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Circular Letter No.4272
21 April 2020

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

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

The Government of the Republic of Estonia has sent the attached communication, dated 13 April 2020, with the request that it is circulated by the Organization.



REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA
MARITIME ADMINISTRATION

13.04.2020 Our ref. 1-1-6/882

CIRCULAR

Impact of the emergency situation on the maritime sector

On the basis of **Order No. 76** of the Government of the Republic of 12 March 2020 “Declaration of Emergency Situation in the Administrative Territory of the Republic of Estonia”, the emergency situation in Estonia will last until 1 May 2020, which will also have an impact on the maritime sector. This is an overview of the situation as of 9 April 2020.

1. Repatriation of seafarers

1.1. Crossing the Estonian state border in case of crew changes

On the basis of **Order No. 78** of the Government of the Republic of 15 March 2020 “Temporary restriction on crossing the state border due to the spread of the coronavirus causing the COVID-19 disease”, foreign citizens, in general, are prohibited from entering Estonia as of 17 March 2020. Exceptions to this include asymptomatic crew members and persons performing repairs or warranty or maintenance work on ships.

The above-mentioned persons shall take into consideration the following requirements:

- A crew member is allowed to enter Estonia for transit only on the basis of a on the basis of the documents submitted by the ship’s agent to the Police and Border Guard Board (Tallinn Cordon) or border crossing point in Tallinn Airport under the following conditions:
 1. crew members who exhibit no symptoms of disease are allowed to pass through the territory of Estonia without delay on their way to their country of residence in case of available transport connections (air traffic, buses, etc.);
 2. crew members who exhibit no symptoms are allowed to pass through the territory of Estonia without delay for the purpose of taking up employment on a cargo vessel.
- Crew members are not permitted to stay at Estonian establishments providing accommodation.

Ship agents are required to submit to the Police and Border Guard Board the same documents as before the emergency situation.

1.2. Repatriation of Estonian seafarers from foreign countries

Employers are obligated to repatriate crew members of ships flying foreign flags upon expiry of their contracts. If the employer fails to fulfil this obligation, seafarers should contact the representative of their flag state.

If repatriation is not permitted because of the restrictions imposed in the imposed in the country of location and help from the state of Estonia is needed, contact the nearest Estonian embassy or call the emergency phone number +372 5301 9999 of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In addition to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, also the Maritime Administration ought to be informed via the general e-mail eva@vta.ee.

Valge 4 / 11413 Tallinn Estonia / +372 620 5500 / eva@vta.ee / www.veeteedeamet.ee
Registry Code 70002414

1.3. Disembarkation of crew members at Estonian ports, calls by foreign vessels

Port calls of cruise vessels are not allowed for the duration of the emergency situation. No restrictions have been imposed on other types of vessels.

Crew members shall take into consideration the following restrictions when calling at Estonian ports:

1. Upon arrival at an Estonian port of a vessel, a crew member is allowed to enter the territory of the port (quay) only for mooring, loading and unloading of cargo, or other operations necessary for the operation of the ship (bunkering, dealing with passengers, replenishment, handling of waste, inspection of draft marks, etc.);
2. Regular disembarkation of crew members is not allowed during the stay at a port of the vessel.

2. Seafarers' certificates

2.1. Extension of seafarers' certificates and endorsements

The Seafarers' Certification Department of the Maritime Administration is open at the usual hours at the address Lume 9.

More specific information about extension of certificates and endorsements has been published in Circular No. 6 of the Maritime Administration of 31.03.2020.

Extension of certificates and endorsements is carried out by recognised maritime educational institutions where distance learning can be conducted in order to assess continued competence of seafarers in accordance with the Maritime Administration **Circular No. 5** of 17 March 2020. The following educational institutions provide relevant courses:

- AS Tallink Grupp – STCW A-VI/1 basic safety familiarization training;
- Estonian Maritime Academy –STCW A-VI/4-1 and A-VI/4-2 medical first aid and medical care);
- OÜ MSCA/Reval Merekoool – STCW A- VI/1 safety training, survival craft and rescue boats A-VI/2, advanced fire-fighting A-VI/3, A-VI/4-1 and A-VI/4-2. Basic training on ships subject to the IGF Code, A-V/3 – on the condition that safety familiarization training has been completed.

2.2. Seafarers' health certificates

More specific information about extension of the validity of seafarers' health certificates has been published in Maritime Administration's **Circular No. 6** of 31 March 2020.

According to the information that the Maritime Administration possesses, health examinations of crew members are currently performed by:

- Qvalitas: <https://qvalitas.ee/en/>
- Baltic Euromedical: <http://www.bemed.ee/>

3. Ship supervision

3.1. Inspection of foreign-flagged ships in Estonian ports

Foreign-flagged ships are inspected to a limited extent, after risks have been evaluated (ports of departure, crew changes, etc.).

3.2. Inspections of Estonian-flagged ships

Routine inspections of Estonian-flagged ships in foreign ports are not being conducted. The Maritime Administration has decided to make use of the possibilities provided by law to extend the inspection deadlines for three months. More specific information about extension of the statutory certificates for ships flying the Estonian flag has been published in Maritime Administration's **Circular No. 6** of 31 March 2020.

4. Recreational craft

4.1. Training of skippers

No examinations of skippers are conducted while the emergency situation lasts.

4.2. Surveys of recreational craft

Surveys of recreational craft are still being carried out, taking reasonable precautions and considering the safety measures established for the protection of health.

4.3. Documents to be carried while navigating at sea with recreational craft

The certificate of a skipper of a recreational craft does not have to be carried if the skipper carries an identity document. If the skipper of a recreational craft carries an identity document, it is not mandatory to carry the registration certificate of the recreational craft registered in Estonia if the skipper of the recreational craft is entered in the traffic register as the owner, authorised user or user, or if the owner, authorised user or user is present on board the recreational craft. If a person rents a recreational craft, he/she is obligated to carry the certificate of a skipper of a recreational craft, because in that case the registration certificate does not contain information about the person.

5. Navigation in Estonian waters

5.1. Aids to Navigation and navigational information

Seamless operation of the aids to navigation in Estonian waters is ensured as usual. No restrictions have been imposed. Preparations for the summer season have started. Navigational information is being published via the ordinary channels.

5.2. Pilotage

The pilotage service is being provided in the customary manner and no special measures have been established due to the emergency situation.

5.3. Vessel traffic management and reporting formalities

The VTS and GOFREP systems continue operation in the ordinary manner and the safety of vessel traffic is ensured.

The electronic maritime information system (EMDE) functions as usual; no additional reporting obligations have been added. As before, a completed health declaration form must be submitted through EMDE if there is a case of infectious disease on board.

6. Port supervision

All supervisory activities are performed in ports (no exceptions), taking health protection precautions.

(signed digitally)

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Director General

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