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Circular Letter No.4241/Add.5
4 February 2021

To: All IMO Members
Intergovernmental organizations
Non-governmental organizations in consultative status

Subject: **Communication from the Government of the Republic of Croatia**

The Government of the Republic of Croatia has sent the attached communication, dated 21 January 2021, with the request that it be circulated by the Organization.



REPUBLIC OF CROATIA
**Ministry of Sea, Transport and
Infrastructure**



CLASS: 810-03/20-01/30
FILE. NO.: 530-04-3-1-21-32
Zagreb, 21 January 2021

**INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION
4, ALBERT EMBANKMENT
LONDON SE1 7SR
UNITED KINGDOM**

SUBJECT: Designation of seafarers as key workers

Dear Mr. Secretary-General,

The recent and on-going COVID-19 pandemic has put maritime industry in the situation that we could not imagine in modern times. Many countries have responded to the pandemic by imposing lockdowns and travel restrictions creating significant difficulties in the regular operations of the entire world shipping industry, including very limited opportunities for crew change, repatriation and shore leave.

From the beginning of this crisis, the Republic of Croatia paid special attention to the protection of Croatian seafarers worldwide.

As we have already informed you earlier, we adopted extraordinary measures for seafarers immediately after escalation of the pandemic in March 2020 taking into account all the recommendations given by the International Maritime Organization.

We would also like to emphasize that Croatian ports were open during all period which allowed seafarers to be repatriated to their home countries.

This is also supported by the fact that we successfully organized acceptance of two cruise ships of Carnival Cruise Line in the Port of Dubrovnik (Croatia) during the first European wave of COVID-19 pandemic in spring 2020, while the strictest lockdown measures were in force all around the world. In this case we successfully organized crew change and repatriation of seafarers from Croatia and many neighbouring countries, with the strongest support of the Seafarers Union of Croatia.

However, we believe that the serious step forward in designating seafarers as key workers happened by adoption of the UN Resolution in December 2020, which we welcomed and fully supported in the Republic of Croatia.

For us in Croatia, as it has been underlined in several occasions, seafarers are vital element of maritime safety, security and environment protection. It is very well known that even vessels built and equipped to the highest technical standards could pose a threat to

maritime safety and environment if they are not properly manned and if not in the hands of competent, rested seafarers, who are working and living in decent conditions.

From the total number of 22.000 Croatian seafarers, almost 16.000 of them are engaged in international navigation and directly affected with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Therefore, with the adopted UN Resolution, we all have a powerful tool in ensuring safe future in the maritime industry in general and especially seafarers and their working and living conditions.

Taking into account all the measures we adopted in the Republic of Croatia since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic to make sure that all seafarers are protected and able to support global supply chains as introduced by UN Resolution, we have an honour to inform you, Mr. Secretary-General, that seafarers are designated by the Republic of Croatia as key workers and therefore we would kindly ask you to include the Republic of Croatia on the *List of Members States and associate members that have designated seafarer as key workers*.

We strongly believe that tasks ahead of us, as well as those we have passed so far, are not easy or painless. However, we are aware that correctly set goals could be a pledge of the future, and therefore we are welcoming all new measures with real optimism.

In that context, we support every further effort of the International Maritime Organization to address and find globally acceptable and practical solutions that will encourage other Member States and relevant stakeholders to implement the protocols to ensure safe crew changes, repatriations as well as shore leaves during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Yours sincerely,


