



# The Neptune Declaration on Seafarer Wellbeing and Crew Change

## Overcoming the Seafarer Crisis: Enabling Crew Changes and Repatriation

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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 ships<sup>1</sup>, 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*<sup>2</sup>, 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

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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.

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1 [http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS\\_755390/lang--en/index.htm](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*<sup>3</sup> 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 Protocols<sup>4</sup>, which are based on existing best practice, are thus recommended for industry-wide adoption.

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

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.

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3 <https://wwwcdn.imo.org/localresources/en/MediaCentre/HotTopics/Documents/COVID%20CL%204204%20Add/Circular%20Letter%20No.4204-Add.14%20-%20Coronavirus%20%28Covid-19%29%20-%20Recommended%20Framework%20of%20Protocols.pdf>

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

## Signatories

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3Seas Shipping

### A

A. M. Nomikos Transworld Maritime Agencies

A. P. Møller-Mærsk

ADNOC Logistics & Services

Advent International

Airports Council International (ACI) World

Asahi Shipping

Alfa Laval

Alfa Ship & Crew Management

Anchor SM (Singapore)

Anglo-American

Anglo-Eastern Univan Group

Anglo International Shipping Operations

Anthony Veder Group

Apostleship of the Sea of the United States of America

Ardmore Shipping

Asiatic/Atlantic Lloyd Group

Atlantska Plovidba

Avance Gas Holding

### B

Bahri Ship Management

BAO-NYK Shipping

BEMAC Corporation

Berge Bulk

Bibby Marine

BIMCO

Borealis Maritime

BP

Bureau Veritas

BW Group

### C

Camellia Line

Cape Shipping

Caravel Group

Cargill Ocean Transportation

Carisbrooke Shipping

Celsius Shipping

Citi

CMA CGM Group

Columbia Shipmanagement

Concordia Maritime

Confidence Shipping Company

Contships Management

Cosmos Agency

CPO Containerschiffreederei

COSCO SHIPPING Lines

Crowley Maritime Corporation

Charles Taylor Investment Management Company

China Merchants Energy Shipping (Singapore)

Chugoku Marine Paints

### D

d'Amico Soc. di Navigazione

D. Oltmann Reederei

Daihatsu Diesel

Daikin MR Engineering

Daiwa Kisen

Danaos Shipping

Danica Crewing Specialists

DFDS

Dorian LPG Management

Doun Kisen

### E

Eagle Bulk Shipping

Eagle Industry

Eastern Pacific Shipping

Emirates Ship Investment Company

ESGPlus

Euronav

Evergreen Marine Corp

Executive Ship Management

### F

F. Laeisz

Fednav

Fidelity International

Filipino Association for Mariners' Employment (FAME)

Filipino Shipowners' Association (FSA)

Fleet Management

FLEX LNG

Foremost Group

Foresight Group

Frontline

France LNG Shipping

Fukujin Kisen

FUKUSHIMA

FURUNO ELECTRIC

### G

G2 Ocean

GAC

GasLog

Gazoocean

Gearbulk Norway

Global Maritime Forum

Gram Car Carriers

Golden Ocean

Grieg Star

Grieg Maritime Group

Grimaldi Group

Gunvor

### H

Hachiuma Steamship

Hafnia Pools

Halcyon Recruitment

Hamanaka Chain Manufacturing

Hapag-Lloyd

Harren & Partner

Hempel

HMM

## Signatories

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Honda Heavy Industries

Hong-Kong Maritime Museum

Houston International Seafarers' Center

Human Rights at Sea

### I

Ignazio Messina & C.

IHI Power Systems

IMC Shipping

ING

Indian Maritime Foundation

INTERCARGO - International Association of Dry Cargo Shipowners

InterManager - - International Association of Ship and Crew Managers

International Association of Classification Societies (IACS)

International Association of Ports and Harbours

International Chamber of Shipping

International Christian Maritime Association

International Federation of Shipmasters' Associations

International Harbour Masters' Association

International Maritime Association of the Philippines (INTERMAP)

International Maritime Employers' Council

International Seaways

International Transport Workers' Federation

International Union of Marine Insurance (IUMI)

INTERTANKO

Ionic

IQrew Management (IQM)

IS Container

ISGAM

ITF Seafarers' Trust

### J

J&J Denholm

Japan Marine United Corporation

Japan Radio

JCRS

Jebsen PTC

Jebsen PTC Maritime

John T. Essberger

Joint Ship Manning Group (JMG)

### K

K Line Ship Management (Singapore)

Kaptanoglu Shipping

Kawasaki Heavy Industries

Kawasaki Kisenn Kaisa ("K" LINE)

Kyklades Maritime

Kyoei Tanker

### L

LADOL Free Zone

Lauritzen Kosan

Lighthouse Shipmanagement Phils

LLC Novikontas Kaliningrad

Lloyds' Register

Logbridge (UK Southampton)

Louis Dreyfus Company

Lubeca Marine Management

### M

M.T. Maritime Management (USA)

Mærsk Tankers

Magsaysay MOL Ship Management

Magsaysay People Resources Corporation (MPRC) / Magsaysay Maritime Corporation (MMC)

Manabe Zoki

MarCoPay

Marine & Offshore Div., Bureau

Veritas Japan

Maritime Association of Shipowners, Shipmanagers & Agents

McNeal Law Firm

HURTWORRINGOFFSHORE.com

Merchant Navy Welfare Board

Metrostar Management

MINSHIP Shipmanagement

MISC Group comprising MISC Bhd, AET and Eaglestar Marine Holdings (L)

Mitsubishi Ore Transport

Mitsubishi Shipbuilding

Mitsui E&S Shipbuilding Company

Mitsui O.S.K. Lines

MK Centennial Maritime (Netherlands)

MK Centennial Maritime (Singapore)

MM Marine

MOL LNG Transport

MOL LNG Transport (Europe)

MOL LNG Transport (Asia)

MOL Ship Management

MOL Ship Management (S)

MOL Tankship Management

MPC Container Ships

MSC Mediterranean Shipping Company

MSea Management

MTM Ship Management

### N

Naftomar Shipping and Trading

Nagasaki Sempaku Sobi

Nakakita Seisakusho

Namura Shipbuilding

Nippon Kaiji Kyokai (ClassNK)

Nippon Pusnes

Nissen Kaiun

Nitta Kisen Kaisha

Norden

Nordic Bulk Carriers

Nordic Hamburg Shipmanagement

Norse Shipholding

## Signatories

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North American Maritime Ministry Association  
Northern Marine Group  
Norwegian Shipowners' Association  
NYK Bulk & Projects Carriers  
NYK Bulkship (Asia)  
NYK Bulkship (ATLANTIC)  
NYK Bulkship (Korea)  
NYK Cruises  
NYK Energy Transport (Atlantic)  
NYK Energy Transport (USA)  
NYK FIL Maritime E-Training  
NYK Line  
NYK LNG Shipmanagement (UK)  
NYK LNG Shipmanagement  
NYK Shipmanagement  
NYK-FIL Ship Management  
NYK-TDG Maritime Academy

### O

Odfjell SE  
Oman Shipping Company  
Ocean Networks Express  
ORION Reederei  
Oshima Shipbuilding  
OSM Maritime

### P

Pacific Basin Shipping  
Pacific Carriers Limited  
Pacific International Lines  
Pangaea Logistics Solutions  
Petredec  
Philippine Association of Manning Agencies and Ship Managers (PAMAS)  
Philippine Transmarine Carriers  
Philippine-Japan Manning Consultative Council (PJMCC)  
Pleiades Shipping Agents  
Port Arthur International Seafarers' Center

Precious Shipping PCL  
Promar  
PSA International

### Q

Qatar Gas Transport (Nakilat)

### R

"Reederei Nord Shipmanagement on behalf of REEDEREI NORD Group"  
Ridgebury Tankers  
Rio Tinto

### S

Saga Shipholding (Norway)  
Saga Welco  
Samudera Indonesia  
Santoku Senpaku  
Seamen's Church Institute  
SeaTankers Services (UK)  
Seanergy  
Senator Crewing (Manila)  
SFL Corporation  
Shell Shipping & Maritime  
Shin Kurushima Dockyard  
Shinko  
Shinkoh  
Shipping Australia  
Shunzan Kaiun  
Singhai Marine Services (Shanghai)  
Sirius Ship Management  
Sitara Shipping  
Sonangol Marine Services  
South32  
Southfield Agencies  
Star Bulk Carriers Corp.  
Stealth Maritime  
Stella Maris  
Stella Maris - Catholic Diocese of Beaumont, Texas USA  
Stena Bulk

Stena Shipping and Ferries  
Sunrui Marine Environment Engineering  
Sustainable Shipping Initiative  
Swire Pacific Offshore  
Swire Shipping  
Swiss Ocean Yacht Management  
Swiss Re Corporate Solutions  
Synergy Marine Group

### T

Tagashira Kaiun  
Taiheiyo Kisen Kaisa  
Taihua Ship Management  
TAIKO KIKAI INDUSTRIES  
Ta-Na Crew Manning Agency  
Tankerska plovdba  
Tata NYK Shipping  
Team Tankers International  
Technomar Shipping  
Teekay Group  
The China Navigation Company  
The CSL Group  
The Dow Chemical Company  
The Mission to Seafarers  
The Nautical Institute  
The Nautical Institute - US Gulf Branch  
The Shipping Corporation of India  
The Standard Club  
Thomas Miller Holdings  
Thome Group  
Tohmei Shipping  
Tokyo Keiki Inc. Marine Systems Company  
Tomini Shipping  
Torm  
Tortoise Engineering  
Torvald Klaveness  
Trafigura

## Signatories

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Transocean Shipmanagement  
(Phils)

Tsuneishi shipbuilding

### U

U Ming Marine Transport

UK Club

Ultranav

Unicrew Management

Unifeeder

Unilever

United European Car Carriers

Ushio Reinetsu

### V

V. Group

Vale

Vanmar Shipping

Vitol

### W

Wallem Group

Wallenius Wilhelmsen

Wan Hai Lines

Western Shipping

Wilhelmsen Ahrenkiel Ship  
Management

Wilhelmsen Ship Management

Windward

World Economic Forum

World Fuel Services Corporation

### X

X-Press Feeders

Xiamen Hailong Manning Service

XT Management

### Y

YANMAR POWER TECHNOLOGY

YDK Technologies

Yokogawa Electric Corporation

### Z

Zeaborn Ship Management

ZIM Integrated Shipping Services

Z-Mariner

Zodiac Maritime