

JANUARY • 2021 | VOL. II • NUMBER 1

# SEA CLOUD NEWS UPDATE

OFFICIAL CREW NEWSLETTER FROM  
UNICREW MANAGEMENT LTD.



**About ready to sail**



## Neptune Declaration: Give our seafarers priority access to COVID-19 vaccine

**Seafarers** have collectively suffered the catastrophe of COVID-19 pandemic like no other professional group in the world, disrupting their lives, livelihood and well-being in unprecedented ways and resulting in a humanitarian crisis of unimaginable proportions on the seas. By conservative estimates, at least 300,000 seafarers were stranded working aboard ships beyond the expiry of their contracts. As the frontline workers of the maritime industry enabling 90% of global trade, seafarers play a vital role in ensuring the global flow of goods that the world depends on.

Recognizing that they have a shared responsibility to resolve the crew change crisis, shipping majors and maritime organisations have now signed the Neptune Declaration on Seafarer Wellbeing and Crew Change. Among the companies who endorsed the declaration were AP Moller-Maersk, BW, Cosco, MISC, NYK, Euronav, CMA CGM, as well as charterers like BP, Shell, Trafigura, Vale, etc. Other significant signatories to the declaration include Cargill, Dorian LPG, GasLog, ICS, International Maritime Employers' Council, ITF, ONE, Philippine Transmarine Carriers, Fleet Management, Synergy Group, V. Group, and World Economic Forum.

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More than 300 companies and organisations worldwide, including Unicef Management, have recognised their collective responsibility to press for worldwide recognition of the role seafarers play in keeping the global supply chain moving and taking steps to prevent the supply chain from breaking down because of crew distress and mental agony. The Neptune Declaration lays down four main actions to facilitate crew change and keep global supply chains functioning:

- Recognize seafarers as key workers and give them priority access to Covid-19 vaccines;
- Establish and implement gold standard health protocols based on existing best practice;
- Increase collaboration between ship operators and charterers to facilitate crew changes;
- Ensure air connectivity between key maritime hubs for seafarers.

situation is becoming worse as governments announce fresh travel restrictions in response to the new strains of the virus. A number of critical factors need to be addressed on a priority basis — national authorities continue to see crew change and international travel as a COVID-19 risk; high quality health protocols are not being consistently implemented by ship operators; and disruption of air travel has reduced the number of flights between traditional crew change hubs and major seafaring nations.

“As we move in to the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic, the health and well-being of our seafarers is at the top of our minds... On top of MSC’s efforts last year to bring the critical issue of crew changes to the attention of governments, we believe it is more important than ever to appreciate the valuable contribution that seafarers bring to the global economy and to ensure that these



## The Neptune Declaration on Seafarer Wellbeing and Crew Change

With hundreds of thousands of seafarers stranded on ships beyond the expiry of their employment contracts, unable to be relieved from duty since the outbreak of COVID-19, the global supply chain faces an imminent threat to survival. If we want to maintain international trade to continue, seafarers must be put to the priority of the vaccine queue. “You can’t inject a global population without the shipping industry and most importantly our seafarers,” said Guy Platten, secretary general of the International Chamber of Shipping. “Seafarers are the unacceptable collateral damage on the war on COVID-19 and this must stop.”

Notwithstanding considerable efforts to ease the crew change crisis from the international community, in particular multilateral organisations, trade unions, companies and governments, the

people are recognised as key workers,” said Soren Toft, CEO of MSC, adding that it was imperative that governments gave full support to alleviate the crewing crisis and kept trade flowing unhindered.

Jeremy Nixon, CEO of ONE had this to say: “We are witnessing a humanitarian crisis at sea. Throughout the Coronavirus pandemic, seafarers have kept the world supplied with food, energy and other vital goods, with no line of sight of when to go home to their families. They have become hostage of the situation and unable to disembark from their ships. Yet, we can put an end to the crew change crisis without any risk to the general public health.”

“We believe that the most effective way of addressing the crew change challenge and building a more

resilient maritime logistics chain, is by working together across the value chain with industry stakeholders, organizations, and with governments to implement solutions that work in practice,” states the Neptune Declaration, expanding on previous appeals to implement standardised health protocols based on existing best practices.

This would provide a universal framework to guide safe crew changes. The declaration also emphasizes that ship owners and charterers should collaborate to ensure that necessary crew changes can be carried out. Owners should provide charterers with as much notice as possible on intended crew changes, while charterers should make all reasonable efforts to accommodate crew changes including when the vessel has to make a reasonable deviation.

“Keeping people safe while keeping food, material for the manufacture and administering of vaccines, and other essential goods moving efficiently is key for global supply chain continuity, trade, and our everyday lives,” said Margi Van Gogh, Head of Supply Chain and Transport, Shaping the Future of Mobility, World Economic Forum speaking as a signer of the declaration. “Unified, prompt action from governments and other key stakeholders is

needed to protect the lives and livelihoods of the 1.4 million seafaring men and women who serve us all across the seas, and who continue to face extreme risk to their safety and earnings.”

International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) called for action. “The ITF welcomes the commitment from shipowners, charterers, investors, NGOs and industry groups in signing the Neptune Declaration, and now there is an expectation that words are turned into action,” said Stephen Cotton, general secretary of the ITF.

“Companies must now be held to account. This means no more charter parties with ‘no crew change’ clauses: charterers must work with shipowners to facilitate crew changes. This means investors asking the companies they own and deal with what the companies are doing to address the crisis. And this means asking why any company in the industry didn’t sign this declaration.”

Gerardo Borromeo of Philippine Transmarine Carriers called it an unique opportunity to come together and resolve the humanitarian concerns of seafarers because they were the heart and soul of this industry’s power to “move the world.”



# CRUISE NEWS

## Masters of Sea Cloud vessels on the delay of sailings

### Captain Gerald Schoeber

The SPIRIT is in good progress. The shipyard has to face the challenge of building a luxury Tallship for passengers and meeting Sea Cloud company expectations. Apart from difficulties due to the pandemic, the last 5% of the building is always the hardest. The onsite team is working for a perfect finish. Currently we are inspecting crew cabins and I'm happy to see them in excellent standards. Rigging will be complete by the end of February and sea trials are scheduled after that. The shipyard is working hard to have public areas and Pax cabins ready for inspection.

Coronavirus is on everyone's mind and after more than one year of it, we haven't won the fight yet. In many countries the situation is worse. Traveling for business or pleasure is almost impossible. Millions of people are struggling for survival. All of us are well advised to remain on "standby" mode for a few more months. Without sufficient vaccination, we'll not get back to normal life.

*Capt. Gerald Schoeber, Sea Cloud Spirit*

### Captain Kathryn Whittaker

I, as many of you, have been looking forward to the return of the crew, the passengers and the wonders of travelling, visiting new ports and old, simply leaving the dock and most of all setting our sails again. This most recent delay has been a tough one and I think we are all feeling a similar stab of disappointment. It means our ships will have been alongside in Las Palmas without passengers and most of our crew for more than a year.

COVID-19 has affected the entire world and is evolving so quickly that it is difficult to plan too

far in the future. It seems each time we try we get knocked back. But we must ensure that it is a safe and enjoyable environment for our return to operation. And so, it appears, we need to hang on a little longer.

When the time is right, we will sail again in all the glory and splendor that sailing on board the Sea Clouds encompasses ...and for sure with plenty of new health precautions in place.

So, dig down deep, find a little more patience and please stay positive.

I look forward to sailing with you again soon!!

*Capt. Kathryn Whittaker, Sea Cloud II*

### Captain John Svendsen

The most critical component to delaying sailing is the health consideration of all people on board. It is necessary to ensure the safety, security and well-being while sailing to maintain our extraordinary service. This will be best accomplished when the vaccines, treatments and best practices are all in place. The crew can expect to return to the ships with additional training on the best practice to prevent the spread of the virus.

*Capt. John Svendsen, Sea Cloud*

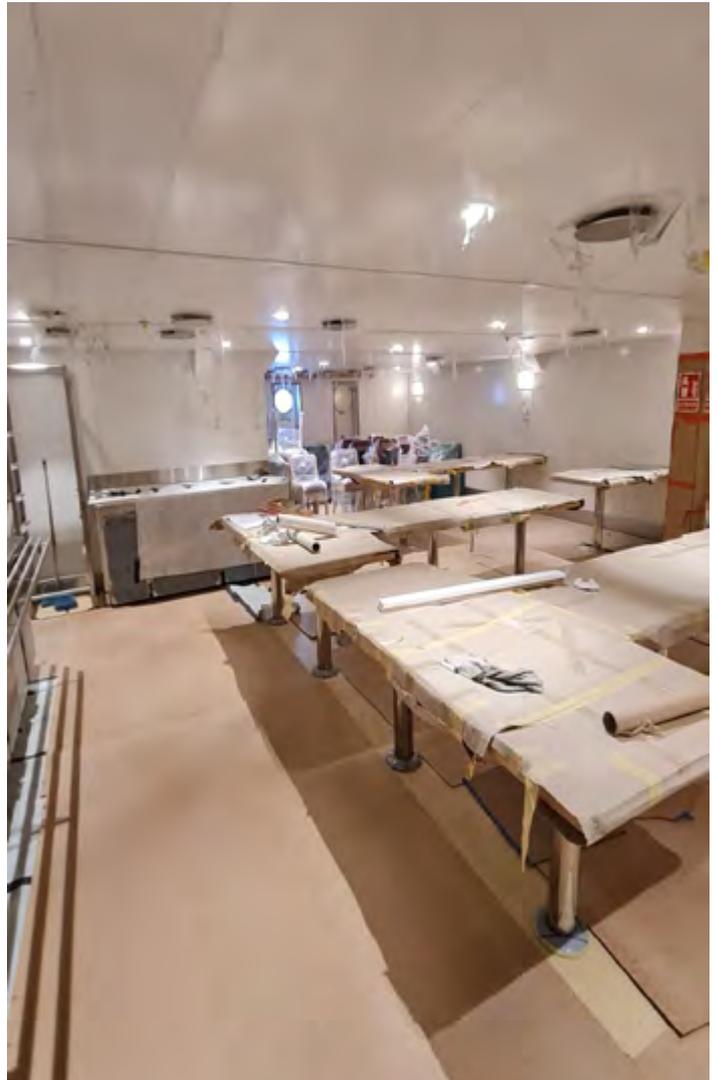
### Captain S. Komakin

My opinion is that it was wise decision as the all world is not yet ready to travel. There are so many restrictions now and to do cruises with present COVID-19 situation will be not possible. All crew is looking forward to start sailing to see back all our passengers and their friends (from the crew). The vessel is ready to sail any time. It all depends on the situation with COVID-19. We hope that COVID-19 will be over soon and Sea Cloud will set sail again.

*Capt. S. Komakin, Sea Cloud*



**Sea Cloud Spirit  
crew spaces**





**Sea Cloud Spirit  
crew spaces**



# CRUISE NEWS

## Cruise shipping poised for a bounce back in 2021, but where are the passengers?

The economics of the cruise shipping industry has been battered and crushed from all sides, in particular because of the “no sail” orders by the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and various major cruise ports around the world. Share prices of publicly-listed cruise companies lost as much as 80% of their value in a few months. Several older cruise ships were quickly sold off at rock bottom prices while some were outright sent off to scrapping. As a result, cruise ship prices have collapsed.

Still, as long as there are cruise ships for sale at low prices, and it looks like a bargain, entrepreneurs will look for a good deal in the hope of making a quick profit. However, traditional shipping loans are not available for such speculative acquisitions. Banking prudence notwithstanding, deep into 2020 with the signs of distress afflicting most major asset holders, smaller European banks were offering mortgages to finance acquisition of cruise ships offered for sale by the big players.

The vessels market and its financing are nowhere close to business-as-usual. But signs of a thaw and improvement are discernible now. Carnival managed to issue more than \$1 billion in unsecured notes in early winter on favorable terms. Royal Caribbean announced the sale of its subsidiary, Azamara Cruises, to Sycamore Partners for a

reported \$201 million, further showing signs that investors are recovering their faith in the market.

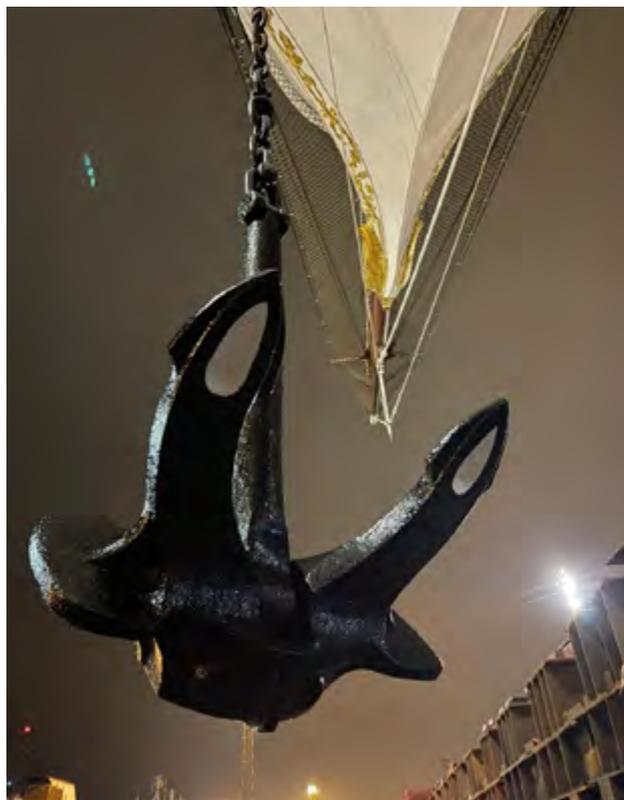
Yet, what stands in the way of a definite recovery is consumer confidence. Even with leading cruise operators keen to publicise advance ticket sales and enquiries as evidence of pent-up demand and several vaccines becoming available for COVID-19, it will be some time before full confidence in the sector returns.

Confidence in the safety of cruise shipping and the economic impact of Coronavirus on potential demand will affect the industry’s attempts at a strong recovery in 2021. Equally worrying is the impact of COVID-19 on discretionary consumer spending. Cruising has become more accessible to all population segments, but the economic impact of COVID-19 is expected to have the greatest bearing on lower income households with lower levels of education.

After 9/11, the cruise sector saw a significant drop in demand. Many analysts went so far as to say cruising may be over. In retrospect, the cruise line sector has outperformed

the commodity shipping market ever since. Today, once again, any attempts to write off cruise shipping may once again seem fanciful at best.

Today, 10 vaccines are already in use and over a hundred in advanced stages of testing and clinical trial. We now have hope that seafarers will be fast-tracked for priority vaccination in the coming months. It is a matter of time when cruise shipping can offer safety and guarantees to its passengers and crew. So we see light at the end of this tunnel.





**New health & safety protocol**



# CRUISE NEWS

## Major cruise lines delay 2021 sailings till further notice

### Carnival Cruise Line

Carnival has paused service through 31st March, 2021.

### Celebrity Cruises

Celebrity has extended its sailing suspension through 30th April, 2021.

### Disney Cruise Line

Disney Cruise Line announced the cancellation of its sailings through 31st March, 2021.

### Norwegian Cruise Line

Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings, parent company of Norwegian Cruise Line, Oceania Cruises and Regent Seven Seas Cruises, said all three of its brands would extend their suspensions through March 2021.

### Royal Caribbean International

Royal Caribbean has suspended sailing of its global fleet through 30th April, 2021.

### Princess Cruises

Princess Cruises has cancelled all cruises through 14th May, 2021.

### Virgin Voyages

The new cruise line has postponed the maiden sailing of the 2,700-passenger Scarlet Lady until May 2021.

### Marella Cruises

Marella Cruises extended pause for all European sailings till 31st March and 30th April, 2021, for all long-haul sailings.

### Silversea Cruises

Silversea Cruises extended its fleetwide sailing suspension till 1st April, and Azamara till 30th April, 2021.

As cruise shipping nears the one-year mark of suspension of service, new regulations and travel restrictions continue to frustrate the resumption of service across the industry. Carnival's AIDA Cruises again suspend operations after briefly resuming operations from Italy in autumn just before new restrictions announced by Germany. AIDA also cancelled its Canary Island cruises till the beginning of March.

Two other cruise lines from Germany, TUI and Hapag-Lloyd, said they are keeping a close watch on the situation but plan to continue their current Canary Island cruise sailings. TUI, which runs charter flights from Germany to the cruises, requires passengers to take a COVID-19 test either just prior to or on their return to Germany. TUI and AIDA are proceeding with plans for a more extensive restart of services from spring onwards.

Royal Caribbean along with Celebrity Cruises and Azamara extended cancellations till May 2021 with the exception is Royal Caribbean's Quantum of the Seas, which is the company's first ship to resume sailing in December offering three- and four-night cruises to nowhere from Singapore. Italy's Costa Cruises and MSC Cruises both announced delays after a end-of-year pause requested by the Italian government. Many cruise lines in the premium segment have also delayed their restart dates to the summer and autumn of 2021 because of advice from their home government.

### Crew Change January 2021 / Sea Cloud

3E Dumitru Ticala, [Joined 14th January](#)

3E Aleksandar Pajovic, [Disembarked 11th January](#)

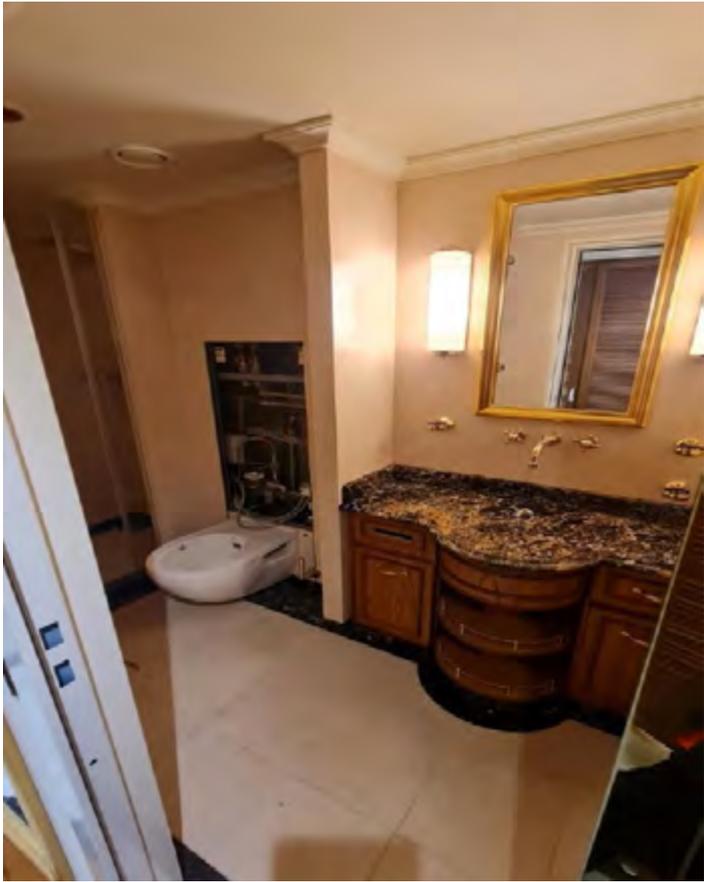
### Crew Change January 2021 / Sea Cloud II

Capt. C Pfenninger, [Joined 12th January](#)

Capt. Kathryn Whittaker, [Disembarked 13th January](#)

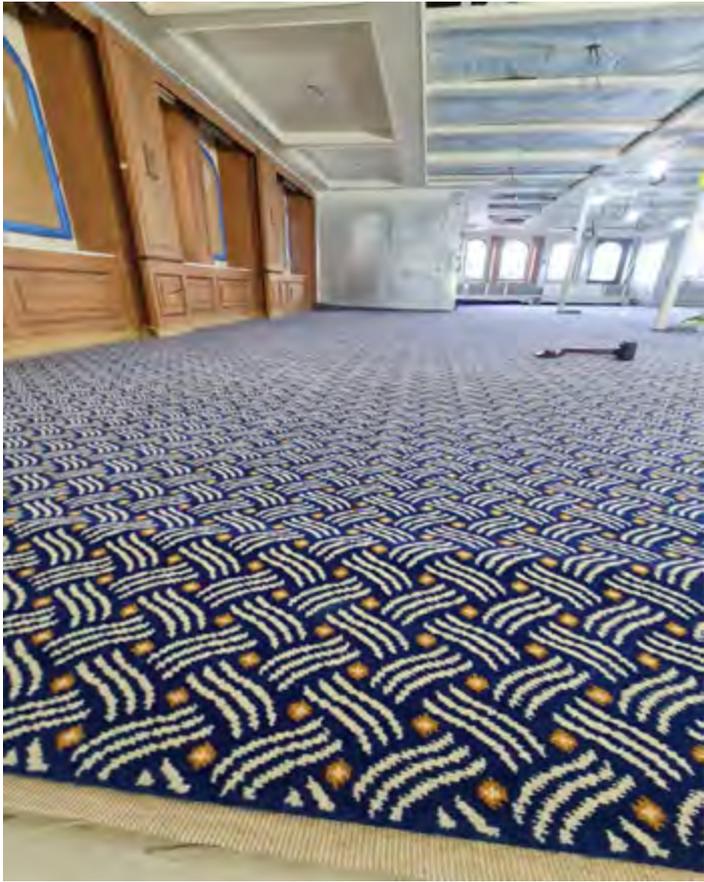


**Sea Cloud Spirit  
passenger spaces**





**Sea Cloud Spirit  
public areas**





## From Jason's Desk

UNICREW Management recently became a signatory to the Neptune Declaration on Seafarer Wellbeing and Crew Change to show our solidarity with our seafarers and to urge the international community to do more. Here are some of the reasons why we signed the document:

At the height of the crew change crisis in the autumn of 2020, the UN International Maritime Organization estimated that around 400,000 seafarers were on their ships beyond the expiry of their contract, while another 400,000 seafarers were unable to get to work. During normal circumstances, ICS estimates around 100,000 seafarers are rotated every month, with 50,000 disembarking and 50,000 embarking ships. Fatigue after long periods at sea has significant consequences on the physical and mental wellbeing of these seafarers.

Seafarers can work 7 days a week and 10-12 hours shifts. They also typically work between four and six months on ships, followed by a period of leave.

However, extensive periods at sea, in some cases over 17 months, have become routine as a result of COVID-19 and increase the risk of accidents onboard.

Some progress on addressing the crew change crisis has been made through significant effort, but the situation is still not resolved as many seafarers remain stranded on vessels beyond the expiry of their contracts. With new COVID-19 mutations appearing, some governments are introducing stricter measures on seafarers and crew changes, which can lead to a return to the untenable situation we saw last year.

Inability to crew change poses a significant threat to the integrity of maritime supply chains. Around 90% of global trade is transported by commercial shipping, which moves the world's food, energy and raw materials, as well as manufactured goods and components — including vital medical supplies and many products sold in supermarkets.

**Photo Captions:** Page 1, Frontal view of Sea Cloud Spirit at the shipyard in Spain. Page 2, The Global Maritime Forum assembled to discuss and ratify the Neptune Declaration of Crew Change and Seafarer Welfare. Page 4, Crew getting ready to disembark amidst pandemic restrictions. Page 6 & 7, Sea Cloud Spirit crew accommodation and common areas. Page 8, Sea Cloud Spirit anchor with the sail in the background. Page 9, Sea Cloud II crew carry our new COVID-19 health & safety drill. Page 11, Passenger areas on Sea Cloud Spirit. Page 12, Public areas on Sea Cloud Spirit. Page 13, Fire drill on Sea Cloud II.