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Circular Letter No.4241/Add.6  
8 March 2021

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

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

The Government of the Republic of Croatia has sent the attached communication, dated 3 March 2021, with the request that it be circulated by the Organization.

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REPUBLIC OF CROATIA  
Ministry of Sea, Transport and  
Infrastructure



CLASS: 810-03/20-01/30  
FILE.NO.: 530-04-3-1-21-35  
Zagreb, 3 March 2021

INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION  
4, ALBERT EMBANKMENT  
LONDON SE1 7SR  
UNITED KINGDOM

**SUBJECT: GUIDELINES FOR ADOPTION OF EXTRAORDINARY MEASURES  
RESULTING FROM THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

- URGENT MEASURES ADOPTED BY THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA
- ADDITIONAL EXTENSION OF VALIDITY OF SEAFARERS CERTIFICATES AND DOCUMENTS
- ver. 4.

Dear Mr. Secretary-General,

Due to the recent and on-going COVID-19 pandemic that has put maritime industry in the situation that we could not imagine in modern times and as a response to the crisis, the Ministry of Sea, Transport and Infrastructure of the Republic of Croatia has established three guidelines for extraordinary extension of validity of seafarers certificates and documents that were in force until 31 December 2020 as we have informed you accordingly.

Those measures were established in line with all recommendations of the International Maritime Organization on implementing pragmatic approach that do not jeopardize safety of navigation and taking into account that such measures do not substantially affect the competence of the seafarer.

Since lockdown measures imposed by countries around the world are unfortunately still in place resulting with inability to organize crew change in many countries and despite the UN General Assembly Resolution adopted in December 2020 recognizing seafarers as key workers in order to facilitate safe and unhindered movement for embarkation and disembarkation, there are still a number of seafarers holding Croatian certificates and documents that are embarked on board vessel with no possibility to organize crew change and their repatriation and whose certificates and documents are due to expire.

Based on our experience, it is evident that the applications for extraordinary extension of Croatian certificates and documents have been reduced lately. However, there are still several individual company and seafarer requests for additional extension of certificates who are currently embarked on board vessel holding certificates that need to be revalidated.

In that respect and bearing in mind that seafarers are unable to individually solve the situation caused by lockdown and travel restrictions, the Ministry of Sea, Transport and Infrastructure of the Republic of Croatia has decided to adopt one more additional COVID-19 related measure in respect of extension of validity of seafarers certificates and documents in order to allow those seafarers to continue to work legally on board vessel until the next port of call where their embarkation and repatriation can be organized and in the context where COVID-19 pandemic can be declared as a *force majeure*.

That being said, please allow us Mr. Secretary-General, to inform you hereby **that seafarers holding certificates and documents issued by the Republic of Croatia who are currently embarked or will be embarked on board vessel with valid certificates and documents that will expire upon the expiration of regularly concluded seafarers employment agreement (SEA) and with inability to organize crew change and repatriation, such certificates and documents shall remain valid until disembarkation and repatriation of seafarer concerned at the latest.**

Taking into account all mentioned, as well as the fact that from the beginning of the crisis, the STCW Parties adopted various different measures as a respond, we would like to welcome the establishment of Correspondence Group on COVID-19 Training and Certification Matters as proposed by the HTW 7 Sub-Committee held in February 2021 and in whose work we are available to participate and on which we have already informed the coordinator of the Group.

We believe that it is essential to agree on unified and standardized approach in respect of this matter, in order to eliminate possible related non-competitiveness of seafarers holding certificates issued by one STCW Party allowing further extraordinary extension of certificates and document *vis-à-vis* seafarers holding certificates issued by other STCW Party not allowing such extension of certificates and documents.

Informing you all of the above, I would like to kindly request the circulation of this information to the Parties of the International Maritime Organization in order to avoid further difficulties of the seafarers concerned.

Yours sincerely,



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