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Circular Letter No.4280  
27 April 2020

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

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

The Government of the Republic of Latvia has sent the attached communication, dated 9 April 2020, with the request that it is circulated by the Organization.

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## Satiksmes ministrija

*Ministry of Transport of the Republic of Latvia*

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Rīga 09. 04. 2020. Nr. 08-01/1245

His Excellency Kitack Lim  
The Secretary - General  
International Maritime Organization  
4 Albert Embankment  
London SE1 7 SR, United Kingdom

## Notification – measures to the Maritime sector due to the impact of COVID-19

Dear Secretary - General,

The Ministry of Transport of the Republic of Latvia is informing the International Maritime Organization (IMO), according to the invitation in Circular Letter No. 4204/Add.5, of the following general information on the measures concerning the impacts on shipping caused by the COVID-19 outbreak.

Starting from 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020, special order for servicing seafarers in the Registry of Seamen has been introduced. Only the seafarers who are scheduled to start service on board vessel within the next 30 days' (employer's confirmation) and for whom the revalidation of documents is required shall be served.

Assessment of competency and re-certification of seamen for a higher qualification shall not be performed. Only existing qualification documents will be revalidated.

Due to the travel restrictions determined in the countries throughout the world, it is possible that there will not be a possibility to sing-off from the ship, which may lead to expiry of Seafarers competence (COC) and other certificates. In such cases, when COC expires, the Registry of Seamen will issue a document on the extension of the validity of such certificates.

The validity of the existing qualification documents for the Masters and Officers will be extended for the period not exceeding six months, but twelve months for the ratings.

If the validity of a medical certificate issued by the recognized medical practitioner in Latvia expires while seafarer is still on board, due to travel restrictions, the Maritime Administration of Latvia shall permit to use it for no more than three months till the moment when the seaman returns to Latvia provided that no new contra-indications have occurred, inversely, the Article 6 of Regulation I/9 of STCW Convention shall be strictly complied with. Flag State inspections for vessels abroad are suspended until further notice. Flag State inspections for vessels in Latvia will only be carried out after careful assessment of the situation with COVID-19.

In case of reaching deadlines for ISM/ISPS/MLC certification, the Maritime Safety Inspectorate will either carry out remote verifications or delegate these verifications to the Recognized Organizations, or extend the validity of appropriate certificates.

Upon request from the Recognised Organisation for extensions for due surveys and statutory conditions/findings, the Maritime Safety Inspectorate may extend the validity of

appropriate certificate or statutory conditions/finding for a period of three months by the Recognized Organisation.

If circumstances would require the issue of new short-term certificates without carrying out surveys/inspections and audits, the validity of such certificates will be valid for three months and can be applied as a short-term solution only.

The surveys and supervision of repair works on domestic ships will be carried in routine manner except in cases when COVID-19 poses risks to surveyors. Each such case will be assessed individually by the Maritime Safety Inspectorate and solutions will be agreed with shipowner.

The PSC inspections on ships having PI and PII are suspended until further notice. In some exceptional cases such as grounding, collision, pollution, erratic manoeuvres and similar, PSC inspection will be carried out after careful assessment of the situation with COVID-19 on a particular ship.

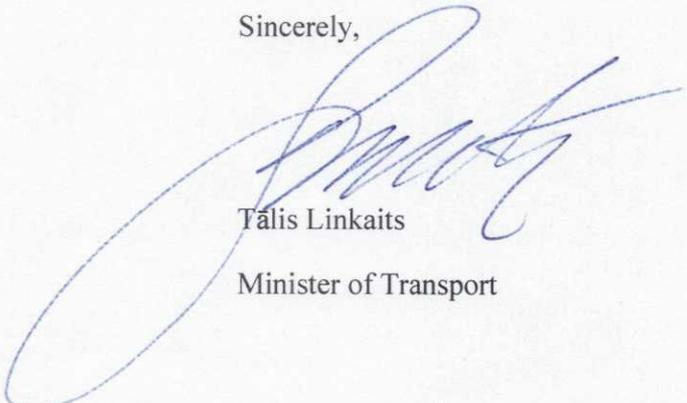
This notification has been published on the webpage of the Maritime Administration of Latvia [www.lja.lv/en](http://www.lja.lv/en) and will be updated accordingly due to the rapidly changing circumstances.

Prior to entering Latvian ports, masters, owners, operators or agents of cargo vessels shall submit to the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention the Maritime Declaration of Health. Declaration shall be submitted through International freight logistics and port information system (SKLOIS). Masters, owners, operators or agents, who are not using the International freight logistics and port information system (SKLOIS), may submit such Declaration in any other form acceptable to the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention.

Taking this opportunity, we would like to recall the vital importance of ensuring the safety of ships and protecting seafarers in line with national and international standards.

We kindly request the Organization to circulate this notification to the IMO Member States.

Sincerely,



Tālis Linkaits

Minister of Transport

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