

MARITIME SAFETY COMMITTEE  
102nd session  
Agenda item 22

MSC 102/22/12  
20 October 2020  
Original: ENGLISH  
Pre-session public release:

### ANY OTHER BUSINESS

#### Proposal for the creation of a GISIS module to disseminate information on ports facilitating crew changes

Submitted by Cyprus, France, Georgia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Peru, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Vanuatu, ICS

#### SUMMARY

*Executive summary:* In this document, the co-sponsors propose to create a GISIS module to register ports which facilitate crew changes and disseminate information about those ports to enable shipping companies to easily plan and organize crew changes during the COVID-19 pandemic

*Strategic direction, if applicable:* 5

*Output:* Not applicable

*Action to be taken:* Paragraph 15

*Related documents:* Circular Letter No.4204/Add.14 and other Circular Letters from 4204 series and resolution MSC.473 (ES.2)

#### Introduction

1 One million six hundred thousand seafarers, essential but invisible players of globalization, are economically and socially challenged by the COVID-19 crisis.

2 The IMO Secretary-General has emphasized the unique and essential nature of the work done by seafarers. This Organization, as well as the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the European Commission have called upon States to recognize seafarers as key workers.

3 These organizations have issued guidelines to encourage States to facilitate crew changes or they have published, in cooperation with representatives of shipowners or involved seafarers, a health protocol to facilitate the organization of safe crew changes.

4 More than 6 months after the beginning of the crisis, despite repeated calls from international organizations and representatives of the maritime sector, the situation is still critical; many seafarers have exceeded the planned duration of their contracts and too few ports actually allow for crew changes. This is in addition to the difficulties encountered in obtaining adequate access to medical care and shore leave.

5 On 21 September 2020, the Maritime Safety Committee, at its second extraordinary session, adopted resolution MSC.473(ES.2) on *Recommended action to facilitate ship crew change, access to medical care and seafarer travel during the COVID-19 pandemic*, recalling again the seriousness of this health crisis.

### **Discussion**

6 In Circular Letter No.4204/Add.14/Rev.1, paragraph 21, Governments and their relevant national authorities were encouraged to provide information on their approach and national recommendations to facilitate safe crew changes and travel of seafarers.

7 Appendix G to Circular Letter No.4204/Add.14/Rev.1 details which information should be disseminated by Governments or national authorities to inform all different stakeholders about essential information regarding requirements, approaches and measures put in place in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, especially regarding public health, civil aviation, customs, immigration and border control.

8 Further information, even if it has to be confirmed by a shipping agent on the spot, could be added to this list so that it would become a practical tool for managing crew changes depending on whether seafarers are embarking or disembarking as the procedure can be different. It could be the visa policy, the COVID-test policy or the policy on safe transit-hotels for self-isolation. As required in resolution MSC.473(ES.2), National Focal Points should also be mentioned.

9 The private sector, especially shipping agents, provide the industry with information for shipping companies. This first census tool, although useful, does not guarantee that all ports and all measures are integrated as agencies will rather favour ports where they have a branch. Apart from the fact that these tools are not exhaustive, the source of this information and the frequency of updates are not indicated.

10 Companies, even though the local contact remains essential, do not have a secure, uniform, up-to-date, reliable tool that allows them to find out which ports facilitate the procedures and their content to facilitate crew changes.

### **Proposal**

11 The Secretariat could set up a new GISIS module that would contain the updated information provided by Member States, as presented in the annex.

12 Member States could fill in the list of all ports facilitating crew changes in this GISIS module. For each port there would be specific information on the conditions and procedure of crew changes.

13 Thus, the database accessible to all shipping companies would offer, in a standardised format, reliable, synthetic, practical, up-to-date and exhaustive information. This information would be available at a single place rather than being disseminated through websites, national declarations/orders or public notification.

14 The use of GISIS would enable Governments to quickly update information without having to issue circular letters. The administrative burden would be reduced.

**Action requested of the Committee**

15 The Committee is invited to take note of the information provided, to consider the proposals contained in paragraphs 11 to 14 and decide as appropriate.

\*\*\*



## ANNEX

### INFORMATION FORM ON PORTS FACILITATING CREW CHANGES AND TRAVEL OF SEAFARERS

Form updated on:

State:

Port:

National Focal Point:

General measures taken nationally in response to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- .1 Requirements and guidance provided by the relevant national authorities:
  - .1 Public health – details of relevant requirements and main guidance
  - .2 Customs – details of relevant requirements and main guidance
  - .3 Immigration – details of relevant requirements and main guidance, especially regarding visas
  - .4 Maritime and port authorities – details of relevant requirements and main guidance
  - .5 Border control – details of relevant requirements and main guidance
  - .6 Civil aviation – details of relevant requirements and main guidance
    - .1 Explanation of potential regional or local differences of requirements and guidance
    - .2 Flight authorizations – confirmation of flight and airport operating authorization
- .2 Crew changes – confirmation to proceed with crew changes
- .3 Documents – all specific documents required to travel for crew changes
- .4 References of public health opinions or recommendations issued in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (or links to those documents)
- .5 COVID-test policy for:
  - .1 Disembarking seafarers
  - .2 Embarking seafarers
- .6 Transit-accommodation policy for:
  - .1 Disembarking seafarers
  - .2 Embarking seafarers

- .7 Reference to circular letters/maritime recommendations regarding COVID-19 for more information (or links to those documents)
  - .8 Other methods used to disseminate recommendations/public health alerts to the public (e.g. dedicated website, declarations/national orders or public notifications).
-