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Circular Letter No.4235
25 March 2020

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

Subject: **Communications from the Governments of:**
i **The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia;**
ii **The Federal Republic of Germany; and**
iii **The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.**

The Governments of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Federal Republic of Germany and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan have sent the attached communications, all dated 25 March 2020, with the request that they are circulated by the Organization.



ANNEX 1

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No. C/70/14/MAA/1094/03/20
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Date 25 March 2020
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Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

**The Secretary General
International Maritime Organization
4 Albert Embankment
London SE1 7SR
United Kingdom**

Subject: Temporary Extension of Certificates and Seafarer books

Your Excellency!

The Ethiopian Maritime Affairs Authority (EMAA) presents its compliments to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and kindly request the IMO to note and circulate this letter to all member states.

This office received requests for the extension of certificates from seafarers who are unable to sign off due to the challenges related to the current outbreak of COVID-19. On the other hand, seafarers may face challenges of completing courses required for the renewal of Certificates as per STCW 1978, as amended.

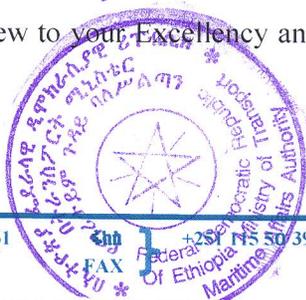
Considering, the inconvenience that may be caused to seafarers and the advice of IMO per circular letter No. 4204/add.5 flag states to take a pragmatic and practical approach on the matter, the Ethiopian Maritime Affairs Authority (EMAA) has decided to grant a general extension on the validity of the Certificates and Seafarer books as of the 25th of March 2020.

As a result, the validity of Ethiopian Certificates of Competency, Certificates of Proficiency, Medical Certificates and Seafarer Books, which will expire before 1st of September 2020, are granted a general extension of validity of up to 6 months from the date of expiry without the individual seafarer submitting an application. Certificate of Endorsement will also automatically be extended as long as COC/COP is extended by the issuing flag state. For urgent matters and any inquiry, EMMA may be contacted on the below telephone and email addresses.

EMAA avails itself of this opportunity to renew to your Excellency and the IMO the assurance of its highest consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Mekonnen Abera
Director General



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Herrn
Generalsekretär Kitack Lim
International Maritime Organization
4 Albert Embankment
London SE1 7SR

Vereinigtes Königreich

Betreff: Maßnahmen Deutschlands im Zusammenhang mit CO-VID-19

Aktenzeichen: WS20/6278.4/6
Datum: Bonn, 23.03.2020
Seite 1 von 2
Anhang: -1-

Sehr geehrter Herr Generalsekretär,

Mit Hilfe pragmatischer Ansätze möchte Deutschland die maritime Wirtschaft bei der Bewältigung der Auswirkung von massiven Einschränkungen im Zusammenhang mit COVID-19 unterstützen.

Deutschland hat als Flaggenstaat und Hafenstaat Erleichterungen für die Seeschifffahrt im Bereich der Ausstellung und Verlängerung von schiffs- und seeleutebezogenen Regelungen sowie hinsichtlich des Kontrollumfangs der maßgeblichen IMO-Übereinkommen vorgenommen.

Das beigefügte Dokument umfasst Regelungen hinsichtlich „Ships’s statutory certificates“, die „Seafarers certificates“, „Port State Control“, „Security inspections“, „Ship’s statutory certificates issued under the provision of the German Maritime Labour Act“ und „MARPOL and BALLAST WATER inspections, inspections acc. to the Sulphur Directive“.

Ich bitte um Weiterleitung der im Anhang beigefügten Information an die IMO-Mitgliedstaaten.

Herr Generalsekretär, ich möchte mich bei Ihnen und Ihren Mitarbeitern im Sekretariat für die Unterstützung der internationalen Seeschiff-

Dr. Norbert Salomon
Abteilungsleiter
Wasserstraßen, Seeschifffahrt

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Seite 2 von 2

fahrt bei der Bewältigung der COVID-19-Krise sehr herzlich bedanken.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen



Dr. Norbert Salomon
Director-General
Maritime Administration
Federal Ministry of Transport and digital Infrastructure

Mr Kitack Lim
Secretary-General
International Maritime Organization
4 Albert Embankment
London SE1 7SR

United Kingdom

Subject: German measures concerning COVID-19

Our reference: WS20/6278.4/6
Date: Bonn, 23 March 2020
Page 1 of 1
Annex: -1-

Dear Secretary-General,

Germany intends to support the maritime industry in coping with the impact of massive restrictions in the context of COVID-19 with pragmatic approaches.

Being a flag and port state, Germany has adopted relaxations of requirements for the shipping industry regarding the issuance and renewal of shipping- and seafarer-related regulations as well as concerning the scope of checks for the relevant IMO conventions.

The attached document includes regulations concerning the “Ship’s statutory certificates“, the “Seafarers’ certificates“, “Port State Control“, “Security inspections“, “Ship’s statutory certificates issued under the provision of the German Maritime Labour Act” and “MARPOL and BALLAST WATER inspections, inspections in accordance with the Sulphur Directive”.

I would kindly ask you to forward the information contained in the Annex to the other IMO Member States.

Secretary-General, I would like to warmly thank you and your staff from the Secretariat for supporting the international shipping industry in coping with the crisis caused by COVID-19.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Norbert Salomon
Director-General for Waterways and Shipping
Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure



Annex

Measures taken by Germany concerning COVID-19

1. Ship's statutory certificates

For ships flying the German flag, the following applies:

- Regarding the endorsements of certificates: due to COVID-19 countermeasures, the mandatory shore-based service for all statutory surveys are herewith suspended until 30 June 2020, however no longer than until three months after the end of the annual survey window.
- Regarding the endorsements of certificates: if the mandatory periodical surveys cannot be carried out due to COVID-19 countermeasures, the mandatory survey requirements are suspended until 30 June 2020, however no longer than until three months after the end of the annual survey window.
- Regarding expiring certificates: if the mandatory renewal surveys cannot be carried out due to COVID-19 countermeasures, the mandatory survey requirements are suspended. The German flag state administration currently issues electronic short-term certificates with a validity of three months for ships affected by this exceptional situation.

All technical and operational requirements have to be complied with during this period.

2. Seafarers' certificates

Due to COVID-19 countermeasures, the following regulations with regard to seafarers' certificates will apply with immediate effect:

- The validity of all seafarers' certificates (certificates of competency, certificates of proficiency and documentary evidence) issued by the German Maritime Administration and approved training providers that will expire before 1. September 2020 is extended by 6 month.



page 2 of 3

No application by the individual seafarer is needed for this purpose. The validity of all German medical certificates with the regular validity of two years that expired after 1 January 2020 will be extended until 30 June 2020. No application by the individual seafarer is needed for this purpose.

- The German Maritime Administration continues to accept applications for the issuance of certificates, will process them as far as possible under the current circumstances and recommends seafarers to apply as usual.
- The validity of endorsements of recognition issued by the German Maritime Administration that will expire before 01. September 2020 is extended by up to 6 month in accordance with the specific COVID-19 related measures taken by the respective issuing Administration of the CoC. No application by the individual seafarer is needed for this purpose.
- For the time being, the following rules will apply: Seafarers whose certificates of competency and proficiency (documents) will expire in the near future and who are registered for a refresher course that will not take place due to the spread of COVID-19 can submit the application form as usual. Seafarers will receive their documents regularly renewed for 5 years, provided that all other requirements are met and proof of registration for the refresher course, including the cancellation, is attached to the application form. The administrative notice issued together with the documents will include an obligation to submit documentary evidence of refresher training within six months from the date of the issuance of the documents. For safety reasons, this regulation does not apply to the participation in courses required for the first qualification that are cancelled due to COVID-19.

3. Port State Control

Germany has suspended all regular PSC inspections of foreign-flagged vessels as a precaution in relation to the spread of COVID-19. The measures took effect on 16 March 2020. Inspections will be carried out by an "incident team" and only in case of an emergency (e.g. collisions or grounding).

Due to COVID-19 countermeasures, Germany currently accepts, until 30th June 2020, all ship certificates and seafarers' certificates that expired after 1 January 2020.





page 3 of 3

4. Security inspections

All control and compliance measures in accordance with the ISPS Code Part A 4.4 and 19 on board German-flagged vessels worldwide and in accordance with SOLAS XI-2, Regulation 9.1 on board foreign-flagged vessels in German ports are suspended until 30 June 2020.

5. Ship's statutory certificates issued under the provision of the German Maritime Labour Act

In the case of an expiring Maritime Labour or Fishing Labour Certificate, the mandatory inspection requirements are suspended if the renewal inspection cannot be carried out due to COVID-19 countermeasures. The German flag state administration currently issues electronic short-term certificates with a validity of three months for ships affected by this exceptional situation.

6. MARPOL and BALLAST WATER inspections, inspections in accordance with the Sulphur Directive

The frequency of ship inspections in accordance with MARPOL, the BALLAST WATER convention and/or the Sulphur Directive (EU) 2016/802 as carried out by the German police has been reduced due to staff shortages and police forces being deployed to deal with priority tasks related to the containment of the virus. As of 19 March 2020, the intention is to carry out inspections following serious THETIS-EU alerts, but the development of the actual feasibility of doing so is difficult to predict.

For further regularly updated information visit <https://www.deutsche-flagge.de/en/coronavirus>



Jordan Maritime Commission

No.: 1/1/826

Date: _____

ANNEX 3

Ref. 25/3/2020

**The Secretary General
International Maritime Organization
4 Albert Embankment
London, SE1 7SR
United Kingdom**

Excellency,

With reference to the Circ.No.4204/Add.5 dated 17 March 2020 concerning the Coronavirus (COVID - 19) guidance relating to the certification of seafarers.

*The Jordan Maritime Commission (JMC), as the maritime administration of the Kingdom of Jordan deals with the implementation of the IMO instruments would like to inform your esteemed organization that in compliance with the subject circular letter we would extend **for two months** all certificates of compliance ,medical certificates issued for Jordanian seafarers which has been expired after 18 March 2020 and all endorsements certificates issued by our administration attesting recognition of certificates issued in accordance with the (STCW Convention), 1978, as amended .*

At the same time JPSCO's regime instructed to grant the same relaxation period to other member states of (STCW Convention) seafarers certificates for ships calling Aqaba ports .

Yours sincerely,

*Director General of
Jordan Maritime Commission*

Eng. Mohammad A. Salman