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Circular Letter No.4232
24 March 2020

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

Subject: **Communications from the Governments of:**
i **Georgia;**
ii **The Republic of Poland; and**
iii **Ukraine**

The Embassies of Georgia, the Republic of Poland and Ukraine have sent the attached communications, dated 23 March, 20 March and 23 March 2020 respectively, with the request that they are circulated by the Organization.



ANNEX 1



9917-88-2-202003231736

**საქართველოს მუდმივი
ნარეგისტრირებული საერთაშორისო
საზღვაო ორგანიზაციაში**

**PERMANENT REPRESENTATION
OF GEORGIA TO THE INTERNATIONAL
MARITIME ORGANIZATION**

N 88/9917

23/03/2020

**To: Mr Kitack Lim
Secretary-General
International Maritime Organization**

Dear Secretary-General,

In my capacity of the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the International Maritime Organization, I would like to kindly convey the official letter of Ms Tamara Ioseliani, Director of the Maritime Transport Agency of Georgia regarding extension of validity of Seafarers' Identity Document or STCW Certificate/s of Georgian Seafarers onboard Ships affected by 2019 Novel Coronavirus – COVID-19.

The Georgian side would like to kindly ask the Secretariat of the IMO to disseminate the attached information among the IMO Member States.

Taking this opportunity, dear Secretary-General, please accept assurances of my highest consideration.

Attachment: 2 pages.

Sincerely

**Tamar Beruchashvili
Permanent Representative of Georgia to the IMO**

საქართველოს
ეკონომიკისა და მდგრადი
განვითარების სამინისტრო



MINISTRY OF ECONOMY
AND SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT OF GEORGIA

სსიპ საზღვაო ტრანსპორტის
სააგენტო

LEPL MARITIME TRANSPORT
AGENCY



KA020195673684120

სსიპ საზღვაო ტრანსპორტის სააგენტო საქართველო, ქ.ბათუმი, 6000, ბაქოს ქუჩა N50. ტელ.: +995 422 27 49 25/26
50 Baku Str., 6000, Batumi, Georgia. Tel.: +995 422 27 49 25/26

№ 10/617

2020 / 03 / 17

To: International Maritime Organization
4, Albert Embankment London,
SE1 7SR United Kingdom
Tel + 44 (0) 20 7735 7611 Fax + 44 (0) 20 7587 3210
Email: info@imo.org

Subject: Extension of validity of STCW Certificates of Georgian Seafarers onboard Ships affected by 2019 Novel Coronavirus – COVID-19

Dear Sir/Madam,

On behalf of Maritime Transport Agency of the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia, I would like to express my most sincere respect towards the International Maritime Organization.

Considering the recent ongoing pandemic of COVID-19, Georgia has put new measures concerning the Georgian System of Seafarers' Certification in circular № 8/CIRC/STCW dated 13 March 2020, which is attached to this letter.

I would therefor like to ask the secretariat of the International Maritime Organization to kindly communicate the aforesaid circular to the Member States.

Annex: "1" page.

Yours sincerely,

Director

SIGNED/SEALED
ELECTRONICALLY

Tamar Ioseliani



სსიპ საზღვაო ტრანსპორტის
სააგენტო

LEPL MARITIME TRANSPORT
AGENCY



KA020116120566920

სსიპ საზღვაო ტრანსპორტის სააგენტო საქართველო, ქ.ბათუმი, 6000, ბაქოს ქუჩა N50. ტელ.:+995 422 27 49 25/26
50 Baku Str., 6000, Batumi, Georgia. Tel.:+995 422 27 49 25/26

№ 8/CIRC/STCW

2020 / 03 /13

All Georgian Seafarers, Ship owners, Shipping Companies, Port
State Control and Flag State Authorities, Manning/Crewing
Agencies and Other Individuals Concerned

Subject: Extension of validity of STCW Certificates of Georgian Seafarers onboard Ships affected by 2019 Novel Coronavirus – COVID-19

Reference: Order N01 of the Director of Maritime Transport Agency of Georgia, Dated 12 Mar 2020 on the "Approval of Measures in Response to COVID-19 within the Georgian System of Seafarers Certification"

Taking into consideration that there might be Georgian Seafarers who are currently serving onboard ships engaged in the international trade and whose Seafarers Identity Document or STCW Certificate/s may expire on board because their planned disembarkation cannot be safely completed in ports affected by the rising tension in worldwide and the outbreak of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus – COVID19, **or**

Whose Seafarers Identity Document or STCW Certificate/s shall expire onboard during the period of their voyage to and from the next convenient port where disembarkation of concerned Seafarer can be safely carried out

Maritime Transport Agency of Georgia may grant extension for the validity of their certificate/s for a period not exceeding **three** months from the date of expiry of the Seafarers Identity Document or certificate to be renewed/revalidated subject to the following conditions:

1. The concerned manning/Crewing Agencies and Shipping Companies shall send an application for the extension of validity, provided that:
2. The following requirements shall be submitted/presented:
 - 2.1. Letter request from the vessel owner/principal or Crewing Agent stating the reason for the extension
 - 2.2. Written statement or official issuance from the port or immigration Authority that disembarkation is not permitted due to the prevailing circumstances
 - 2.3. Copy of valid employment contract.

Director

SIGNED/SEALED
ELECTRONICALLY

Tamar Ioseliani



ANNEX 2

Embassy
of the Republic of Poland
in London

47 Portland Place
London W1B 1JH

London, 25 March 2020 r.

H. E Kitack Lim
Secretary-General
International Maritime Organization
4, Albert Embankment
London
SE1 7SR

Dear Secretary General

The Embassy of the Republic of Poland in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland would like to inform that to prevent and minimize the impact on the shipping industry and especially on seafarers resulting from the outbreak of the COVID-19 coronavirus, the Ministry of Maritime Economy and Inland Navigation of the Republic of Poland has implemented measures as described in the attached updated Guidelines on extending the validity of seafarers maritime documents in the period of restrictions due to COVID-19 epidemic risk.

In line with point 5 of Circular Letter No. 4204/Add.5 on Coronavirus (COVID 19) Guidelines relating to the certification of seafarers we would like to kindly request that the attached Guidelines are circulated among IMO Member Governments and Organizations.

The Embassy of the Republic of Poland in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization the assurances of its highest consideration.

With highest regards

Małgorzata Buszyńska

1st Counsellor, Permanent Representative of
the Republic of Poland to the International
Maritime Organisation (IMO)



MINISTER
OF MARITIME ECONOMY
AND INLAND NAVIGATION

Warsaw, 25 March, 2020

DEM.WKK.2.0212.1.2020.BD_v2

**Guidelines on extending the validity of seafarers' maritime documents
in the period of restrictions due to COVID-19 epidemic riskⁱ**

Due to the rapid spread of SARS-CoV-2 virus (causing COVID-19) and the measures to prevent, counteract and fight COVID-19 in Poland and other countries, and

having regard to the problems related with the temporary restrictions on the functioning of educational institutions, including maritime education units, and the temporary restrictions on the movement of citizens, and

whereas seafarers encounter considerable difficulties with revalidating certificate of competency, certificates of proficiency and medical certificates, and

following the guidelines set out in Circular Letter No.4204/Add.5 of 17 March 2020 of the International Maritime Organisation on Guidance relating to the certification of seafarers, and

having regard to the exceptional and extraordinary circumstances,

the Minister of Maritime Economy and Inland Navigation introduces the following guidelines for seafarers, shipping companies and maritime authorities and, for information, to other countries' administration and control bodies.

Seafarers holding certificate of competency or certificates of proficiency that have expired or will soon expire, who meet the conditions for revalidation under the provisions of the relevant Regulation¹, may apply electronically to maritime offices, provided that they send scans or copies of the documents required with a relevant statement (confirming their authenticity). Detailed information can be found on the websites of maritime authorities.

1. Extension of seafarer's documents

1.1. Certificates of proficiency revalidated based on a completed refresher training:

- Certificate of proficiency in personal survival techniques
- Certificate of proficiency in basic fire prevention and fire fighting
- Certificate of proficiency in basic safety training (integrated)
- Certificate of proficiency in advanced fire fighting
- Certificate of Proficiency in survival craft and rescue boats other than fast rescue boats
- Certificate of Proficiency in fast rescue boats

¹ Regulation of the MMEIN of 23 April 2018 on training and qualifications of the crew members of sea-going vessels (Polish Journal of Laws, item 802).

- Certificate of proficiency in medical care

and those that expired on 1 February 2020ⁱ or later and cannot be revalidated due to exceptional circumstances resulting from COVID-19 outbreak remain valid until 1 September 2020. Such an extension does not require any separate official confirmation.

- 1.2. Certificate of competency that expired on 1 March 2020 or later and cannot be revalidated due to exceptional circumstances resulting from COVID-19 outbreak remain valid until 1 September 2020. Such an extension does not require any separate official confirmation.
- 1.3. In exceptional circumstances, seafarers who are in the above situation and are required to submit a certificate or certificate of competency to a shipping company or control body and do not meet the conditions for revalidation set out in the relevant Regulation¹, may receive a certificate or diploma valid until 1 September 2020. Applications for extension of the above certificates or certificate of competency may be submitted to maritime authorities only via traditional post or electronically means. A certificate or certificate of competency will be sent by post to an address indicated by the seafarer. Possibly, also a scan of such a document may be sent to the e-mail address indicated in the application.
- 1.4. The above extension applies primarily to seafarers who are currently aboard vessels and due to the imposed restrictions may not revalidate their certificate of competency or certificates of proficiency.
- 1.5. Due to the extraordinary circumstances of such an extension, where the epidemic risk is contained, the movement of citizens and the operation of maritime education units is restored, seafarers holding documents that have been extended under this procedure should, where possible, immediately as soon as possibly remedy all deficiencies, as required, in order to revalidate their documents in accordance with the provisions of the Regulation¹.

2. Extension of maritime pilots' documents

- 2.1. Holders of maritime pilot diplomas and pilot's licenses that have expired or will soon expire, who meet the conditions for revalidation under the provisions of the relevant Regulation², may apply electronically to maritime offices, provided that they send scans or copies of the documents required with a relevant statement (confirming their authenticity). Detailed information can be found on the websites of maritime authorities.
- 2.2. Pilot's diplomas and licenses that expired on 1 March 2020 or later and cannot be revalidated due to exceptional circumstances resulting from COVID-19 outbreak remain valid until 1 September 2020. Such an extension does not require any separate official confirmation.

3. Medical certificate

- 3.1. If a medical certificate issued by medical practitioner recognised by maritime administration cannot be revalidated due to the COVID-19 epidemic outbreak, it is deemed valid until 1 September 2020. Seafarers are obliged to hold such medical certificates with expired validity and obtain new ones as soon as possible.

4. Extension of contracts

- 4.1. On a case-by-case basis, shipping companies or employment agencies (acting on behalf of a shipping company) that encounter problems with repatriation of seafarers after the deadline set in the seafarer's employment agreement (drafted in line with MLC) may extend the agreement for the maximum period of three months. This period may possibly be further extended if the situation resulting from the epidemic does not allow repatriation.
- 4.2. Notwithstanding the foregoing, measures relating to repatriation should be taken as soon as possible.

²Regulation of the Minister of Maritime Economy and Inland Navigation of 17 November 2017 on maritime piloting (Polish Journal of Laws of 2018, item 38).

- 4.3. If a seafarer's employment agreement needs to be extended, an annex should be concluded, providing the seafarer with the same working conditions as in the agreement.
- 4.4. In the case of such an extension, shipping companies operating vessels that fly the Polish flag and employment agencies placing seafarers to work on vessels flying the Polish flag are required to provide the data of the seafarer(s), including the data on the current agreement validity periods, to the directors of maritime offices competent for the vessel's port of registration, to the e-mail addresses of the Flag State Inspections.

5. Final provisions

- 5.1. It should also be noted that due to the lack of relevant international arrangements some maritime administration authorities may refuse to recognise the extension of certificates. Therefore, should you have any doubts as to the application of the above guidelines or wish to obtain more details, please contact maritime offices.
- 5.2. The aforementioned guidelines apply to certificate of competency and certificates of proficiency issued by the Polish maritime administration and to medical certificates issued by medical practitioners recognised by the Polish administration. These guidelines may be changed without prior notice. They may be modified or repealed if any decisions, directives or other acts are adopted at the level of the European Union or the International Maritime Organisation. If this is the case, the guidelines will be updated or withdrawn as appropriate.
- 5.3. Any applications for extension of seafarers' documents should be sent to a special e-mail addresses of maritime offices:
- Maritime Office in Gdynia – wdm.gdynia@umgdy.gov.pl
 - Maritime Office in Szczecin – wdm1@ums.gov.pl
- 5.4. Up-to-date information will be published on an ongoing basis on the websites of the Maritime Offices www.umgdy.gov.pl and www.ums.gov.pl.

Anna Moskwa
Undersecretary of State
on behalf of Minister
Maritime Economy and Inland Navigation
/- electronic signature/

ⁱ Amendments implemented since the last version of the Guidelines of 19 th March 2020:

- Point 1.1 – the date 1 March 2020 is replaced by the 1 February 2020

ANNEX 3

МІНІСТЕРСТВО
ІНФРАСТРУКТУРИ
УКРАЇНИ



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www.mtu.gov.ua

MINISTRY OF
INFRASTRUCTURE
OF UKRAINE

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

Dear Mr. Lim!

On behalf of the Ministry of Infrastructure of Ukraine I have the honor to present my compliments to Your Excellency and to the International Maritime Organization and would like to address with the following.

In view of the current situation and the introduction in the world and Ukraine the prevent measures of disease spread caused by the coronavirus Covid-19, we inform that the validity of the qualification documents of seafarers which are on a voyage now issued on behalf of Ukraine in accordance with the provisions of the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW), 1978, as amended, expiring in March, April and May 2020, are deemed to be extended for no more than 3 months from the date of expiry of their term of validity, in the case of agreement of such extension by the country of the flag of the vessel and the obligatory extension of the seafarers' employment contract by the shipowner.

In case of continuation of the employment contract, the shipowner is obliged to inform the Maritime Administration and the Ministry of Infrastructure of Ukraine at the following e-mail: psc.ua@marad.gov.ua, m.melnyk@mtu.gov.ua. The notification shall contain the following information: the name of the shipowner, the name and IMO number of the vessel, the seafarer's full name, position on board the vessel, details of the qualification documents or scanned copies of it, a copy of the extended employment contract.

I address to the Secretariat with the kind request to submit this letter to all Member States of the International Maritime Organization.

Let me avail myself of this opportunity to renew to Your Excellency and the International Maritime Organization assurances of my highest consideration and express hope for further fruitful cooperation.

Yours faithfully

Minister

Vladyslav KRYKLII

№890/46/14-20 від 23.03.2020

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