Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers, Dear Colleagues,

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak is a fact. In March 2020 World Health Organization (WHO) made the assessment that Covid-19 is characterized as a pandemic. The situation is dynamic.

All the world, all medical authorities are focused on fighting this disease. It is the greatest challenge at the moment. The most important problems are: preventing the spread of the disease, medical treatment of infected patients, vaccine discovery. But also for people who require mental and psychosocial well-being support is especially significant.

The sudden global emergence of Covid-19 illness is of great interest for maritime health as well. Therefore, we publish three Editorial Announcements: "Coronavirus Disease 2019 as a challenge for maritime medicine", "Coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak on the cruise ship *Diamond Princess*" and "COVID-19, guests and crews of cruise: observation on Thai citizens".

In addition in the same issue "International Maritime Health" publishes for your two press releases of relevance to maritime health:

- INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION (IMO) CIRCULAR LETTER NO. 4204/ADD. 1: "COVID-19 – IMPLEMENTATION AND ENFORCEMENT OF RELEVANT IMO INSTRUMENTS" (Source: <http://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/HotTopics/Documents/CL.4204-Add.1%20English.pdf>; accessed: 3rd March 2020)

This circular of 19th February 2020 issues information and guidance, based on recommendations developed by the World Health Organization (WHO), on the precautions to be taken to minimize risks to seafarers, passengers and others on board ships from the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV).

- CRUISE LINES INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION (CLIA) – "STATEMENT ON COVID-19" (Source: <https://cruising.org/news-and-research/press-room/2020/march/clia-covid-19-toolkit>; accessed: 3rd March 2020)

This press release of 2nd March 2020 from CLIA provides details on how the CLIA cruise line members will deal with cruise passengers and crew after 27th February 2020.

Take care of yourself, stay safe and healthy at this time!

IMH Editorial Board

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Circular Letter No.4204/Add.1

19 February 2020

To: All IMO Member States
United Nations and specialized agencies

Intergovernmental organizations
Non-governmental organizations in consultative status with IMO

Subject: **COVID-19 — Implementation and enforcement of relevant IMO instruments**

The Secretary-General informs that he has received reports regarding the impacts on the shipping industry resulting from the sudden and rapid outbreak of the COVID-19 coronavirus. In response to this situation, the Secretary-General has issued guidance through Circular Letter No. 4204.

Flag State authorities, port State authorities and control regimes, companies and shipmasters should cooperate, in the current context of the outbreak, to ensure that, where appropriate, passengers can be embarked and disembarked, cargo operations can occur, ships can enter and depart shipyards for repair and survey, stores and supplies can be loaded, certificates can be issued and crews can be exchanged.

The principles of avoiding unnecessary restrictions or delay on port entry to ships, persons and property on board are also embodied in articles I and V and section 6 of the annex of the FAL Convention.

Several IMO instruments contain provisions that may be relevant to the impact on shipping caused by the outbreak of COVID-19. These include, but are not limited to:

- the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974;
- the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973;
- the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004;
- the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978; and
- resolution A.1119(30), *Procedures for port State control*, 2017.

In addition, the Secretariat has received the following communication from the International Labour Organization (ILO):

“In the context of the evolving coronavirus outbreak, the effective protection of the health and safety of seafarers should be a priority. Under the International Labour Organization’s (ILO) Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, flag States must ensure that all seafarers on ships flying their flag are covered by adequate measures for the protection of their health and that they have access to prompt and adequate medical care whilst working on board. The Convention also requires port States to ensure that seafarers on board ships in their territory who are in need of immediate medical care are given access to medical facilities on shore.”

COVID-19 is a severe public health challenge that requires understanding and close cooperation among all Member States to overcome challenges related to the implementation and enforcement of the relevant IMO instruments.

The Organization will continue to closely monitor the situation and the Secretary-General will provide additional information as appropriate and will bring these matters to the attention of the relevant organs of the Organization, in particular the Maritime Safety Committee, the Marine Environment Protection Committee, the Facilitation Committee and the Legal Committee.

Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA)

Statement on COVID-19

WASHINGTON, DC (1 MAR 2020) — Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA), the leading voice of the global cruise industry, issued today the following statement in response to recent developments concerning COVID-19 and its impact on the global cruise industry.

“The health and safety of cruise passengers and crew is and remains the number one priority of CLIA and its member lines, which make up over 90% of ocean-going cruise capacity worldwide.

Given the evolving nature of the ongoing COVID-19 — and based upon prevailing guidance from global health authorities, including the World Health Organization (WHO) — CLIA Members have adopted the following enhanced protocols for ocean-going guests and crew who have recently traveled from or through Iran, South Korea and China, including Hong Kong and Macau. These enhanced policies, which are in effect as of 27 February 2020, build upon those which were first implemented on 31 January 2020 and focus on conservative measures, as the situation evolves, to appropriately and effectively screen every guest and crewmember on every ship prior to boarding.

- CLIA Members are to deny boarding to all persons who have traveled from, visited or transited via airports in Iran, South Korea and China, including Hong Kong and Macau, within 14 days before embarkation.
- CLIA Members are to deny boarding to all persons who, within 14 days before embarkation, have had close contact with, or helped care for, anyone suspected or diagnosed as having COVID-19, or who is currently subject to health monitoring for possible exposure to COVID-19.
- CLIA Members are to conduct preboarding screening necessary to effectuate these prevention measures. Enhanced screening and initial medical support are to be provided, as needed, to any persons exhibiting symptoms of suspected COVID-19.

In coordination with cruise lines, medical experts and regulators around the world, CLIA and its member lines will continue to closely monitor for new developments related to the coronavirus and will modify these policies as necessary with the utmost consideration for the health and safety of passengers and crew. With strict measures in place, as guided by national and international health authorities, CLIA and its member lines do not believe restrictions on the movement of ships are justified.

Importantly, the cruise industry is one of the most well-equipped and experienced when it comes to managing and monitoring health conditions of those onboard, with outbreak prevention and response measures in place year-round. Furthermore, ships must be fitted with onboard medical facilities, with shipboard medical professionals available around the clock, 24/7, to provide initial medical care in the event of illness and help prevent disease transmission.”