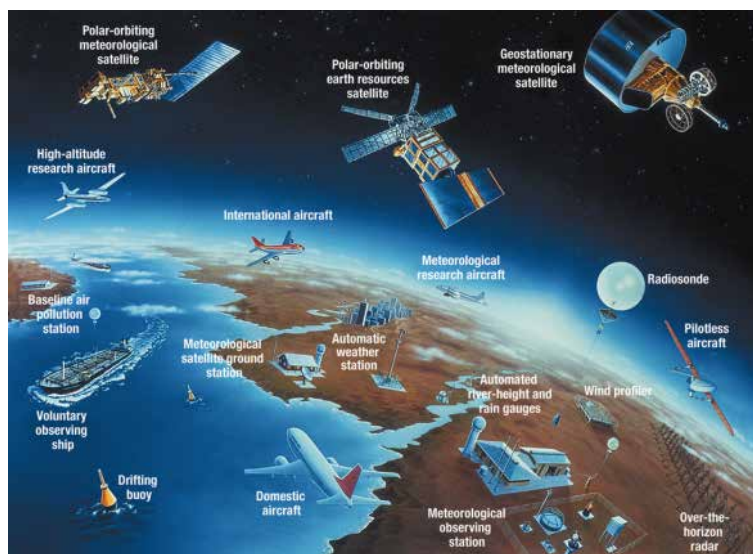
Surface-based observations

In most developed countries, surface-based weather observations are now almost fully automated.

However, in many developing countries, the transition to automated observations is still in progress, and the meteorological community still relies on observations taken manually by weather observers and transmitted into the international networks for use in global weather and climate models.

WMO has seen a significant decrease in the availability of this type of manual observations over the last two weeks. Some of this may well be attributable to the current coronavirus situation, but it is not yet clear whether other factors may play a role as well. WMO is currently investigating this.

Lars Peter Riishojgaard, Director, Earth System Branch in WMO's Infrastructure Department commented: *'At the present time, the adverse impact of the loss of observations on the quality of weather forecast products is still expected to be relatively modest. However, as the decrease in availability of aircraft weather observations continues and expands, we may expect a gradual decrease in reliability of the forecasts.'*



'The same is true if the decrease in surface-based weather observations continues, in particular if the COVID-19 outbreak starts to more widely impact the ability of observers to do their job in large parts of the developing world. WMO will continue to monitor the situation, and the organization is working with its Members to mitigate the impact as much as possible.'

Powering large ships

ABB brings fuel cell technology a step closer

ABB signs Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Hydrogène de France to jointly manufacture megawatt-scale fuel cell systems capable of powering ocean-going vessels

The MOU between ABB and hydrogen technologies specialist Hydrogène de France (HDF) envisages close collaboration on the assembly and production of the fuel cell power plant for marine applications. This was reported by ABB on 8 April.

Building on an existing collaboration announced on 27 June 2018 with Ballard Power Systems, the leading global provider of proton exchange membrane (PEM) fuel cell solutions, ABB and HDF intend to optimize fuel cell manufacturing capabilities to produce a megawatt-scale power plant for marine vessels. The new system will be based on the megawatt-scale fuel cell power plant jointly developed by ABB and Ballard and will be manufactured at HDF's new facility in Bordeaux, France.



Fuel cells turn chemical energy from hydrogen into electricity through an electro-chemical reaction. With the use of renewables to produce the hydrogen, the entire energy chain can be clean.

Damien Havard, CEO of HDF commented: *'HDF is very excited to cooperate with ABB to assemble and produce megawatt-scale fuel cell systems for the marine market based on Ballard technology'*.

Juha Koskela, Managing Director, ABB Marine & Ports added: *'With the ever-increasing demand for solutions that enable sustainable, responsible shipping, we are confident that fuel cells will play an important role in helping the marine industry meet CO₂ reduction targets. Signing the MOU with HDF brings us a step closer to making this technology available for powering ocean-going vessels.'*

With shipping responsible for about 2.5% of the world's total greenhouse gas emissions, there is an increased pressure for the maritime industry to transition to more sustainable power sources. The IMO has set a global target to

cut annual emissions by at least 50% by 2050 from 2008 levels.

Among alternative emission-free technologies, ABB is already well advanced in collaborative development of fuel cell systems for ships. Fuel cells are widely considered as one of the most promising solutions for reducing harmful pollutants. Already today, this zero-emission technology is capable of powering ships sailing short distances, as well as supporting auxiliary energy requirements of larger vessels.

ABB's eco-efficiency portfolio, which enables sustainable smart cities, industries and transport systems to mitigate climate change and conserve non-renewable resources, accounted for 57% of total revenues in 2019. The company is on track to reach 60% of revenues by the end of 2020.

About ABB

ABB is a technology leader that is driving the digital transformation of industries. With a history of innovation spanning more than 130 years, ABB has four, customer-focused, globally leading businesses: Electrification, Industrial Automation, Motion, and Robotics & Discrete Automation, supported by the ABB Ability™ digital platform.

Indian Register of Shipping (IRClass) classes its first vessel under Lebanese Flag

International ship classification society IRClass, has classed its first vessel under the Lebanese flag. This was reported on 2 April.

The vessel *Jouri* was converted from a vehicle carrier to a livestock carrier under the survey of IRClass which included structural modification, plan approval and reapproval of stability conditions.



Jouri was converted from a vehicle carrier to a livestock carrier.

This modification process was complicated and was carried out under the close supervision of its surveyors to the complete satisfaction of owner Etab Shipping SA and Technical Manager, Safe Sea Service SARL, Beirut.



Jouri was the first vessel classed under the Lebanese flag by the Indian Register of Shipping.

To quote Rajeev Pratap Rao, IRClass' Regional Manager for Middle East and Africa: *'The project took around four months to complete, including overcoming technical challenges like the location of permanent ballast and arrangement for storage of cattle feed to take into account the stability of the vessel.'*

He continued: *'Class societies are increasingly being seen not just as regulators but also as enablers and this project is a perfect example of this with our Plan Approval team and surveyors using their technical expertise to advise and guide the modification team. As this project was such a success we are now working on a similar conversion for the City of Barcelona.'*

European Shippers' Council COVID-19 measures

Introduction to ESC

The European Shippers' Council (ESC) is a non-profit European organisation representing cargo owners, that is to say freight transport interests of around 100,000 companies throughout Europe. These interests are manufacturers, retailers, wholesalers (import and export, intercontinental). Collectively they are referred to as 'shippers' as neutral users of transport in all modes: air, road, rail or waterborne.

ESC was established in 1963.

The global ESC network consists of national shippers' associations, European commodity trade associations, for example chemical, steel and paper and corporate members among which well-known multinational brands of the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) and food sectors. ESC aims at creating a level playing field in Europe and between continents.



Global links

Internationally, the ESC works closely with the Asian Shippers' Association (ASA) and the American Association of Exporters and Importers (AAEI), together forming the Global Shippers Alliance (GSA), see here: <https://globalshippersalliance.org/> .

COVID-19 measures

Now see here: <https://tinyurl.com/w2bm27z>

This link delivers a map showing the countries of Europe. By hovering your mouse over them, you receive the full country name. With a click on the blue countries, a popup window provides more information about the measures in place.

For the grey countries, no relevant information is available although the ESC will attempt to keep the information updated and seek to add measures for more Member States.

More information as an Excel document can be downloaded via this link: <https://tinyurl.com/utu3vr8>

Some non-European countries are covered, too, for example Algeria, China, Jordan, Mongolia, Morocco, Nepal and Pakistan.

Bahamas Registry latest

Recognition by the USCG's Qualship 21 programme (Quality Shipping for the 21st century)

On 6 April Bahamas Maritime Authority (BMA) proudly announced that is to be included in the USCG Qualship 21 list which recognises the quality of Bahamas-registered ships, their owners/Managers and crew, operating to and from United States ports.

The Bahamas always strives for zero detentions and is moving ever closer to this goal with just two detentions out of 538 US port state inspections of Bahamas flagged ships during the last year (2019). Furthermore, The Bahamas is at the top of the so-called White List within the port state control regimes of the Paris MoU and Tokyo MoU.

Captain Dwain Hutchinson, BMA's Managing Director and

CEO commented: 'We are delighted that the stringent attention to quality that is paid by all of our Owners has been recognised once again and we would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to our Owners, and crew onboard Bahamas registered ships, for this achievement.'



'Together our dedication to applying, operating and maintaining Bahamas' ships to the highest possible standards is a credit to The Bahamas, the BMA and your organisation.'

Qualship 21 is testament to The BMA's team, including its Recognised Organisations and Nautical Inspectors, commitment and dedication. The support and advice that The BMA provides to owners to assist them with port state control and regulatory compliance issues, as well as the regular flag state inspections, statutory audits and surveys of the fleet that are undertaken, ensure their ships comply in all respects with the international conventions and so uphold the reputation of The Bahamas, it was reported.



Captain Hutchinson added in conclusion: 'Our Owners, their Managers and crew onboard their ships demonstrate the best values seen in the shipping industry and, along with all other ship owners, they are playing possibly the major role in the global response to, and recovery from, the COVID-19 pandemic as they transport urgently needed food, medical supplies and provisions around the world.'

'Today, we are all reminded more than ever of the vital role played by shipping and all who work within the industry, whether onboard or ashore, in the global economy.'

Pandemic masks true picture of sulphur 2020 compliance

It will be difficult to ascertain a full picture of how well the international shipping industry is complying with the new sulphur 2020 environmental legislation and judge the effectiveness of enforcement measures until sometime after the Covid-19 pandemic has receded, says maritime law specialist Hill Dickinson.

Introduced on 1 January this year, the implementation of Regulation 14.1.13 of MARPOL Annex VI, was a key issue for the shipping industry, particularly in respect to how the sulphur cap was being observed and enforced. The horizon issue was the Carriage Ban, effective on 1 March 2020, which prevented any vessel not fitted with an exhaust gas cleaning system from carrying marine fuel with a sulphur content in excess of 0.50% m/m for use on board.

Beth Bradley (*illustrated*), a Partner with Hill Dickinson, explained: 'While a few issues arose concerning the quality of the low sulphur fuel, particularly some blended fuels having a propensity to sediment, and around marginal breaches of the cap, the implementation of the global sulphur cap was progressing smoothly with reports of high levels of compliance.'



'Three months on and the disruption to international shipping caused by Covid-19 has pushed sulphur cap issues well and truly from the headlines. Regulation 14.1.3 remains in force – however, where Port authorities globally are prioritising health and the movement of freight, enforcement action will perhaps be less of a priority.'

The impact of the pandemic has led to serious delays to existing orders for the retro-fitting of exhaust gas cleaning systems, particularly for those vessel where the work was to take place in Chinese shipyards, or to cancellations as owners and operators seek to cut costs.

In addition, the collapse in the oil price has eroded the price differential between high sulphur and low sulphur fuel oil, making the immediate prospect of a larger uptake

of exhaust gas cleaning systems doubtful, particularly if prices remain low for a significant period of time.

The UK's Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) recently announced that it was suspending vessel checks for compliance with low sulphur fuel regulations in order to keep freight moving, although it made clear that it will still inspect vessels where information is received indicating that an inspection would be appropriate. This is unlikely to be the last such announcement, predicts Ms Bradley.

Ms Bradley commented further: *'While the sulphur cap and the carriage ban remain in force such that owners risk enforcement action if they carry marine fuel with a sulphur content in excess of 0.50% m/m for use on board, the disruption caused by Covid-19 may reduce that risk where port state control is under pressure on other fronts. It also will make it difficult to ascertain a full picture relating to compliance and enforcement until sometime after the pandemic has receded.'*

Use of Remote Surveys to beat Coronavirus restrictions

Indian Register of Shipping (IRClass) increases effort

The Indian Register of Shipping (IRClass) is taking a pragmatic and practical approach in rendering services to its clients during this period of unprecedented challenges posed by global restriction in personnel movement to reduce the spread of COVID-19 pandemic.

IRClass' aim is to manage and adapt to the ever-changing circumstances to minimise the impact on its customers by adapting remote surveys in maintaining the validity of ship's certificates and thereby supporting the global trade, while ensuring the wellbeing and safety of its staff. All its office-based staff are now working remotely from their homes and the company has also provided specific guidelines to its surveyors to follow precautions and country specific advisories when planning the conduct of surveys.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some ships may experience operational challenges such as non-availability of dry docks, spares, technicians and so forth. In addition, surveys and audits may, in some cases, not be conducted because surveyors are unable to attend the ships due to travel restrictions or quarantines.

Depending on the specific circumstances, IRClass may grant survey extensions as allowed by its rules and application of *force majeure* provisions to ships due for surveys but facing difficulties due to COVID-19 scenario.

IRClass is working very closely with its clients and may also consider the postponement of non-critical work, where appropriate.

However, where possible and with flag approval, IRClass is increasingly turning to the use of remote surveys/inspections which are based on self-checks by the Master/Chief

Engineer of the ship or the Senior Staff of the works, using the IRClass survey checklist and remote assessment of supporting documentation, photographs/videography by an IRClass surveyor.

Facilities for video conferencing including live video streaming for viewing specific sections of the ship or equipment for cross verification, are also proving to be invaluable tools for IRClass' surveyors.



In the words of said Suresh Sinha (*illustrated*), Managing Director of IRClass: *'These are challenging times for everyone, as the Covid-19 scenario is constantly changing. IRClass is actively monitoring the global situation and is committed to working with all its clients to support their business needs.'*

'Our remote survey system is working very well indeed and is a practical and innovative way for our surveyor to carry out the emergency safety assessment of a ship around the various restrictions in place.'

'Our surveyors can now deal with surveys, audits and inspections from the safety of their own homes and, subject to various flag approvals. I can see remote inspections continuing to revolutionise classification services long after the COVID-19 outbreak using digital technology and real time, risk based, data driven decision making process - in not too distant a future.'

ABB to power South Asia's first LNG hybrid tug for efficient and sustainable operations

Extensive ABB electric propulsion and power distribution package for Sembcorp Marine opens new era for higher efficiency and lower emission tug operations in Singapore and beyond

ABB's electric propulsion, power, energy storage, control and automation technology will be at the heart of the first tug in South Asia capable of switching between low emission liquefied natural gas (LNG) engines and zero-emission battery power. The tug, which will operate in the port of Singapore, has been ordered by Sembcorp Marine subsidiary Jurong Marine Services for delivery from the Sembcorp Marine shipyard by the end of 2020.

LNG as a fuel virtually eliminates sulphur oxide emissions, while the Maritime Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) is also incentivizing its use to support the IMO's aims to halve ship CO₂ emissions by 2050.

The project represents the first delivery of ABB's award-winning power and distribution system Onboard DC Grid™ for a tug application.

Leveraging Onboard DC Grid™, the vessel will be able to deploy 904 kWh of battery power for zero-emission operation, as well as for peak shaving – improving utilization of electricity use on board.



ABB is to power South Asia's first LNG hybrid tug for efficient and sustainable operations in the Port of Singapore.

In the words of Juha Koskela, Managing Director, ABB Marine & Ports: *'This is a breakthrough in the tug market for the ABB's energy storage technologies and a strong validation of Onboard DC Grid™ as the ultimate solution for power management efficiency for hybrid propulsion.'*

'Future-proofing for a different energy mix makes particular sense for tugs and other port service vessels, as the most likely candidates to face imminent environmental restriction. This is also a great example of a local team meeting a regional priority by realizing ABB's 'Electric. Digital. Connected.' vision.'

Gas fuelled engines face a particular challenge when it comes to handling the fast-changing load capabilities demanded by tugs. Leveraging the Onboard DC Grid™ system, the tug's engines will be able to run at variable speeds for optimized LNG fuel economy at each load level.

Additionally, through integration with an energy storage source, the batteries will be able to provide power to the tug's propulsion system almost instantaneously.

Leveraging the capabilities of Onboard DC Grid™, the LNG engines will not have the need to be tied to a fixed speed against dynamic loads, and would be able to provide energy at variable revolutions per minute (RPM), further enhancing efficiency, responsiveness and sustainability of tug operations. ABB's scope of supply also includes the DC drives for the PTI/PTO variable speed shaft generator, which integrates with the energy storage battery.

COVID-19 exit and recovery strategy

The message: Keep European ports going

Since the start of the COVID 19 crisis, Europe's ports have been doing everything possible to ensure the continuity of their operations and thus the security of supply. European ports have activated contingency plans to ensure that ports remain fully operational during this crisis. More than ever, European ports have been demonstrating their role as essential and critical infrastructures playing a crucial role in the supply of necessary goods.

Priority and a recovery strategy

The first and most important priority of European ports is to help overcome the health crisis by ensuring the continuity of their operations and providing citizens, health services and businesses with the goods and materials they need.

However, European ports believe that the EU needs to decide on a recovery strategy on how to overcome the economic crisis Europe is facing. This was reported in a statement by the European Sea Ports Organisation (ESPO) on 10 April.

On their side, European port managing bodies are cooperating as best as they can with their stakeholders and customers to help them solve the challenges they will be facing in the forthcoming months.



North Sea Port 1

www.en.northseaport.com

Engines of growth

As engines of growth, European ports will play an important role in the recovery process. To ensure that ports keep going and can help revamp Europe's economy in the aftermath of the crisis, ESPO proposes the following:

- European ports, their stakeholders and their customers must, when and where needed, be able to benefit from immediate relief measures developed at both the EU and national levels. This will help the port ecosystem to bridge the temporary lockdown and impact of some limited or non-functioning port stakeholders. This temporary support will enable European ports and related

industries to catch up as swiftly as possible once the confinement measures are lifted. During past crises, ports have proven to be a very resilient sector, able to rebound rapidly. An important condition for such a recovery is to ensure the short term financial viability of the maritime industry and the most affected businesses in the port. All European ports should be considered for such measures, regardless of their TEN-T* status.

- European ports ask EU policy makers to strengthen the existing support and financial instruments for infrastructure projects in ports, in particular CEF**, and to reinforce investments to allow European ports to play their role in the decarbonisation of Europe's economy. The current crisis shows the key and critical role of port infrastructure and well-functioning port operations in ensuring the supply of essential goods and material. This is only possible if European ports continue to invest, remain state-of-the-art and further improve their hinterland connectivity. Advancing planned CEF calls could also be a way of boosting investments in ports. Such support should be provided notwithstanding the governance and economic model of ports and should include their respective critical hinterland infrastructures (inland waterways, railways, pipelines, roads).
- Ongoing port and transport infrastructure projects which are delayed due to national lockdown measures (in particular the temporary stop of construction works) require flexibility on deadlines and should not fall under the use-it-lose-it principle. Guidance should be further developed and discussed with the relevant project managers involved in ongoing projects, taking away the current uncertainty in their planning.
- Ports with important passenger traffic and/or tourism-related activities (notably ferry connections but also cruise) suffer an even more significant drop in activity and must be given special consideration. The recovery of touristic and travel activities risks to take longer in view of the severe travel restrictions within and outside the European Union. Initiatives aiming at restoring the trust in the sustainability, health and safety of maritime passenger traffic and cruise should be developed.



North Sea Port 2

www.en.northseaport.com

Isabelle Ryckbost, Secretary General of ESPO, commented: *'In all European ports it is now really all hands on deck to remain operational and to fulfil their critical and essential role in the supply chain.'*

'The contingency plans are working well. I can say that European ports remain fully operational. It is now important to prepare for what comes after the crisis. The port ecosystem is facing serious economic impacts, but ports have proven in the past to be resilient.'

'In order to catch up quickly once the health crisis is under control, and to play their role as engines of growth in Europe's economic recovery, it is important that ports and the affected businesses in the port are supported when and where needed.'

'The support must help in bridging this period of none or reduced economic activity. It is also important that port and transport infrastructure projects and investments can be pursued as planned and if possible even reinforced.'

*The Trans-European Transport Network.

See here: <https://tinyurl.com/ycgmdfyh>

**Connecting Europe Facility.

See here: <https://tinyurl.com/yda7lxrz>

Crew change plan shipping alliance's collective call Government action needed

As at mid-April more than a 100,000 seafarers were in effect marooned at sea because coronavirus shut-downs worldwide prevented them from entering or transiting countries and/or finding flights on which to return home

- An alliance of leading maritime companies desperately concerned about seafarer welfare and the viability of ocean supply chains in the midst of coronavirus restrictions has developed detailed crew changeover risk assessment plans. However, it needs urgent political and regulatory support to enact them. This was reported on 14 April by the Synergy Group.
- Representing more than 1,500 vessels and over 70,000 seafarers, the alliance includes: D/S Norden; Grieg Star; Reederei Nord; Dynacom; V Group; Wilhelmsen Ships Service; Pacific Carriers Limited (PCL); Magsaysay; Augustea; Columbia Ship Management; Representing more than 1,500 vessels and over 70,000 s Inchcape Shipping Services and Synergy Group.

Current coronavirus policy as applied to shipping is a potentially disastrous own goal that threatens not only the mental health and human rights of seafarers, but also the viability of ocean supply chains on which those in lockdown depend, according to an alliance of leading ship owners and managers.

This alliance has developed port viability and detailed seafarer risk assessment plans which it is convinced will mitigate the risk of coronavirus infections during essential

crew changeovers. In a statement issued on 14 April the group urged immediate governmental and inter-governmental action to enable the resumption of crew changes including the designation of seafarers as key workers.

Captain Rajesh Unni, CEO and Founder of leading Singapore-based ship manager Synergy Group, commented: *'We understand Covid-19 is a black swan event. But measures aimed at protecting society were never intended to prevent key workers from carrying out tasks essential to the ongoing wellbeing of society. These policies were also not intended to be detrimental to the welfare of key workers such as seafarers.'*

'Yet that is exactly what is now happening. Current policy represents a potentially disastrous own goal.'

'Our collective aim as responsible owners and managers employing tens of thousands of seafarers is to pursue every means possible to get crew back to their families.'

The 'Who's Who' alliance of like-minded shipping companies came together in response to the crew change crisis which has intensified as coronavirus has spread around the world.



Collective crew changes are viable now

Members believe collective crew changes at identified ports are a feasible short-term aim even in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic if State assistance is made available.

The alliance has identified key ports where collective crew changes can potentially be organised. The ports include Singapore, Houston, Rotterdam, Gibraltar, Jebel Ali, Fujairah, Hong Kong and Shanghai.

Added Captain Unni: *'As well as identifying ports we have also developed a rigorous risk assessment methodology and drawn up action plans that we, as employers of seafarers and organisers of crew logistics, can implement to mitigate the risks of infection.'*

'We are delighted to have the support of the International Chamber of Shipping and International Transport Work-

ers' Federation. Governments must act and assign ports in proximity to suitable airports so that crew changes can be resumed.'

'This really is a time bomb. It is imperative governments recognise this and take action.'



Minimal risk to port states

The alliance is confident that collective crew changes can be managed at minimal risk.

Alliance members said in a joint statement: *'While we, as responsible owners and managers, would have to work on the micro level to deal with the logistics of transporting a seafarer from his home to the vessel and vice versa, matters such as access to airlines and airports and immigration clearances are political decisions.'*

'We urge port states and the G20 nations to take all actions possible to facilitate crew changes.'

'The world relies on seafarers to deliver everything they need including medicines, food and energy. The shipping industry and seafarers are now relying on the world's politicians to respect their human rights and protect their welfare in these difficult times.'



'Seafarers are key workers and they should be classified as such and their plight addressed with all expediency.'

Guy Platten, Secretary General of the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS), said he was proud of how the shipping industry was responding to the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic.

He commented: *'90% of all global trade is transported by commercial shipping. At the heart of all this are the unsung heroes – ship crews especially, but also port staff and those who provide the logistics for the ships.'*

'Governments must not forget that our seafarers are key workers and ensure consistent support at this critical time.'



The crew change time bomb

Over 1.6 million seafarers keep the world's merchant fleet at sea, delivering fuel, medicines, food and equipment to those countries where large portions of the population are currently under curfew as governments try to contain the coronavirus pandemic.

Every month around 100,000 seafarers are rotated on / off vessels worldwide in accordance with international safety and working hours regulations. However, the closure of borders and strict quarantine rules are preventing crew changes from being completed in accordance with employment contracts and international conventions including the Maritime Labour Convention, leaving thousands stranded at sea for periods far beyond their contracts.

Seafarers must be officially recognised as essential workers in the fight against Covid-19, believes David Wonfor, Vice President, Global Head of Managed Services, Inchcape Shipping Services. He said: *'Seafarers have limitations on the amount of time they can work onboard a vessel which is governed by the vessel Flag State.'*

'Even if this period can be extended in exceptional circumstances, it can be detrimental to the mental health and wellbeing of crew to work for such extended periods without any downtime.'

'Seafarers who are now stranded ashore and cannot re-join vessels will not be earning any income and in many cases are the only breadwinner in their families.'

Mental health a growing concern

Graham Westgarth, CEO of V Group, is concerned about the mental health of seafarers stranded at sea indefinitely.

He commented: *'First and foremost, prolonged periods of service onboard will ultimately result in a significant increase in mental wellbeing issues among the seafaring community.'*

'We should also be aware of the negative impact it will have on their families. Ultimately, such a situation can only jeopardise the safety of the individuals and potentially the vessels they sail on.'

Westgarth called for governments and regulators to recognise the critical role seafarers play in the supply chain and their importance to the safe delivery of food, medical equipment and energy sources.

He added: *'Simply put, governments need to adopt mechanisms which allow unencumbered movement of seafarers to and from their vessels. The European Commission has issued guidelines to this effect. These should be adopted not only by EU members but on a global basis.'*

'The shipping industry recognises that it needs to play its part by putting in place relevant risk mitigation strategies.'



Uncertainty at sea

Keith Obeyesekera, Managing Director of Reederei Nord BV, said crew members on ships were facing terrible uncertainty about when they may be relieved after completion of their contracts.

He added: *'Crew mental health deteriorates in these circumstances and they could be prone to errors which can, in extreme cases, lead to loss of life, damage to the environment and property.'*

'Governments need to recognise that shipping and seafaring is an essential service, and should be categorised as such. If done so, then seafarers can be given special status for travel, visa issuance and their passage to and from their home countries streamlined.'

'Currently, in some instances, crew members requiring urgent medical attention have not been allowed ashore, or have not been allowed to sign off in their own home countries.'

Current policy unsustainable

Brendon Hawley, Head of Safety and Compliance, Wilhelmshaven Ships Service, added: 'The safety and welfare of our customers' crew is always at the heart of everything we do as port agents. This current situation, where crew change is close to impossible in most ports around the world, is not sustainable long-term.'

'With a truly global network of port agents, we are proud to work alongside Synergy and other leading ship managers and owners in finding solutions in ports when and where crew change can resume. However, we are fully dependent on support from governments and regulators to make this happen.'

Picture credits:

www.synergymarinegroup.com Synergy Group ©.

Piracy and armed robbery a threat to ships' crews, warns IMB

Seafarers face continuing threats from pirates and armed robbers on the world's seas, said the ICC International Maritime Bureau (IMB), reporting 47 attacks in the first three months of 2020, up from 38 in the same period last year (2019). Pirates boarded 37 ships in the first quarter of 2020. This was reported jointly in London and Kuala Lumpur on 14 April.

The Gulf of Guinea remains the world's piracy hotspot. Seventeen crew were kidnapped in three incidents in these waters, at distances of between 45 and 75 nautical miles from the coast.



IMB's latest global piracy report shows zero hijackings in the last two quarters, and no incidents around Somalia. But with no sign of a reduction in attacks worldwide, IMB encourages shipowners to stay vigilant, calling for contin-

ued international cooperation.

IMB Director Michael Howlett commented: 'Navy patrols, onboard security measures, cooperation and transparent information exchange between authorities, are all factors which help address the crimes of piracy and armed robbery.'

'The threat to crew is, however, still real – whether from violent gangs, or opportunistic armed thieves inadvertently coming face-to-face with the crew. Ships' masters must continue to follow industry best practice diligently and maintain watches. Early detection of an approaching pirate skiff is often key to avoiding an attack.'



Gulf of Guinea kidnappings persist

IMB's 24-hour Piracy Reporting Centre (PRC) recorded 21 attacks in the Gulf of Guinea in Q1 2020. Of these, 12 were on vessels underway at an average of 70 nautical miles off the coast. All vessel types are at risk. The perpetrators are usually armed. They approach in speedboats, boarding ships in order to steal stores or cargo and abduct crewmembers to demand a ransom.

While ten vessels were fired upon worldwide for the whole of 2019, four already reported being fired at within Nigerian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in the first quarter of 2020. This includes a container ship underway around 130 nm southwest of Brass.

In another incident around 102 nm northwest of São Tomé Island, another container ship was boarded by pirates. The crew retreated into the citadel and raised the alarm. On receiving the alert, the IMB PRC liaised with Regional Authorities and the vessel operator until the vessel was safe and the crew had emerged from the citadel.

Howlett added: 'The IMB PRC commends Regional coastal state response agencies and international navies in the Gulf of Guinea region for actively responding to reported incidents.'

With many more attacks going unreported, IMB advises seafarers in the region to follow the recently published *Best Management Practices West Africa – BMP WA*. (See: www.ics-shipping.org).

Indonesia: dialogue pays dividends

Strategic deployment of Marine Police patrol vessels has

resulted in a continued decline in attacks on ships in most Indonesian anchorages and waterways – thanks to positive cooperation between the IMB PRC and the Indonesian Marine Police (IMP). In Q1 2020, just five anchored vessels were reported boarded. These are often low-level armed robbery attacks. The IMB PRC is monitoring the situation and continues to liaise with the IMP as well as other local and regional authorities.



Singapore Straits

Five ships were boarded while underway in the Singapore Straits – where no attacks were reported in Q1 2019. These low level armed robbery attacks are a distraction to crews navigating in congested waters. In one incident the crew managed to lock their assailants in the storeroom, which enabled their later arrest.

Elsewhere

Other violence against seafarers includes the kidnapping of five crew for ransom in an attack on a fishing vessel off Sabah, Malaysia in January 2020. In March, at Macapa Anchorage, Brazil, a watchman was confronted while on duty and held temporarily by a group of robbers. Meanwhile, in the anchorage of Callao, Peru, three crew were apprehended by nine robbers who boarded their vessel to steal ship's stores. Two crew were injured during the incident. Callao recorded five incidents in the last quarter of 2019 and three this quarter.



IMB Piracy Reporting Centre

Founded in 1991, the IMB PRC's 24-hour manned centre remains a single point of contact to report the crimes of piracy and armed robbery. The centre has not only assisted ships in a timely manner, it also provides the maritime industry, response agencies and governments with transparent data – received directly from the Master of the vessel under attack - or its owners.

The IMB PRC's prompt forwarding of reports and liaison with response agencies, its broadcasts to shipping via GMDSS Safety Net Services and email alerts to ships' CSOs (Company Security Officers), all provided free of charge, has helped the response against piracy and armed robbery and the security of seafarers, globally.

ESPO and FEPORT urge Member States to enable crew changes in all ports

Ever since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, all European ports have been fully operational and continued to do everything they can to fulfil their essential role in the supply chain and provide citizens, health services and businesses in Europe with the products and material they need.

To ensure the continuity of the supply chain, European ports rely on the smooth functioning and mobilisation of all port stakeholders and on the availability and engagement of many transport workers, both on shore and at sea.

A number of valid points were emphasised in a joint European Sea Ports Organisation (ESPO) / Federation of European Private Port Companies and Terminals (FEPORT) press release issued on 17 April.

The possibility for ships' crews to embark on a ship, to return home or be repositioned after a long period at sea is a priority and it is essential for the functioning of European logistics chains that Member States should facilitate crew changes in all their seaports.

It is has become essential that Member States work in co-ordination to facilitate the movement of crew and seafarers across land borders, for example to reach a repatriation flight at an airport in a neighbouring country. Neither technically nor economically is it feasible to restrict crew changes to only a select group of main ports.



The two organisations, ESPO and FEPORT, welcomed the recently adopted European Commission's Green Lanes concept with its exemptions to enable transport workers to cross borders.

ESPO and FEPORT called on Member States to properly apply these guidelines and make use of the Green Lane border crossings concept, so that movements of ships' crews and seafarers who need to embark on a vessel or return home can be facilitated as smoothly as possible. It has been suggested that shipping lines should also liaise

with Member States and airports in order to ensure that the necessary flights home for the ship crews can be arranged, both within the EU and to third countries.

On 8 April, the European Commission issued a Communication entitled: *Guidelines on protection of health, repatriation and travel arrangements for seafarers, passengers and other persons on board ships.*

See here: <https://tinyurl.com/s3ffsqb>

US Coast Guard medevac

155 miles SW of Key West

From Key West, Florida, we learnt that on 16 April USCG *Charles David Jr* (WPC-1107) crew medevaced a 31-year-old Filipino man from the 820-foot motor tanker, *Philotimos*, approximately 155 miles southwest of Key West.

The *Charles David Jr.* crew arrived to the scene, embarked the *Philotimos* crew member, transferred him to a Coast Guard Station Key West 45-foot Response Boat—Medium crew, who then transferred him ashore to local emergency medical services in a stable condition.



Illustrations USCG 7th District ©.

Earlier Coast Guard Sector Key West watchstanders received a medevac request from the *Philotimos* crew stating a 31-year-old crewmember was suffering from a possible appendicitis.

In the words of Lieutenant Greg Mitchell, CO the cutter *Charles David Jr.* ‘*This medevac was a great success.*

‘The coordinated efforts of the Charles David Jr. crew, Station Key West, and Sector Key West enabled all of us and the crew of the Philotimos to work through the challenges of distance, language barriers, and medical concerns to ensure the crewmember was received by emergency medical services as quick as possible.

‘While, I am proud of the work and effort that enabled this mission to be a success, I hope the crewmember of the Philotimos is ultimately healthy and has a quick recovery.’

UK government financial support for ferries

Isle of Wight and Isles of Scilly

Vital transport links to the mainland for people living on the Isle of Wight and the Isles of Scilly (England, South Coast and SW Coast) have been safeguarded during the COVID-19 pandemic, thanks to an emergency package of up to £10.5 million, granted by the UK government on 24 April.

The funding – agreed jointly by the Department for Transport (DfT) and HM Treasury – will support the continuation of crucial passenger ferries to the Isle of Wight as well as sea and air links to the Isles of Scilly over the next three months it was reported.

More than 140,000 people live on the Isle of Wight and 2,200 on the Isles of Scilly. It is understood that this fund will help ensure these communities continue to have access to vital medical services on the mainland while protecting the flow of supplies to these regions.

This is the latest step in a string of urgent measures being taken forward by HMG to support vital public services, including emergency support to sustain rail, bus and freight links as operators manage the impacts of COVID-19.

It follows the temporary suspension of competition law to allow ferry operators in the Isle of Wight to work together to continue to run essential services despite reduced usage during the virus, maintaining a vital route for those who cannot work from home and those needing medical treatment.

HM Government



Irish and Continental services

On 24 April it was further announced that the UK, French and Irish governments have pledged to work together on temporary measures to ensure COVID-19 does not threaten vital freight routes between their countries.

There will be, in addition, £17 million funding to safeguard ferry routes between Great Britain and Northern Ireland during COVID-19 outbreak.

The package is being funded by the UK government and the Northern Ireland Executive and will be made available to operators so that they can continue running freight services on five sea routes between Great Britain and Northern Ireland during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Tripartite Ministerial accord

UK Transport Secretary, Grant Shapps, Irish Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport, Shane Ross, and French Minister of Transport, Jean-Baptiste Djebbari, said the nations are united by trade which has thrived through the most difficult of times, and that they will continue to engage closely to help keep freight moving between the nations.

In conclusion it was stated that the UK is working closely alongside French and Irish partners and has pledged in a joint statement to: 'strengthen partnership and share best practices', to ensure the continued movement of freight across the continent. There are twenty-six maritime freight routes between Britain, France, Belgium, Spain, the Netherlands, Denmark, Germany, Norway and Sweden, including Eurotunnel.

Solving the crew-change challenge with difficulty

Crew managers attempting to repatriate or relieve seafarers are facing a number of challenges, and these may be the tip of the iceberg for the shipping industry, according to crewing specialist Henrik Jensen. This was reported on 27 April.



A number of companies and maritime organisations have joined forces to investigate how crew changes can be made possible during the Covid-19 pandemic, said Jensen, founder of Danica Crewing Services which has offices in Hamburg, Ukraine, Russia and Latvia. However, global travel restrictions and quarantine requirements are proving difficult to overcome.

It is understood that part of the problem is that each country has its own version of measures in place to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

Jensen explained: *'At present every country has its own set of rules. As a collective industry we now have work in progress to set-up an industry standard on how joining*

seafarers should be tested and stay in self-isolation before travelling, and so forth.

'This has two purposes: to develop a common standard policy which, if followed, would allow seafarers to cross borders and move to their vessels, and to reduce the risk to existing crew members of bringing the virus onboard.'

Lack of commercial flights

One of the biggest hurdles to be overcome, apparent in the last week of April, is the lack of commercial flights to facilitate crew changeovers. The consortium is in the process of identifying key ports and investigating flight charter options.

Speaking for Danica, Jensen added: *'The problem we, and I guess many others, have is that the majority of our vessels are in the tramp trade with the schedule not known much ahead – which makes it difficult to determine the ports.'*

'Only 15,000 of the world fleet of 75,000 vessels are in the liner trade with relatively fixed schedules. It is very difficult to foresee where vessels will be at a certain time and therefore very difficult to consolidate crew changes with other shipping companies.'

Huge air ticket prices

If the group can secure flights the costs will not be cheap. Jensen said: *'All this is not a free ticket. Chartered flights are expensive and so are the majority of the remaining commercial flights. We investigated putting on one flight within Europe and the costs with airport taxes would have been about €1,200 one way per seafarer – for a journey which would usually be €300-€350.'*

He added: *'There is no playbook for this situation – new solutions need to be created to cope with the problems. It is important that all stakeholders in the industry come together to get in place common standards and new modus operandi to solve the problem.'*

'We need to help overdue seafarers as soon as possible to eliminate the safety risks posed by the stress and fatigue which is building up now.'

Ship operators are facing other costs

Covid-19 test kits are expensive and, in addition, many crew members are being paid extra salary as compensation for staying longer onboard or spending time in quarantine facilities.

Jensen added: *'Shipping companies are already under financial pressure, with ships being idle, and I am afraid a huge crisis is looming.'*

New builds also need to be collected, warned Mr Jensen. *'A number of the owners we work for have purchased new vessels which are due to come under our management.'*

'While the takeover of these vessels has been postponed, it is now becoming imperative for commercial and legal reasons that the ownership changes.'

'Unfortunately it is a challenge not only to get the crew onboard but also for the owners to have their superintendents, Class and Flag surveyors and technicians to attend the vessels in order to facilitate the change of ownership.'

When the pandemic begins to dissipate and global coronavirus restrictions are relaxed, crew change problems may become even more challenging, predicted Jensen: *'I don't want to be pessimistic but I think this is going to take a long time. The world is not going to open up in one go – countries will come back step-by-step.'*

'The number of crew who are overdue being relieved is growing and to change large numbers of crew who will need to be replaced or moved at that time will be a challenge, particularly if ship operators are trying to remain within existing budgetary restrictions.'

'We also need to bear in mind that replacing an entire crew who are overdue could jeopardise the safe operation of the vessel. In addition, the workplace will have to adapt as social distancing and other physical restrictions are likely to continue for the rest of the year – certainly that is what some leaders, such as the German Prime Minister, have indicated.'

US Coast Guard monitors increased presence of tankers

Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach

On 23 April the USCG reported 27 tankers off the coast of Southern California.



US Coast Guard Cutter Narwhal patrols the coast of Southern California.

US Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Aidan Cooney, US Coast Guard District 11.

USCG ©.

There, Sector Los Angeles-Long Beach coordinates operations in an area of responsibility spanning more than 350 miles along the California coast, from Morro Bay to San Clemente and encompassing the US's largest port complex.

Commander Marshall Newberry, from Coast Guard Sector Los Angeles/Long Beach commented: *'Due to the unique nature of this situation, the Coast Guard is constantly evaluating and adapting our procedures to ensure the safety of the vessels at anchor and the protection of the surrounding environment.'*

VTS Los Angeles-Long Beach is jointly operated by the USCG and Marine Exchange of LA/LB from the Vessel Traffic Center located in San Pedro.

VTS provides anchorage assignments based on physical requirements, such as a vessel's draft, length, type, as well as logistical requirements such as duration of stay and intentions while at anchor.

From the IFSMA Office

Well, actually from my home office as the London Office continues to be closed during the pandemic. In these internet communication times we continue to receive all email messages and monitor our social media feeds. We are also able to maintain meeting attendance using video conferencing. See the Secretary General's report on page 2 to find out who have been meeting with. The office closure is expected to continue for some time.

The UK is not a good place to be at the moment, with very high COVID-19 infections and deaths, the government tell us we are now past the peak, so hopefully things can only get better.

Don't forget to check our website "IFSMA Log" for the latest information on COVID-19 matters and other important information. We will send as much information to you as practicable via email, however, some documents will be too large to send by that method.

This Newsletter will be sent via email, but if it does not get through you can always access it through the IFSMA Website.

Apologies for the length of this Newsletter, which is probably the longest we have ever produced. However, there are lots of COVID-19 and crew change articles included, which are very relevant at this time.

Here is a useful webpage link. The International Group of P&I Clubs have produced a free access webpage to provide country and port information on restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Click on the red discs to see the relevant information.

<https://www.igpandi.org/covid-19>