

INTERNATIONAL CHAMBER OF SHIPPING
NOTE OF CREW CHANGE TASK FORCE MEETING
TUESDAY 7 JULY 2020 AT 1200 UK TIME

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH COMPETITION RULES

Welcome and Introduction.

1. CREW CHANGES

Guy - focus this week on the ministerial summit hosted by the UK government on Thursday being attended by a number of governments. ICS and ITF will have 2 minute interventions. IMO SG will have an address, followed by interventions by each government. ICS will report back on the outcome of the summit in due course.

Signatories to the summit will sign to say the following:

- (a) DESIGNATING seafarers, regardless of nationality, as “key workers” when in our territory to facilitate their freedom of movement, as key workers providing an essential service;
- (b) ACCEPT the documentation carried by seafarers as evidence of their status and purpose of their travel and movement of the purpose of crew changes;
- (c) ENGAGE, nationally, multilaterally and bilaterally, in discussions about implementation, to the maximum extent possible, as appropriate to the circumstances that may prevail nationally or locally, the Recommended Framework of Protocols for Ensuring Safe Ship Crew Changes and Travel during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic, circulated to IMO Member States as Circular Letter No.4204/Add.14 on 5 May 2020;
- (d) REVIEW, working in conjunction with our health, immigration and other relevant ministries, agencies and authorities, the necessity of any restrictions that may continue to apply, at national and/or local level, to the movement and travel of seafarers for the purpose of conducting ships’ crew changes, including the possibility of allowing exemptions from quarantine or similar restrictions;
- (e) CONSIDER, in liaison with our relevant ministries and authorities, including those responsible for immigration, temporary measures including (where possible under national law) the possibility of waivers, exemptions or other relaxations from any visa or documentary requirements that might normally apply to seafarers; and
- (f) EXPLORE, in cooperation with ICAO and the aviation industry, ways of increasing, as soon as possible, the number of commercial flights to and from the principal countries of residence of seafarers and airports in reasonable proximity to those seaports where crew changes are effected.

Simon – looking ahead, need to have more engagement from health ministries and immigration departments.

Natalie – Philippines will be dedicating green lanes for seafarers to make travel easier. More cases are occurring in the Philippines and no travel is currently allowed from abroad. IMO bi-lateral are having value and should be able to feed in to the ministerial summit. The EU is now also having bi-lateral discussions with member States.

Michael (Singapore) – besides setting up green lanes in PH, have they eased the restrictions on limited number of people arriving into Philippines?

Natalie – not yet.

Dimitri (UGS) – Philippines Green Lanes not yet active. Bottlenecks galore in Manila! Singapore Changi very few flights!

Guy – India also has increasing cases, so it is vital that the protocols are implemented. Meetings next week in the Philippines regarding crew changes and flights that ICS will participate in. The Egyptian President is engaged in being a hub for crew changes.

Guy – shout out for seafarers will be held tomorrow.

Claudia (ECSA) – a number of joint letters sent to heads of different EU institutions to apply further political pressure, no reactions yet received. Meetings are scheduled for next week, with crew changes and visas on the agenda, so hoping to see improvements soon in member States taking responsibility.

Rajesh (Singapore) – India lockdown extended until end of July for international flights. Flight information to/from India is now available on the DG website.

Michael (Singapore) – since the revised protocols have been issued fewer problems have been encountered and approvals for crew change have increased, however there are still limitations regarding flight availability. Flight information being provided by SSA, which Natalie is adding to the ICS e-room.

Phillip (Intertanko) – Cote d'voire open for Air France flights so route out of west Africa, but as seafarers need to transfer bags to another flight in Paris they need to pass through immigration and so need a Schengen visa. Members reporting seafarers on board testing positive without significant symptoms, which is impacting on the operation of the vessel when they need to isolate on board. Positive tests from crew changes and interactions following port calls. . Protocols are not always being strictly followed and situations need to be managed. Living with COVID on board is the next challenge to face the industry

Natalie – looking at simplified procedures and a poster for managing COVID cases on board. Further challenges will occur if there are multiple cases on board.

Claudia (ECSA) – Agree with Phillip that next challenge to focus on how to deal with Covid on board and consequences to operations. Reports of companies reporting dead end situations when having persons that tested positive on board and:

- companies wanting to test the crew but cannot leave or commence any bunkering before tests concluded and
- vessels not receiving clearance if a positive case on board.
- being told they cannot offsign potential positive Covid 19 cases.

Guy – need a separate discussion on managing COVID cases on board.

Nita (Switzerland) – situation in India regarding crew changes is improving slowly but still mainly using charter flights.

Tim (UK) – One UK Chamber company has reported that no Schengen visa appointments are available in either Manila or Mumbai until the end of the month. Seafarers trying to get to the UK to join a ship is a problem, but repatriation is not an issue regarding visas, so still looking to get visa waivers agreed.

Gautam (HK) – important to follow the framework of protocols to avoid negative effects on the HK government arrangements for crew changes. HKSOA have sent a Circular to members regarding strictly following the protocols. HKSOA have asked the HK government to bring seafarers under the testing regime. Mainland Chinese seafarers waiting for repatriation for Europe and other western ports have been lobby the government to use charter flights from Europe to HK and that from the air side of HK airport they are transported to Chinese ports without coming into contact with the general HK population. Have spoken about the Visa issue to the British Consulate here. They have also taken note and passed it onward to the UK government

Terry (WaterFront) – It is getting less complicated to execute crew changes in the USA itself. The challenge is in getting flights. The authorities are being reasonable in facilitating last minute changes in various ports/cities.

2. TESTING

Natalie – WHO have confirmed they are starting to authorise certain PCR tests but do not support rapid or saliva tests. Testing should be done prior departure home country and again prior boarding the vessel, along with on board quarantine for 14 days to avoid the risk of infection spread on board. ICS will be issuing a Circular shortly. IHMA will be promoting. ICAO working on a dashboard showing international testing and immigration requirements, the website link will be shared when available.

3. CHARTERING AND INSURANCE ISSUES

Jakob (BIMCO) – no data regarding whether the clause is being used, however have received no negative feedback so far. It may be however that the cost of crew change still falls on the shipowner even though the clause allows for costs to be shared.

4. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Guy - ICS members meeting on Friday this week due to the Ministerial Summit on Thursday.

Next meeting scheduled for Tuesday 14 July, an invite will be sent out as usual.

ATTENDANCE

Representatives of following national and international associations:

Australia
Bahamas
Belgium
Canada
Cyprus
Denmark
France
Germany
Greece
Hong Kong
Japan
Netherlands
Norway
Singapore
Spain
Switzerland
United Kingdom

With

ICS
ECSA
BIMCO
INTERCARGO
INTERTANKO
IG P&I
IMEC
WaterFront