

SEA CLOUD NEWS UPDATE

OFFICIAL CREW NEWSLETTER FROM
UNICREW MANAGEMENT LTD.



**Sea Cloud Spirit:
Countdown to sea trials**



Vaccine Passport: About time or wishful thinking?

The European Commission is on its way to legitimizing a EU Travel Passport to facilitate travel by citizens and residents of EU member states, opening up the possibility of travel and tourism resuming by later this summer.

Brussels will put shortly forward a draft law for a Digital Green Pass that includes health information related to COVID-19 test results, whether the individual has been vaccinated and other health information, European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen announced.

“The Digital Green Pass should facilitate Europeans’ lives... The aim is to gradually enable them to move safely in the European Union or abroad — for work or tourism,” von der Leyen said. The vaccine passport will be primarily used to override travel restrictions imposed by EU member states for citizens of other member states despite the existence of free movement within EU territory. “We’re working towards facilitating safe and free movement in the European Union, not restricting it,” an EC spokesperson said.

The idea of introducing vaccine passports has been around since December 2020 but some EU states are still not comfortable with the discrimination it might lead to. Meanwhile, Greece has already issued digital vaccination certificates, the first EU government to do so. France, on the other hand, is against the vaccine passport.

Tourism-dependent Greece and Spain have stepped up lobbying

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in recent weeks in an effort to save the 2021 summer season.

Nevertheless, disagreements among member states persist. Belgium's foreign minister, Sophie Wilmès said: "For Belgium, there is no question of linking vaccination to the freedom of movement around Europe. Respect for the principle of non-discrimination is more fundamental than ever since vaccination is not compulsory, and access to the vaccine is not yet generalised."

An Exeter University report says that while a vaccine passport could allow for the long-term management of COVID-19, it could also cause data protection breaches and allow countries to determine the freedom of individuals based on their medical records.

The 'passports' could create two classes of citizens: the vaccinated and the non-vaccinated. This seems especially unfair in the many countries where it is still hard to access vaccines. Besides, the WHO is against the vaccine passport, saying that while vaccines do prevent COVID-19, there is no evidence that these prevent transmission.

There have been protests in Denmark against vaccine passports.

Travellers are already carrying a vaccination certificate to avoid compulsory quarantine in foreign countries. Tech firms in the US and Europe have teamed up for The Commons Project to make a universal COVID-19 vaccine certificate accessible via mobile phone app. The Common Pass may be accepted at every airport in the world when it becomes available.

Europe could be on the brink of a major tourism explosion this summer with hotels, bars and restaurants packed to capacity. Or it could have another year of depressing lockdowns, compulsory quarantine and rigorous travel bans. It all depends on how fast the vaccine roll-out within the Community reaches the bulk of the population.

Tourism provides 27 million jobs in Europe, and helps generate around 10% of the EU's GDP. Countries like Greece, Spain and Italy cannot recover until their tourism is reopened. A tourism official in Majorca, Spain, recently said the economic situation was "unsustainable" and if tourists were not allowed to return, many local business would disappear.





CRUISE NEWS

Sailing Schedule 2021

Sea Cloud Cruises announces a further small delay in the start of cruising and a revised sailing schedule will be available shortly for all Sea Cloud vessels.

SEA CLOUD

Sea Cloud restart dates have been postponed to 2nd July, 2021.

SEA CLOUD II

Sea Cloud II restart dates have been postponed to 7th July, 2021.

SEA CLOUD SPIRIT

Sea Cloud Spirit's inaugural sailing has been announced for 5th July, 2021. Sea trials are expected to commence in end March.

Europe's cruise lines plan to announce more sailings

Cruise offers from Europe are going ahead with resumption of service even as the industry in North America adopts a wait-and-watch policy for their summer itineraries. Germany's AIDA cruises and Italy's Costa Cruises have already announced dates to resume sailings. AIDA delayed its restart to 20th March due to German travel restrictions, and now the AIDAperla will resume sailing around the Canary Islands.

Costa Cruises had also paused cruise operations at the request of the Italian government around the year-end holidays. The company has now updated its plans with the new cruises from 27th March. The Costa Smeralda will run weekly cruises calling at the ports of Savona, La Spezia, Civitavecchia, Naples, Messina, and Cagliari. Costa hopes to add French and Spanish ports to its itinerary starting May. A second cruise ship is expected to sail weekly

to Greece and Croatia.

MSC Cruises and TUI's Mein Schiff are already operating two large cruise ships in Europe. The MSC Grandiosa resumed her cruises to Italy and Malta at the end of January, while MSC delayed the return of the MSC Magnifica. The line has already announced a string of sailings for March, April and May. TUI continued its weekly cruises around the Canary Islands aboard the Mein Schiff 2. The ship is currently carrying a maximum of 1,000 passengers and 800 crew members when it actually has a capacity of 2,894 people.

Both MSC and TUI highlighted that they are continuing to follow strict health and safety protocols and have not experienced a health crisis on their ships so far. MSC reported that in November, the health and safety protocols were expanded to include testing for passengers before boarding and again at mid-week and weekly testing for the crew as well as social distancing and mandatory use of face masks in public areas.

Windstar Cruises announced a return to service for six vessels, with the earliest sailing in mid-June. The company is offering cruises in French Polynesia, the Caribbeans, the Mediterranean and North Europe.

Several companies have announced mandatory vaccination requirements for guests and crew. UK-based Saga Cruises announced that it would require all its passengers to be vaccinated against COVID-19 two weeks before a trip. Saga primarily caters to passengers over 50-years-old.

Crystal Cruises also said it would require guests to receive both doses of the COVID-19 vaccine at least 14 days before a cruise. The company further requires a negative Coronavirus test result from travellers and crew members, among other health protocols.

Silversea Cruises extended its fleetwide sailing suspension till June through to November 2021 for some vessels.

CRUISE NEWS

Royal Caribbean launches fully vaccinated cruise out of Israel

Royal Caribbean's newest Odyssey of the Seas is set to debut in May with departures from Israel with all passengers and crew over age 16 vaccinated. In collaboration with Israeli health and tourism authorities, Royal Caribbean will be the first to offer fully vaccinated sailings, where both crew and guests will be vaccinated against COVID-19, the cruise line said in a statement.

"Israel has been praised for their effective COVID-19 management by global experts and communities, and thus is well-placed to resume cruise operations," Lyan Sierra-Caro, spokesperson for Royal Caribbean said. The cruises, ranging from three-night to seven-night round-trip voyages visiting Greece and Cyprus will be offered to Israelis only and depart from Haifa.

"Sailing from Israel is an opportunity we have had our sights on for quite some time," Michael Bayley, president and CEO, Royal Caribbean International said. "We greatly appreciate the government of Israel for their collaboration and confidence in us."

While some of the cruise destinations have taken shape, details on what proof of vaccination will look like for passengers are still being deliberated. "We are still working with the local health authorities on what this will look like and will have more details shortly," Sierra-Caro said.

Meanwhile, Royal Caribbean carried out a detailed study of the transmission of aerosol particles through a cruise ship's HVAC system with the help of the University of Nebraska Medical Center and the National Strategic Research Institute at the same university. The study found the transmission of aerosol particles between spaces, through the ventilation system, to be undetectable on surfaces and in the air.

A team of five medical scientists specializing in bioaerosols led by Josh Santarpia, associate

professor of Pathology and Microbiology were tasked with studying the role of HVAC systems in spreading airborne particles on cruise ships. The study explored the effectiveness and efficiency of ship air management strategies and examined air flow across different areas of the ship, including passenger and crew staterooms, lounges and other public areas.

For a week on board Oasis of the Seas, the researchers released billions of microspheres, each individually tagged, in the ship's HVAC system, tracking where they went and how long they lingered in the air and on surfaces. The results were encouraging — existing HVAC systems provided adequate ventilation, continual fresh air and layers of filtration. Only minimal changes were suggested to make sure air exchanges are close to hospital standards and adding MERV 13 filters. The company has already equipped its ships with reinforced ventilation systems and added HEPA filters.

Crew Change

Sea Cloud / February 2021

DH Stevan Brnovic, [Joined 25th February](#)

DH Uros Djurickovic, [Disembarked 26th February](#)

Sea Cloud II / February 2021

EL Ionel Ianculescu, [Joined 25th February](#)

CE Aleksandar Rajkovic, [Joined 25th February](#)

EL Elect Ionut Ianache, [Disembarked 26th February](#)

CE Yuriy Konchak, [Disembarked 26th February](#)



**Maintenance on
Sea Cloud II**



**Crew barbecue
on Sea Cloud**



From Jason's Desk

It is a blow for us all, that the re-start of the Sea Cloud cruising season has been delayed until July 2021, but I feel this was inevitable with the current travel restrictions in place. I realise that many of our crew were counting on returning to work in the coming months, and now we will have to wait a little longer.

The company is ready for cruising — we have protocols and procedures in place for safely operating the Sea Clouds this summer, and we are confident that these will protect the health of the passengers and crew on board. However, we must wait till pandemic restrictions for travel are eased by each country.

With the vaccination roll-out picking up speed globally, these conditions are bound to improve. I believe that Sea Cloud owners will require all crew, where possible, to be vaccinated before joining, and we would like to encourage all our crew to accept the vaccine when the opportunity comes. At the same time, each country has its own pace of vaccination and this will be taken into

consideration too.

Ever since the signing of the Neptune Declaration, the shipping industry is urging all governments to standardise crew change policies and collaborate with each other and the international community to facilitate shipping. The IMO is already readying standards and guidelines in this area, but all countries must agree to set aside national interests and recognise these guidelines so that seafarers can travel and crew changes take place till vaccination for seafarers becomes a global priority and reaches a critical mass in major source countries.

Almost on cue, Philippines has relaxed crew change restrictions for both native nationals and foreigners from 1st February. Manila issued new guidelines on the arrival of seafarers, restoring crew change procedures to December 2020 when a temporary ban was announced. Off-signing seafarers will have to quarantine for seven days at facilities designated under the One-Stop-Shop (OSS) for Seafarers until testing negative in a COVID-19 PCR test.

Photo Captions: Cover, Page 2, Page 6 & Page 9, Sea Cloud Spirit at the Vigo shiyard in Spain. Page 3, Empty beaches at Europe's most popular tourist spots due to the pandemic. Page 7 & Page 8, Crew at work and rest on Sea Cloud and Sea Cloud II at the Las Palmas lay-up.