



The Neptune Declaration on Seafarer Wellbeing and Crew Change

Overcoming the Seafarer Crisis: Enabling Crew Changes and Repatriation

The Covid-19 pandemic has created an unprecedented crew change crisis which has led to hundreds of thousands of seafarers being impacted and in many instances left stranded on ships¹, beyond the expiry of their contracts. Despite significant efforts by international organizations, governments, industry associations, labor unions, NGOs and individual companies including the adoption on 1 December 2020 by the UN General Assembly of a resolution on *International cooperation to address challenges faced by seafarers as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic to support global supply chains*², the issue is still far from resolved.

This is not an acceptable way to treat seafarers, who are the frontline workers of the maritime industry carrying 90% of global trade. Fatigue after extended periods at sea has significant consequences on the physical and mental wellbeing of seafarers. It also increases the risk of maritime incidents and environmental disasters, and poses a wider threat to the integrity of global supply chains, which depend on safe and reliable maritime transport.

This is why a taskforce of stakeholders from across the maritime value chain has identified the following key issues preventing crew changes, that require urgent action:

- While high-quality health protocols have been adopted internationally, they have not been consistently implemented in practice. This has led authorities to perceive seafarers as a Covid-19 risk, which has limited the possibilities of crew changes.
- Implementing high-quality crew change protocols will reduce the economic risk of disrupted supply chains but will lead to increased short-term costs.
- The disruption of international air travel has reduced the number of flights, causing connectivity issues between major crew change hubs and major seafaring nations, which has complicated crew changeovers.

Taking action to deliver on our shared responsibility

We, the signatories to The Neptune Declaration on Seafarer Wellbeing and Crew Change, recognize that we have a shared responsibility to ensure that the current crew change crisis is resolved as soon as possible and to use the learnings from the crisis as an opportunity to build a more resilient maritime supply chain.

We believe that the most effective way of addressing the crew change challenge and building a more resilient maritime logistics chain, is by working together across the value chain with industry stakeholders, organizations and with governments to implement solutions that work in practice.

Therefore, we commit to take action to resolve the crew change crisis, based on our position and role in the value-chain, thereby ensuring the rights and wellbeing of the seafarers supporting global supply chains. We call on our peers and other stakeholders, in particular relevant government bodies, to join us in our efforts.

1 http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_755390/lang--en/index.htm

2 <https://www.undocs.org/en/A/75/L.37>

To make tangible improvements, the following actions should be implemented:

- **Recognize seafarers as key workers and give them priority access to Covid-19 vaccines**

Seafarers should be recognized as key workers by all governments in line with the UN General Assembly resolution adopted on 1 December 2020 and the transition of seafarers across borders should be facilitated based on internationally agreed, high-quality health protocols.

Governments and other stakeholders should work together with the maritime industry to ensure that seafarers, irrespective of their nationality, get priority access to Covid-19 vaccines alongside other key workers and health care professionals in recognition of their critical role in global supply chains and trade. This should include developing protocols that ensure vaccinations are correctly certified and effectively administered to seafarers as well as establishing a standardized format for health passes that contain tamper proof information about vaccination and testing status to facilitate crew changes.

- **Establish and implement gold standard health protocols based on existing best practice**

The maritime industry and governments should implement *The Recommended Framework of Protocols for ensuring safe ship crew changes and travel during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic*³ which has been recognized by the International Maritime Organization.

To minimize the risk of Covid-19, to build trust that crew changes can be carried out in a safe manner, and to ensure that the measures taken can be universally accepted, the implementation of the Framework of Protocols should be based on the highest practicable standards. The STAR Crew Change Protocols⁴, which are based on existing best practice, are thus recommended for industry-wide adoption.

- **Increase collaboration between ship operators and charterers to facilitate crew changes⁵**

Facilitating crew changes based on high-quality health protocols is a shared responsibility which will create benefits for all by minimizing the risk of Covid-19 spread on vessels, minimizing the risk of disruptions to global supply chains, while contributing to maritime safety and the wellbeing of seafarers.

Ship owners and charterers should share relevant information transparently and collaborate to ensure that necessary crew changes can be carried out with the least impact possible in terms of cost and delays. The owner should provide the charterer with as much notice as possible on intended crew changes, while the charterer should make all reasonable efforts to accommodate crew changes including when the vessel has to make a reasonable deviation.

No charter contracts should contain clauses preventing necessary crew changes from being carried out, as the aggregate effect of such clauses could be a serious obstacle to the safe operation of maritime trade and the protection of the wellbeing and rights of seafarers.

By implementing high-quality health protocols, ship owners can reduce the risk of trade disruption due to Covid-19, which also creates benefits to charterers. These benefits should be reflected in chartering decisions to create incentives for shipowners to implement high-quality health protocols and be transparent about actions taken as well as costs incurred.

- **Ensure air connectivity between key maritime hubs for seafarers**

The aviation industry should work together with the maritime industry to ensure that airlift capacity is established between major crew changing hubs and seafaring nations.

Additionally, the aviation and maritime industries as well as governments – involving all relevant ministries and agencies – should work together to establish a universally accepted and harmonized framework of standards for the validation of trusted health data for seafarers to facilitate border crossing and ensure the long-term resilience of air connectivity.

3 The reference is to the latest version of the Protocols, last updated on 22nd April 2021: [MSC.1-Circ.1636 - Industry Recommended Framework Of Protocols For Ensuring Safe Ship Crew Changes And Travel.pdf \(imo.org\)](https://www.imo.org/en/About/Pages/press-releases.aspx?CIDPR=2021042201)

4 <http://www.globalmaritimeforum.org/content/2020/12/The-Neptune-Declaration-STAR-protocols.pdf>

5 A group of charterers from both the wet and dry bulk sectors has outlined a set of best practices they have used to turn the Neptune Declaration recommendations into concrete action: <http://www.globalmaritimeforum.org/content/2021/05/The-Neptune-Declaration-Best-Practices-for-Charterers.pdf>

Signatories

2020 Bulkers

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Advent International

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Alassia NewShips Management

Alberta Shipmanagement

Asahi Shipping

Alfa Laval

Alfa Ship & Crew Management

Algeciras Bay Port Community (COMPORT)

Alios Bulkers

Allmode Global

All-Ukrainian Association of Crewing Companies

Alma Maritime Group Corporation

ALP Maritime Services

Altera Infrastructure

Amazon Crew Services

AMCF - Agents Maritimes et Consignataires de France

American Express Global Business Travel

American Maritime Services

AMSOL - African Marine Solutions

Anchor SM (Singapore)

Anglo-American

Anglo-Eastern Univan Group

Anker Crew Insurance

Anosis Maritime

Anglo International Shipping Operations

Anthony Veder Group

APeopleBusiness

Apex Ship Management

Apollo 1969 at Lloyd's

Apollo Ship Management

APORMAR Seafarers Portuguese Agency

Apostleship of the Sea of the United States of America

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Aquatrade

ARCADIA SHIPMANAGEMENT

Ardmore Shipping

ARGELAN SHIPS SERVICE

Argo Crew

Armateurs de France

Asahi Shipping

Ashley Chartering Limited

Asiatic/Atlantic Lloyd Group

ASP Crew Management Group

Assarmatori

Associated Maritime (Hong Kong)

Associated Steamship Agents

Association of Canadian Port Authorities

Association of German Shipmasters and Ship Officers

Association of Malaysia's Maritime Professionals/IKHTISAS KELAUTAN MALAYSIA (IKMAL)

Association of Marine Pilots Ireland

Atlantic Ship Management

Atlantska Plovidba

Atlas Marine Valves

Atlas Professionals

Atlas Sea Group

Atlas Ship Supply

ATPI Marine & Energy

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Australasian Institute of Marine Surveyors

Australian Mariners' Welfare Society

Australian Seafarers' Welfare Council

AV Global Marine

Avance Gas Holding

AVB Ahrenkiel Vogemann Bolten

Azimuth Ship Management

B

Bahri Ship Management

Bao-Island Enterprises

BAO-NYK Shipping

BBC Chartering

Belships Management (Singapore)

BEMAC Corporation

Ben Line Agencies

Berge Bulk

Bernhardt Schulte Shipmanagement

BHN Shipping Group

Bibby Marine

BIMCO

Black Sea Contractors

Blackbird Air Charter

Blue Ocean Marine and Offshore Solutions

Blue Planet Shipping

BMT

Bodrum Mariners Association

Boers Crew Services - a part of the BCS Group

Borealis Maritime

BOURBON

BP

Signatories

Brentwood Communications	CLC Projects	DALNAVE NAVIGATION
Bridgefort Crew Management	Cluster Maritime Français	Danaos Shipping
Briese Crew Management	CMA CGM Group	Danica Crewing Specialists
Briese Schifffahrts	CMAF- Comité Marseillais des	Danz & Tietjens Schifffahrtsgruppe
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BW Group	Association (KOSDER)	Denholm Group
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C Solutions	Compagnie Maritime Nantaise - MN	DHT Holdings
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Management	Concordia Maritime	Döhle Seafront Crewing (Manila)
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Capital Ship Management	CONFITARMA - Italian Shipowners'	Dorian LPG Management
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Management Company	Crowley Maritime Corporation	Element Shipmanagement
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China Merchants Energy Shipping	Cyprus Shipping Chamber	Emarat Maritime
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EveryWay Travel

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Executive Ship Management

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F

Federal Fleet Services

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Genco Shipping & Trading

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GERMAN MARINE AGENCIES

German Nautical Association founded 1868

GFS Ship Management

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Global Maritime Group

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Grieg Star

Grieg Maritime Group

Grimaldi Group

Grindrod Shipping

Grupo Stier

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Gungen Denizcilik ve Ticaret

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Hammonia CrewCo

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Hong Kong Shipowners Association

Hong-Kong Maritime Museum

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INCARGO	International Seafarers' Welfare and Assistance Network (ISWAN)	JBG Shipping Agency
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ING	International Transport Workers' Federation	Jebsen PTC Maritime
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INTERCARGO - International Association of Dry Cargo Shipowners	Interorient Shipmanagement	Junge & Co. Versicherungsmakler
InterManager - - International Association of Ship and Crew Managers	Interscan Schifffahrts	K
International Association of Classification Societies (IACS)	INTERTANKO	K Line Ship Management (Singapore)
International Association of Geophysical Contractors (IAGC)	Ionia Management	KAMER Marine Denizcilik
International Association of Ports and Harbours	Ionic	Kaptanoglu Shipping
International Bunker Industry Association	IQrew Management (IQM)	Kawasaki Heavy Industries
International Chamber of Shipping	IRIS Security	Kawasaki Kisenn Kaisa ("K" LINE)
International Christian Maritime Association	Irish Institute of Master Mariners	Klaveness Marine
International Congress of Maritime Museums (ICMM)	IS Container	KOTUG group of companies
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Liberty Blue Shipmanagement	Marine Transport Workers Trade Union of Ukraine	MINSHIP Shipmanagement
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Lindholm Shipping	MARINO Party-List	MISC Group comprising MISC Bhd, AET and Eaglestar Marine Holdings (L)
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Lloyd's Register Foundation	Maritime Association of Shipowners, Shipmanagers & Agents	Mitsui E&S Shipbuilding Company
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Logbridge (UK Southhampton)	Maritime Medical Services (Gibraltar)	MK Centennial Maritime (Netherlands)
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Navigator Gas	NYK FIL Maritime E-Training	Petredac
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Norbulk Shipping UK	Odfjell SE	POSH Fleet Services
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Nordic Hamburg Shipmanagement	OMA Group West Africa	Precious Shipping PCL
Nordic P&I Group	Oman Shipping Company	PREVENTION at Sea
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Signatories

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"Reederei Nord Shipmanagement on behalf of REEDEREI NORD Group"	Seafarers Trade Union Organization/OMK NSZZ Solidarnosc	Sonangol Marine Services
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RightShip	Seanergy	South32
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RISK4SEA	Sea-Side Shipping Agency Brazil	SouthPoint Ship Management
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S	SFG Engineering Services	Star Bulk Carriers Corp.
S5 Agency World	SFL Corporation	Stealth Maritime
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Safe Bulkers Management	Shin Kurushima Dockyard	Stella Maris - Arica, Chile
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Safety Management Overseas	Shinkoh	Stella Maris - Cape Town
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Saga Shipholding (Norway)	ShipMed Medical Services	Stella Maris - Manila
Saga Welco	ShipMoney	Stella Maris Brasil - Tiplam Santos
Sailors' Society	ShipParts.com	Stella Maris Kaohsiung
Samba Shipping	Shipping Australia	STELLA MARIS Rio de Janeiro
Samudera Indonesia	Shipping Professional Network in Hamburg	Stella Maris Scalabrinian Network
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Suisse-Atlantique	The Nautical Institute of Ukraine	Turk P&I Sigorta
Sun Enterprises	The Naval Connection	Turkish Chamber of Shipping
Sunrui Marine Environment Engineering	The Nordic Association of Marine Insurers (Cefor)	Turkish Maritime Federation
Sunship Schiffahrtskontor	The Shipping Corporation of India	Turkish Maritime Pilots' Association (TUMPA)
Sustainable Shipping Initiative	The Shipping Professional Network London	Turkish Ocean-going Masters' Association
Swire Pacific Offshore	The Standard Club	Turkish Shipowners' Association
Swire Shipping	Thomas Miller Holdings	Türkiye Denizciler Sendikası (Seafarers' Union of Turkey)
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Tamar Ship Management	Torm	Unilever
Ta-Na Crew Manning Agency	Tortoise Engineering	Unisea Philippines
Tankerska plovdba	Torvald Klaveness	Unisea Shipping
Tata NYK Shipping	Total Marine Solutions	Uniteam Marine Limited
Taylor Maritime (HK)	Tototheo Maritime	United European Car Carriers
TCC Group	Trafigura	United Offshore Support
Team Tankers International	Trans KA Tanker	Unitized Ocean Transport Limited
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Technomar Shipping	Trans-Global Maritime Agency	Ushio Reinetsu
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The China Navigation Company	Transmed Shipping Co. Ltd.	Uvea Marine Services
The College Clinic	Transocean Shipmanagement (Phils)	V
The Council of American Master Mariners	Transportation Institute	V. Group
The CSL Group		Vale
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Signatories

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Windward
Wintermar Offshore Marine
Wisby Shipmanagement
WISTA Canada
WISTA Colombia
WISTA International
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World Fuel Services Corporation
World Marine

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World Maritime University

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X-Press Feeders
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Z-Mariner
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