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Circular Letter No.4231
24 March 2020

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

Subject: **Communications from the Governments of:**
i the Republic of Italy; and
ii the Kingdom of Norway

The Embassy of the Republic of Italy and the Government of the Kingdom of Norway have sent the attached communications, dated 20 March and 13 March 2020, respectively, with the request that they are circulated by the Organization.

ANNEX 1



EMBASSY OF ITALY
LONDON

20 March 2020

H.E. Mr. Kitack Lim
Secretary-General of the
International Maritime Organization
secretary-general@imo.org

000504

Subject: ITALY – Contingency measures to mitigate the disruption of essential maritime services in the event of COVID-19 pandemic.

Reference is made to Circular Letter No.4204/Add.5 of 17 March 2020.

Excellency,

Italy has introduced a number of practical measures that are designed to alleviate the current COVID-19 pandemic, which poses a serious challenge to the Administration's efforts to allow the continued training of seafarers.

In light of the foregoing, I have the honour to forward the following:

1. a note from the Italian Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport (the competent authority for educational matters) regarding the extension of the validity of certificates of competency (CoCs) and endorsements;
2. a note from Italian Coast Guard (the competent authority for training matters) regarding the extension of validity of certificates of proficiency (CoPs)

To this end, I would like to request that the Secretariat of the International Maritime Organization kindly disseminate the attached information among the Member States and any other interested parties.

I avail myself of the opportunity to renew the assurances of my highest consideration.

Alessandro Motta

(Deputy Head of Mission)



**Ministry of Infrastructures and
Transport**

*Italian Coast Guard Headquarters
Safety of Navigation and
Maritime Security Department*

Rome, 20th March 2020
(p.o.c. Rear Admiral (ITCG) Luigi GIARDINO
e-mail: segreteria.reparto6@mit.gov.it)

HE Mr. Kitack Lim
Secretary General of
International Maritime Organization

Subject: Measures to Address Covid-19.

Dear Secretary-General Lim,

The Italian Coast Guard Headquarters presents its compliments and has the honour to confirm receipt of the Circular letter No. 4204/Add.5 dated 17th March 2020.

In its fight to contain the spread of COVID-19, the Government of Italy has declared a state of emergency and has been forced to exercise strict measures - one of which, inter alia, has been to close all seafarers' training centers in Italy that are recognized and controlled by the Italian Coast Guard.

The provisions of the Manila Amendments state that in order to renew the certification required by Chapter VI of the STCW Convention, it is compulsory to attend the following refresher courses:

- ◆ Basic Training Regulation VI/1 and corresponding Section A-VI/1 points 2, 3 and 4;
- ◆ Survival Craft and Rescue Boat Regulation VI/2.1 and corresponding Section A-VI/2 points 5 and 6;
- ◆ Fast Rescue Boat Regulations VI/2.2 and corresponding Section A-VI/2 points 11 and 12;
- ◆ Advanced fire-fighting - Regulation VI/3 and corresponding Section A-VI/3 points 5 and 6.

In this regard, in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and properly address it, the CoPs relating to the above-mentioned training courses have been extended with the following conditions:

- a. Extensions are limited to 6 months;
- b. Extensions are granted only to seafarers with adequate experience who have already served in that position and:
 - are serving on board with certification expiring during the course of their employment; or
 - are due to embark and are in possession of expired certificates.

We would therefore like to ask the Secretariat to kindly have this information regarding the extension of the CoPs communicated to all Member States of the IMO. Your valuable attention to this matter is very much appreciated.

The Italian Coast Guard avails itself of this opportunity to renew the assurances of its highest consideration.

**The General Commander
Vice Admiral (ITCG) Giovanni PETTORINO**

Firmato Digitalmente da/Signed by:
GIOVANNI PETTORINO

In Data/On Date:
venerdì 20 marzo 2020 11:57:38

COURTESY TRANSLATION

Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport

H.E Kitack Lim
Secretary-General of the
International Maritime Organization

Rome, 19 March 2020

CORONAVIRUS/COVID-19 EMERGENCY – Extension of validity of certificates of competency and certificates of endorsement of qualifications

In view of the current situation of emergency due to covid-19 and the impossibility of exchange of personnel already on board vessels, the Italian administration has extended the validity of the certificates of competency issued to Italian seafarers and certificates of endorsement of qualifications issued to foreign seafarers operating on Italian vessels.

The extension is valid until 30/06/2020. The terms and conditions are indicated in notes no. 7428 of 13/03/2020 and no. 7780 of 19/03/2020.

We would therefore like to ask the Secretariat to kindly have this information communicated to all Member States of the IMO.

M. Coletta
Director General

International Maritime Organization
SE 1 7 SR London
United Kingdom

Extension of certificates and vessel instructions for Norwegian-flagged ships and seafarers due to COVID-19

The Norwegian Maritime Authority has, due the developing COVID-19 pandemic, adopted special measures for its ships and seafarers serving on board Norwegian ships. Please find attached the specific measures that have been adopted.

The Norwegian Maritime Authority would greatly appreciate it if these special measures could be circulated among member States.

Yours faithfully,

Linda Bruås
Director

Haakon Storhaug
Senior Adviser

This document has been electronically approved and signed.

Encl.



Extension of certificates and vessel instructions

The Norwegian Maritime Authority (NMA) has decided that certificates and vessel instructions which expire before 12 June 2020 may be granted a 3-month extension without further approval from the NMA.

Regarding extension of statutory inspections and issuance/endorsement of statutory certificates due to COVID-19

1. Scope

This technical note shall apply to all Norwegian flagged vessels registered in the Norwegian Ordinary Ship Register (NOR) or the Norwegian International Ship Register (NIS), as well as all fishing vessels and cargo ships of 8 to 15 metres having vessel instructions.

2. Background

Since the outbreak of the coronavirus disease in 2019 (COVID-19), the Norwegian Maritime Authority (NMA) has received inquiries from shipowners and Recognized Organizations (RO) regarding postponement of inspections and extending the validity of mandatory certificates due to difficulties caused by the COVID-19 outbreak. This includes an extension of statutory certificates or postponement of bottom inspections as a result of unavailable dry-dock facilities.

Travelling, both nationally and internationally, has become more increasingly difficult as travel bans have been imposed. Combined travel restrictions given by governments and companies cause difficulties with providing inspectors when needed. Furthermore, numerous of shipyards cannot accommodate vessels, even for booked and planned inspections and surveys which require dry-dock.

Based on the above conditions, the NMA considers the COVID-19 outbreak to be a force majeure situation.

For the NMA, the main focus is that ships registered in NOR or NIS to the extent possible shall not be out of operation due to possible expired certificates caused by the current and probable COVID-19 situation.

3. Relevant references

- IMO Circular Letter No. 4204/Add.1
- IMO Circular Letter No. 4204/Add.2
- IMO Circular Letter No. 4204/Add.3
- IMO Circular Letter No. 4204/Add.4

4. Extension of certificates

While all reasonable steps should be taken to ensure that certificates are kept valid and inspections are performed, the NMA will accept that for vessels for which the time frame of endorsement or renewal of certificates is before 12 June 2020, a 3-month extension may be granted without further approval from the NMA.

The extension will also apply to certificates provided by companies providing services to the Administration or RO, including, but not limited to service providers re-certifying life-saving equipment, fire-fighting equipment or radio control.

5. Instruction to RO

While all reasonable efforts should be taken to ensure that statutory certificates are kept valid, ROs are hereby authorized to grant extension as described in paragraph 4 above.

The NMA shall be kept informed of when and to which vessels the extension under paragraph 4 are issued.

6. Notification

The NMA will notify IMO, relevant stakeholders such as Port State MOU's of the above decision.
