



Hamburg, 25 June 2021



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Day of the Seafarer: Vaccinate seafarers without regard to nationality Start of vaccination campaign in the Port of Hamburg / VDR and German Seamen's Mis- sion call for vaccination centres in all German seaports / Enable shore leave and travel / Thanks to seafarers

Together with other institutions, the German Shipowners' Association (Verband Deutscher Reeder, VDR) and the German Seamen's Mission are today jointly celebrating the "Day of the Seafarer" of the International Maritime Organization (IMO). At 12 noon, the crews of ocean-going vessels in all German seaports are called upon to sound their ship's horns so that they can be heard from far away. This is part of a global shipping-industry initiative launched by the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS), of which the VDR is a member. The hashtag #ShoutOutForSeafarers is to be used on social media and other communication channels to remind people of the urgent need to enable seafarers to make crew changes as well as to vaccinate far more seafarers than has been the case so far.

In addition, at noon today, seafarers will be vaccinated against the coronavirus for the first time at the DUCKDALBEN international seamen's club in Hamburg. The Hamburg Port Health Center has announced that, from now on, it will be regularly offering this service to seafarers of all nations whose ships are berthed in Hamburg. "We are thrilled that vaccinations will now be administered at our seaman's club," says Anke Wibel, Director of the DUCKDALBEN international seamen's club.

The VDR and the German Seamen's Mission also welcomed the start of the vaccination campaign in the Port of Hamburg as an important signal. "There needs to be this kind of offer to vaccinate the men and women on board ocean-going vessels regardless of nationality in all German ports," demanded Ralf Nagel, Chief Executive Officer of the VDR, and Christoph Ernst, Secretary General of the German Seamen's Mission. After all, of the 1.7 million seafarers across the world, roughly 900,000 come from countries in which vaccines may not be widely available before 2024. Thus, in the shared opinion of the VDR and the German Seamen's Mission, Germany must adopt the corresponding resolutions of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and – as, for example, in Belgium, the Netherlands and the United States – set up vaccination centres for seafarers in all larger port cities.

"To date, Germany has always been out in front during the pandemic in terms of issues such as enabling seafarers to sign on and sign off in this country," said Ralf Nagel. "We mustn't allow the men and women on board, who have kept our country supplied through all the months of the pandemic, to now be left vulnerable while performing a service that is so important to all of us." Governments need to vaccinate seafarers now to protect global trade



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and to end the crew-change crisis, the CEO of the VDR continued, adding: “We are seeing delivery delays that may persist until Christmas, as Covid-19 continues to impact global supply chains. Vaccinating seafarers will help to mitigate these risks.”

“Especially on the Day of the Seafarer, our thanks go out to all those whose daily efforts have been indispensable for keeping all supply chains from breaking long ago,” said Christoph Ernst, Secretary General of the German Seamen’s Mission. “The most powerful expression of our gratitude would be for seafarers to be able to travel without restrictions again, to have regular shore leave and, of course, to have access to vaccinations as soon as possible.”

With a global campaign on 1 May of last year, the global shipping industry had already drawn attention to the problems faced by seafarers in terms of making crew changes. A little over a year later, the number of crew members significantly impacted by travel restrictions worldwide still stands at 200,000. What’s more, many countries are still refusing to allow seafarers to disembark, and some ports are not even allowing seafarers access to urgently needed medical care.

More information and videos on the #ShoutoutForSeafarers events to be held today, 25 June, can be found [here](#) on the ICS website.

Press photographs by Ralf Nagel: <https://www.reederverband.de/en/press/press-images.html>

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