

RESOLUTION MSC.473(ES.2) (adopted on 21 September 2020)  
RECOMMENDED ACTION TO FACILITATE SHIP CREW CHANGE, ACCESS TO  
MEDICAL CARE AND SEAFARER TRAVEL DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

## ANNEX 2

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#### **RECOMMENDED ACTION TO FACILITATE SHIP CREW CHANGE, ACCESS TO MEDICAL CARE AND SEAFARER TRAVEL DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

THE MARITIME SAFETY COMMITTEE,

RECALLING Article 28(b) of the Convention on the International Maritime Organization concerning the functions of the Committee,

RECALLING ALSO that the Council, at its thirty-first extraordinary session, urged flag and port States to ensure the welfare of seafarers, in particular that their rights to wages, shore leave, sick leave, access to medical care, food supplies and repatriation were preserved,

RECALLING FURTHER the statement adopted by Council, at its thirty-second extraordinary session, on recognition of the importance of the flow of trade by sea during the COVID-19 pandemic,

REAFFIRMING the unique and essential work of seafarers for international shipping and for the world with the uninterrupted transportation of vital medical supplies, food and other basic necessities during the COVID-19 pandemic,

RECOGNIZING the International Maritime Virtual Summit on Crew Changes, hosted by the Government of the United Kingdom in July 2020, on the commitment to facilitate safe crew change and achieve "key worker" designation for seafarers,

BEING DEEPLY CONCERNED about the significant challenges being faced by the global shipping community to effect crew change and repatriation of seafarers as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic,

BEING CONSCIOUS of the large numbers of seafarers that have had to extend their service on board ships after many months at sea, unable to be replaced or repatriated to their home countries,

NOTING that each month more than 150,000 seafarers need to be changed over to and from ships which they operate, to ensure compliance with international maritime regulations for ensuring safety, crew health and welfare, and the prevention of fatigue,

NOTING ALSO that it has been estimated that more than 300,000 seafarers require immediate repatriation, with many more serving on extended crew contracts and being overdue to return home, and that a similar number of seafarers urgently need to join ships to replace them,

BEARING IN MIND that regulation 2.5 of the International Labour Organization's 2006 Maritime Labour Convention (MLC, 2006) sets out seafarers' entitlement to repatriation at the end of their contracts,

HAVING NOTED the *Recommended framework of protocols for ensuring safe ship crew changes and travel during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic*, circulated by means of Circular Letter No.4204/Add.14 on 5 May 2020,

RECOGNIZING that implementation of the above Recommended Framework of Protocols and other initiatives of Member States and international organizations have significantly contributed to facilitating crew change and repatriation of seafarers during the COVID-19 pandemic,

RECOGNIZING ALSO the positive impact of national and international cooperation on crew change and repatriation of seafarers,

1 URGES Member States and relevant national authorities to:

- .1 engage nationally and internationally in discussions on the implementation of the *Recommended framework of protocols for ensuring safe ship crew changes and travel during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic*, as may be revised, and consider applying them to the maximum extent possible;
- .2 designate seafarers as "key workers" providing an essential service, in order to facilitate safe and unhindered movement for embarking or disembarking a vessel and consider legal possibilities for accepting internationally recognized documentation carried by seafarers as evidence of their status as "key workers", and for the purpose of their travel and movement for crew change;
- .3 consider, in liaison with relevant ministries and authorities, including those responsible for immigration, temporary measures including (where possible under relevant law) waivers, exemptions or other relaxations from any visa or documentary requirements that might normally apply to seafarers;
- .4 encourage the use of prevention measures such as tests on crew before embarkation to reduce the risk of crew infections, with a view to facilitating safe and quick crew change during the pandemic;
- .5 provide seafarers with immediate access to medical care and medical facilities and facilitate medical evacuation of seafarers in need of urgent medical attention when the required medical care cannot be provided either on board or in the port of call; and address the situation of seafarers who, due to their unforeseen longer periods on board, are facing expiry of essential medical prescriptions;

2 INVITES Member States and relevant national authorities to designate a National Focal Point on Crew Change and Repatriation of Seafarers to coordinate action at national level and to inform the Secretary-General accordingly so that Member States can be advised for the purpose of coordination;

3 REQUESTS Member States and international organizations to bring this resolution to the attention of all parties concerned.

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