



COVID-19 Joint statement of ECSA, EMPA and ETF on protective measures to minimise risks between crew and shore based personnel boarding a ship

ECSA, EMPA and ETF welcome the recommendations by the European Healthy GateWays and call for a common approach for the health and safety of maritime transport workers and smooth and efficient operations in port

- Despite the many challenges posed by the current COVID-19 crisis, maritime professionals across the whole European shipping industry are working hard to ensure the continued supply of goods, energy and equipment and the necessary transport services to millions of citizens currently affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Maritime transport workers are also essential to the resumption of passenger transport services throughout Europe.
- In order to ensure these professionals will be able to do their jobs in a safe and healthy environment, as well as to keep the maritime logistics chain working smoothly, it is important to have a clear and common approach on procedures applying to the physical interface between the vessels' crew and external workers visiting the vessel, including pilots.
- The European Commission's Guidelines on protection of health for persons on board ships¹ read as follows: "Contact between crew and port workers, including pilots, should be reduced to an absolute minimum to protect all persons from risk of transmission of COVID-19. For any necessary contact, personal protective equipment (PPE) should be worn by workers on board ships and in ports and social distancing measures put in place." This is also reflected in the recently adopted European Commission's Guidelines on the progressive restoration of transport services and connectivity,² which states that transport workers who are required, due to the nature of their work, to have a high level of interaction with others should be provided by their employers with the appropriate level of PPE. In addition, the IMO Circular Letter No.4204/Add.14 on crew change protocols and the guidance in [Circular Letter No.4204/Add.6](#) both recommend Governments and relevant national authorities to request port authorities and port workers to comply with any screening or other protocols or procedures introduced by visiting ships to address COVID-19.
- Member States have adopted their own national guidance regarding the use of PPE and social distancing which has led to diverging guidance by the port and

¹ [Communication from the Commission Guidelines on protection of health, repatriation and travel arrangements for seafarers, passengers and other persons on board ships, OJ C 119, 14.4.2020,](#)

² [Communication from the Commission, COVID-19: Guidelines on the progressive restoration of transport services and connectivity, C\(2020\) 3139 final, 13.5.2020](#)

flag states. This gives rise to health and safety concerns amongst those onboard in cases where shore based personnel boarding a ship, following national regulations, do not observe the protocols on wearing PPE and temperature testing provided by the visiting vessel. The IMO's guidance for ensuring good communications for a safe shipboard interface between ship and shore-based personnel ([Circular Letter No.4204/Add.16](#)) will greatly assist in these cases.

- However, complementary to this guidance, the signatories strongly consider that a common approach is needed in ports on the use of PPE, social distancing and temperature screening in the ship-shore interface. This will help ensure safe and healthy working environments for maritime transport workers as well as smooth and efficient operations in ports.
- Therefore ECSA, EMPA and ETF representing European shipowners, European maritime pilots and European seafarers welcome the additional guidance provided by the EU Healthy GateWays on the recommended Personal Protective Equipment³ and social distance to be required of shore based personnel when boarding the vessel. They also provide guidance on the possibilities for requiring temperature testing⁴.
- We therefore urgently call upon Members States' authorities and all stakeholders to effectively work towards the implementation of the guidance by the European Healthy GateWays Joint Action and adapt national guidance accordingly, so as to ensure all 'shore based personnel boarding a ship' should wear PPE, (including masks) provided by their employers⁵ and apply rules of social distancing (maintaining a distance of at least 1,5m) when boarding a vessel. Serious consideration should also be given to the EHG's recommendations regarding temperature testing.

³ [EU Healthy Gateways Joint Action, "WHO, WHERE, HOW: Overview of personal protective equipment \(PPE\) recommended for personnel, crew and passengers at points of entry and on board conveyances in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic \(VERSION 4 – 20/05/2020\)"](#)

⁴ [General guidance for restarting transportation activities to serve tourism after lifting restrictive measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

⁵ [Communication from the Commission, COVID-19: Guidelines on the progressive restoration of transport services and connectivity, C\(2020\) 3139 final, 13.5.2020](#)