

MedCruise attended the Ad-Hoc meeting of SAGMAS Community, June 2020

The Ad-Hoc meeting of Stakeholders Advisory Group on Maritime Security (SAGMAS) Community took place on 4 June 2020 online. The meeting was chaired by Mr Carlos Mestre, Head of Unit A.5 Security of the Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport (DG MOVE).

The meeting started with a welcome from the chairman. Firstly, he pointed out that the security in the maritime industry must remain a priority despite the current situation. He also stated that it is very important to remind the work and the tasks of the working group and make sure that it continues to deliver the secure environment that the shipping industry requires to recover from the COVID-19 crisis.

Mr Carlos Mestre continued with the evaluation of the impacts of the crisis on the maritime sector. He mentioned that the pandemic hit all modes of transport in a particular negative way. The economic consequences are not only for the sector but for the entire society. In fact, one of the biggest issues at the beginning of the crisis was, precisely, ensuring that the necessary goods reached their destination.

The Chairman pointed out the difficulties in conducting maritime security inspections and surveys during this period as these activities require a physical presence of inspectors in ports, port facilities and ships. This, often means the impossibility of renewing certificates, assessments and plans under the deadline set for the validity.

The Chair presented the Commission's response to the crisis in the transport sector and the relief measures taken specifically for maritime security. The Commission explained the measures adopted on 25

May 2020 in Regulation 2020/698, which extends deadlines for renewal and time limits, notably for port facility security assessments, port security assessments and plans, and drills and exercises under EU maritime security legislation. The aim is to give this flexibility and provide solutions while not compromising the security. He emphasised that security and safety have to be part of the solution and should not be a problem.

Italy, Germany and Norway took the floor to present their own actions in maritime security in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

EMPA (European Maritime Pilots' Association), ECSA (European Community Shipowner's Association) and ETF (European Transport Workers' Federation) highlighted their joint statement on protective measures to minimise risks between crew and shore based personnel boarding a ship. EMPA also raised the difficult situation faced by seafarers due to the pandemic, notably severe difficulties in crew changes and repatriation, adding that this situation also presented safety and security issues.

Next meeting is planned to take place online, on 9 September 2020. •