

20 April 2021

## **Joint ETF-ECSA Statement on the recognition of seafarers as key workers**

Trade unions and employers in the maritime industry have been calling on governments throughout the Covid-19 pandemic to recognise seafarers as 'key workers'.

While a number of governments have designated seafarers in this way, allowing for unimpeded travel and transit through airports, seaports and river terminals to keep global trade moving, there is no universal definition of the term 'key worker' and it has different meanings in different countries. Hence the European social partners believe that it is more beneficial to focus attention on the specific rights and entitlements that seafarers should enjoy everywhere.

The ETF and ECSA have therefore established the following list of such rights and entitlements to assist Member States in ensuring the health and wellbeing of maritime professionals as they perform their key function. What follows is not intended to be exhaustive or exclusive, and is not meant to weaken or undermine existing standards.

This will in turn ensure that global supply chains can remain in motion, supplying the world with 90% of everything we consume – in addition to the increased shipments of medical equipment, personal protective equipment, medicines and in future, a vaccination, to combat Covid-19.

### 1. Travel

- MS should ensure that seafarers:
  - o can travel to and from their country of domicile and their place of work without restriction
  - o can move freely between regions and states of applicable countriesMS should work together to ensure that [IMO Protocols](#) for ensuring safe ship crew changes and travel are implemented.
- MS should ratify and implement ILO C185 - Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention.
- MS should, in the case of their embassy, consulate or high commission being closed in a seafarer's country of residence, make provisions for any required visas to be issued upon arrival.

### 2. Quarantine

- MS should exempt seafarers from quarantine upon arrival in the jurisdiction in which they will sign on to their vessel.

### 3. Medical treatment

- MS should ensure that procedures are in place that accord with the International Chamber of Shipping [Guidance for Ship Operators](#) for the Protection of the Health of Seafarers.

### 4. Testing

- MS should prioritise seafarers for Covid-19 testing, particularly where test results are required in advance of a seafarer joining their vessel
- MS should prioritise seafarers for Covid-19 testing where necessary in jurisdictions visited by the seafarer and assist industry in providing access to onboard Covid-19 testing.

## 5. Welfare

- MS should ensure that seafarers are able to access welfare facilities ashore, or that welfare organisations can safely approach vessels at the dockside, via tender or – where appropriate safety measures are in place – that welfare providers can board vessels.

## 6. Vaccination

- MS, in planning for vaccination programmes in their own jurisdictions, should ensure that seafarers can access vaccinations as a priority, in order to further facilitate the easing of restrictions currently faced.
- MS, working with shipowners and trade unions, should plan for seafarers currently at sea to be able to access Covid-19 vaccinations as early as possible.

## 7. Financial support

- MS should ensure that seafarers resident in their territories who are unable to access employment due to cessations or reductions of activity, a lack of available transport, closed borders or other crew change difficulties resulting from the pandemic, can access schemes of financial support that are available to their residents who are engaged in other professions.