

**INTERNATIONAL CHAMBER OF SHIPPING**  
**NOTE OF CREW CHANGE TASK FORCE MEETING**  
**TUESDAY 26 MAY 2020 AT 1200 UK TIME**

**STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH COMPETITION RULES**

Guy Platten welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that, whilst there were some positive signs emerging regarding crew changes there was still a long way to go before there would be any crew changes at the scale needed.

**1. A FRAMEWORK OF PROTOCOLS FOR FACILITATING CREW CHANGES**

It was noted that a number of governments were now starting to use the protocols but the continued lobbying was under way to persuade more to follow suit.

**2. CREW CHANGES**

The Chairman updated the group regarding a joint ITF/ICS/ITUC letter to the UN Secretary General urging action on crew changes and that this had received some good media attention. Work was continuing with a media campaign to raise the issue as widely as possible.

It was reported in Hong Kong that there would shortly be a meeting between HKSOA and the Government to allow Hong Kong to be a hub for crew changes. They appeared to be receptive to the idea and were looking for risk mitigation plans. The framework of protocols had been shared with them along with the ICC AOKpass/ Hong Kong airport was due to open on 01 June.

Singapore representative reported that crew change trials were underway to test the protocols and was developing a handbook of procedures for crew changes that could be used as a template for other ports. Working on a floating hotel for accommodation of crew changes so the ship would not need to be in port for arriving and departing crew.

It was also explained that the Singapore Government and MPA were extremely cautious. Looking at several phases, pushing ahead with phase 1 (trials) and hope to start phase 2 on 15 June (opening up further). Flights not expected to be an issue. Seafarer country destination restrictions remain a problem, particularly to Philippines and India.

India – seafarers included on evacuation flights, but only as the last priority. Outbound flights now operating but not incoming. Domestic flights open but each state has their own regulations. Charter flights as an option may be starting up.

In the Philippines a COVID test was required a maximum of 48 hours prior departure and within 24 hrs prior departure a doctor had to issue a clean bill of health. Schengen visas remain a problem and they were clarifying whether visa on arrival in Netherlands if possible. Testing is by private testing companies approved by the government, results received within 24 to 48 hours.

Danish Shipping and some other national associations have been asked by a group of Philippine manning agencies (with European clients) to endorse a letter to department of finance and defence requesting support to be able to change crew in a larger scale. It was asked whether Has ICS, IMEC, ECSA or others received the same and if so whether they would endorse such letters?

IMEC reported that some crew changes happening in the Philippines. Singapore is frustrating and difficult to comply with requirements and costs for doctor certification are high. Philippines is an issue regarding testing, but some flights are available. IMEC have been asked the same as Danish Shipping have to request financial support from governments for crew changes. Crew changes in Columbo (Sri Lanka) are opening up.

Guy Platten reported that the ICS had launched a survey to ascertain whether crew changes are taking place and to date over 550 responses had been received so far indicating approx. 55% successful crew changes. First report will hopefully be issued later this week.

South Africa representative reported that a letter had been sent to the government regarding crew changes, but no feedback received yet.

Intertanko reported that their members were indicating it is possible for crew changes in some areas.

ECSA reported that the European Commission are supporting ECSA ETF calls for EU's diplomatic missions around the world to help international efforts to ensure countries facilitate crew changes.

### **3. CHARTERING AND INSURANCE ISSUES**

The meeting was updated on progress with the BIMCO time charter deviation clause and it was hoped to have a clause agreed week commencing 01 June 2020.

### **4. TESTING**

Agreeing an industry wide procedure on testing was considered important to promote this with governments and avoid multiple and differing requirements. Work was ongoing and further reports would be made.

## **5. VISAS**

The issue of visas and particularly the issue of Schengen Visas was discussed and it was acknowledged that serious challenges needed to be resolved.

UK representative reported that visas issue by embassies remains problematic and there would be a huge backlog when it resumes. Visas on arrival a problem in many places still as well.

ECSA reported that visa issuing is the top priority and a number of meetings have been undertaken with the authorities to find alternative solutions, such as acceptance of expired visas and waivers. EC is aware that action is needed, are sympathetic to the problem and aiming to find a solution that does not require any legislative amendment which waivers would require.

It was explained that Cyprus is not in Schengen area so they do not issue Schengen visas and are not limited by EU rules for issuing visas. <https://www.schengenvisainfo.com>.

Netherlands provide visas on arrival but limited in number due to cumbersome procedures and lack of personnel/infrastructure (65 p/day) and limited to NL flagged ships.

The Belgium mission is open in the Philippines and processing visas but were limiting the issue of visas to crew members joining in Belgian ports.

## **6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Before closing the UK representative reported that the forthcoming 14-day quarantine period for newly arrived travellers to the UK would not be required for seafarers.

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June at 1200 UK Time.

## **ATTENDANCE**

### **Representatives of following national and international associations:**

Australia  
Bahamas  
Belgium  
Canada  
Cyprus  
Denmark  
France  
Germany  
Greece  
Hong Kong  
Japan  
India  
Liberia  
Netherlands  
Norway  
Philippines  
Singapore  
South Africa  
Sweden  
United Kingdom

### **With**

ICS  
CLIA  
ECSA  
BIMCO  
INTERCARGO  
INTERTANKO  
IG P&I  
IMEC  
WSC