

Neptune Declaration May Update

Maritime Industry Crew Change Taskforce
May 2021



The Neptune Declaration
on Seafarer Wellbeing
and Crew Change

Key Developments

- The rapid spread of new strains, especially in Asia has led to a rise in cases. This has translated into travel restrictions in major seafaring hubs and seafaring nations and into crew-change bans.
- A growing number of seafarers are testing positive and some seafarers have indicated a reluctance to join vessels out of fear of family members falling ill and needing their help.
- These developments can potentially lead to a resurgence of the crew-change crisis.
- It is therefore important to sustain efforts, engage with governments and stakeholders and stay abreast of developments on the ground to effectively respond to deteriorations of the situation.
- To better monitor the situation and changes, tools such as the Neptune Declaration Crew Change Indicator have been developed.



Seafarers' Access to Vaccines

- Ensuring seafarers have access to vaccines is a long-term solution to overcome the crew-change crisis. Recent developments include:
 - A very limited number of seafarers have been vaccinated.
 - The ICS, ITF and other organisations are actively working with international governance bodies to secure seafarers' access to vaccines.
 - Work is also ongoing to establish vaccination protocols and pilot projects for vaccine hubs are ongoing.
 - Industry partners are also exploring ways to ensure that vaccination records remain private to seafarers, but enable them to prove inoculation for the purpose of international travel as mandated by the MLC.
- Some governments have announced they are prioritizing seafarers' access to vaccines, such as [Cyprus](#), Romania, Belgium and Singapore as of April 2021.
- The ILO adopted the "[Resolution Concerning Covid 19 Vaccination for Seafarers](#)" at the Fourth Meeting of the Special Tripartite Committee of the MLC, 2006 – Part I (19-23 April 2021), calling on governments to ensure seafarers have priority access to vaccines.



Shared Responsibility and Collaboration

- The Neptune Declaration identifies the recognition of a shared responsibility and the importance of collaboration as key elements to overcome the crew change crisis.
 - **Best Practices for Charterers**
 - A framework of “[Best Practices for Charterers](#)” based on the Neptune Declaration has been developed and published by a group of leading charterers. This was launched in early May with an [op-ed](#). The Document lists actions for time charters and spot charters and hopes to inspire other to follow the recommendations and share their best practices.
 - **‘A Tool to Support Human Rights Due Diligence’, UN Global Compact**
 - The United Nations Global Compact has issued ‘[A Tool to Support Human Rights Due Diligence](#)’ for businesses, specifically drafted for cargo owners and charterers. The Tool lists best practices that each party can implement to facilitate safe crew-changes.



The Neptune Declaration Crew Change Indicator

- To get better information on the crew-change situation and changes to it, we have created the Neptune Declaration Crew Change Indicator, which is based on data provided by leading ship managers.
- We hope this information can be used by stakeholders from the public and private sector to take relevant action to improve the situation and use the Indicator to engage with policy- and decision-makers and proactively respond to deteriorations of the situation.

May Indicator

- The first Indicator was published in early May 2021, you can find the [press release](#) and the full [report](#).
- From a sample of over 90, 000 seafarers:
 - **5.8 %** have been onboard beyond the expiry of their contract.
 - **0.4%** have been onboard for over 11 months.
- We expect the numbers to be higher for the June Indicator, as the rapidly deteriorating situation in India has begun to have several impacts on crew-changes and government regulations.



Charity Plea: Seafarers' International Relief Fund

- The [Seafarers International Relief Fund](#) has been established by leading seafarer welfare charities and shipping industry players in order to support seafarers and their families devastated by the rampant COVID-19 pandemic in India and other countries.
- By collaborating in the face of emergency, it is anticipated that more impact can be achieved in a shorter space of time than can be individually.
- A number of major shipping organisations have already pledged their support to the fund.
- The Seafarers International Relief Fund will deliver aid to seafarers affected by the COVID-inflicted crew crisis through existing welfare programmes to ensure the relief reaches seafarers and their families as quickly as possible. The fund will continue to provide support over the coming weeks and months in India and other afflicted countries if needed.
- To share the message and for how to donate, please see [here](#).

Update on the Neptune Declaration

- **Status:**
 - There are currently **814** Neptune Declaration Signatories in early May 2021.
 - There have been **2,590** media mentions and **3,290** social media posts (Instagram and LinkedIn excluded) identified by early March
- The Declaration is available [here](#) with a full list of Signatories

