

MedCruise attended the 59th SAGMAS meeting, November 2020

The 59th meeting of Stakeholders Advisory Group on Maritime Security (SAGMAS) took place on 12 November 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 was attended by fourteen stakeholders' organisations, several Member States, Norway and Iceland were also present, as well as EEAS, EMSA and EFTA Surveillance Authority.

The meeting started with a welcome from the Chairman and the adoption of the agenda.

Impact of the COVID-19 crisis on maritime security

The Commission recalled the actions taken regarding maritime security in the context of the COVID-19 crisis, in particular Regulation (EU) 2020/698 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 May 2020 laying down specific and temporary measures in view of the COVID-19 outbreak concerning the renewal or extension of certain certificates, licences and authorisations and the postponement of certain periodic checks and periodic training in certain areas of transport legislation. The Commission only received a request from France, the decision made was published in the EU Official Journal on 15 September 2020. The Commission continues to monitor the situation and studying the implications for the maritime security. From a wider perspective, the Commission came forward with an additional set of actions and recommendations in response to the COVID-19 crisis – COM/2020/687 final.

DG MOVE's Maritime Safety Unit presented the Commission's actions regarding seafarers. It stated the accumulated contract length of seafarers, beyond the eleven months permitted under the international law – the maritime labour convention. Some of them

have been onboard for more than fourteen months, which might increase the risk of accidents, from a maritime safety perspective. The Commission has been active on this issue and, at the time of the meeting, the situation was relatively stable within the European Union, with a regular number of crew changeovers taking place.

EMSA presented the EU Guidance for Cruise Ship Operations in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, developed by EMSA and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and published on 27 July 2020. DG MOVE, EU Healthy Gateways Joint Action, ETF, CLIA Europe, ECSA, ESPO and EU Member States also contributed. The Guidance is mainly focused on maritime health safety and addressed to cruise companies, terminals and Flag and Port States.

EMSA informed that it is working on a second revision of the Guidance, as things develop fast, it is necessary to take into consideration new concepts and new technical developments.

Passenger ship security

The Chairman briefed on the Working Group meeting on passenger ship security held on 3 November 2020. The Chairman informed that the Working Group will continue to work in relation to a document on Guidance. It was highlighted the importance of continuing with the process of engagement in relation to the work on EU level risk assessment, to try and have at least a common approach about what might be the risks that may need to be tackled.

The plan is to present some Guidance material in 2021 which will not be mandatory. The aim of the Guidance is to be helpful in addressing some of the critical risks that might be identified.

Validation of the cybersecurity toolkit for transport companies

The Chairman reminded that the idea of the project is to provide a very practical and effective tool to raise wariness as far as cybersecurity is concerned and which is specifically targeting transport. For this, Deloitte company was engaged.

Deloitte gave a detailed overview of the toolkit as part of validation activities in order to finalise the project. Deloitte insisted that the toolkit will not substitute any compliances that different organisations may have.

EMSA asked whether the toolkit contained elements on training requirements, Deloitte answered that the toolkit is a starting point, some open advice to all organisations; hence, it should not be a substitute for

training. InterFerry highlighted the importance of the topic and of training for cases of cyber-attacks.

The Chairman informed on next steps and reminded about the deadline to receive comments. He reiterated that the objective of the toolkit, which also covers aviation and land transport, is to provide a practical tool which can be widely disseminated.

It was commented that the toolkit will be available by the end of December 2020 in electronic format.

The Chairman added that the toolkit is foreseen to be translated into different languages.

The next SAGMAS meeting is scheduled for 4 March 2021, either physically or virtually, to be duly confirmed. •