



IRISH INSTITUTE OF MASTER MARINERS

18th March 2020

To whom it may concern

I am writing to you on behalf of IIMM to lobby governments with a request that European Ship's Crews are exempted from European Travel restrictions and that travel arrangements are provided for these essential workers. Merchant ships and their crews are in the front line and are essential in ensuring that vital supplies are being delivered to European Countries in the fight against the COVID – 19 pandemic.

Merchant Ship Masters are increasingly concerned that their hardworking crews cannot be relieved after periods of duty from 2 months to 6 months on board ship as a consequence of the travel restrictions. The nature of the 24/7 ships operations leaves crews exhausted and in need of relief. European crews from Latvia, Romania and Spain are rested and ready to travel to relieve their colleagues on board ships. Shipping companies have procedures in place for crew members coming from other European countries so that the risk of the joining crew members having the virus is minimised.

The current Irish Department of Foreign Affairs travel advice requires ***“that anyone coming into Ireland, apart from Northern Ireland, to either self-quarantine or self-isolate on arrival for 14 days. Exemptions are in place for providers of essential supply chain services such as hauliers, pilots and maritime staff.”***

This pragmatic approach is an effort to keep ships manned safely and to continue to keep the supply lines moving with essential supplies. However it is not succeeding as personnel, such as Maritime Staff, are not being allowed to travel to relieve their shipmates. The exemptions are essential to maintain an uninterrupted supply chain service, but only if they are applied appropriately. The European travel restrictions mean that ships crews are not being relieved and are exhausted with the constant work required to keep the ships operating. In a relatively short timeframe this will affect the supply chain if ships have to stop because of crew exhaustion.

Captain Dermot Gray

President Irish Institute of Master Mariners.

President: Capt. Dermot Gray
Secretary: Capt. Terry Burke

Deputy President: Capt. Tony Mulcahy
Treasurer: Capt. Trevor Crowley

Correspondence to: The Secretary, 16 St Davids, Artane, Dublin, D05 E9H9 secretary@mastermariners.com