



Geneva, December 2020

ILO Governing Body 340th session

Draft resolution concerning maritime labour issues and coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

EU Statement – for adoption by correspondence

This statement is delivered on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, the Republic of North Macedonia*, Montenegro* and Albania*, as well as Moldova, Armenia and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

1. The European Union and its Member States thank the social partners for putting forward a draft resolution concerning maritime labour issues and coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and support the adoption of the text of this Resolution following the tripartite consultations of 23 and 27 November.
2. Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, around 400 000 seafarers have been stranded at sea. In too many cases, carrying out crew changes has proven very difficult or even impossible, resulting in seafarers and fishers being forced to continue to work far beyond the length of their contracts. They are often denied shore leave, medical assistance ashore and repatriation. As a result, many work beyond the maximum allowed duration of service.
3. This situation calls for action to enable crew changes, shore leave and medical assistance for seafarers as provided for in the Maritime Labour Convention. The same goes for fishers. This is important not only on humanitarian grounds, but also in view of their important role in ensuring the continuity in the supply of goods, energy, medical supplies and food, including seafood.
4. The EU undertook action to that end. Already in March guidance was issued recommending the designation of workers involved in the supply of goods, maritime and inland navigation workers and fishers as essential. In October, EU Member States adopted a Recommendation on a coordinated approach in response to the pandemic, facilitating the free movement of essential workers, including seafarers.
5. However, due to the global nature of maritime transport and fishing activities, international cooperation is essential. The European Union and its Member States therefore welcome initiatives taken by the Office, the Officers of the Special Tripartite Committee of the Maritime Labour Convention, international social partners, the International Maritime Organization and other UN agencies and programmes to address this situation. Furthermore, they thank Indonesia for taking the initiative to pursue the matter at the UN General Assembly. The EU and its Member States have supported and welcome the adoption of the UN Resolution on seafarers by consensus on 1 December 2020.

*The Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

6. The draft ILO resolution urges all ILO Members to designate seafarers as key workers, to consider the relaxation of travel requirements and ensure access to medical assistance and emergency repatriation. It calls on the Office to continue this support and cooperation on this matter. It calls on companies to carry out human rights due diligence in relation to the pandemic. It calls on ILO members, the Office and companies to consider taking similar measures for fishers. These are actions essential to ensuring the health of hundreds of thousands of seafarers and fishers, preventing accidents and securing the functioning of global supply chains.
7. The EU and its Member States fully support this resolution and look forward to further cooperating with the Office, with governments, workers and employers on this matter.

UNITED KINGDOM WRITTEN STATEMENT - *Draft resolution concerning maritime labour issues and the COVID-19 pandemic*

As the world has faced Covid-19 pandemic this year, collective international efforts have rightly prioritised the continued functioning of global supply chains to ensure the resilience of our national economies. Seafarers have been on the front line of those efforts. They are the key workers responsible for the safe and efficient operation of the maritime transportation system, which moves over 80% of global trade.

Seafarers, and those operating their ships, have faced unprecedented challenges posed by the pandemic, in particular as restrictions have hindered their ability to conduct ship crew changes, to return home, and to access medical care and assistance.

The UK would like to thank the seafarers and the shipowners for submitting the draft resolution and to all on the tripartite screening group for their collaborative and constructive approach during the negotiations. We would also like to thank Greg Vines for his direction as Chair and the members of the Office for their support and extensive knowledge of ILO protocols and procedures.

For the UK, a key element of the draft Resolution was the ability for a seafarer to access medical care ashore and we are therefore appreciative that this has been included in the draft Resolution.

Seafarers are the lifeblood of the world's economy. As a coastal, port and flag State the UK recognised the critical position that seafarers hold in both the UK and the global economy. More than ever, we need to ensure that freight is able to flow inwards and outwards of the country, and that global trade continues for the benefit of all citizens and the global economy.

We recognise and appreciate that governments will want to protect their domestic population but the crisis being endured by seafarers cannot be permitted to continue. It does not matter if a state is a net importer or exporter, every state relies on seafarers for the delivery of vital goods and services. For the sake of their physical and mental welfare, for their families, for the protection of the marine environment and for the protection of the global economy and supply chains we urge states to act now.

We welcomed the adoption on 1 December 2020 of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution on International cooperation to address challenges faced by seafarers as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic to support global supply chains.

We are hopeful that we can also welcome the adoption of the draft Resolution concerning maritime labour issues and the COVID-19 pandemic by the Governing Body.

Resolution Concerning Maritime Labor Issues and the COVID-19 Pandemic
340th Session of the ILO Governing Body

Explanation of Position
U.S. Government

The United States is pleased to join consensus on this important resolution, recognizing the dire situation faced by many seafarers around the world today as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Early on in the pandemic the United States designated seafarers as “key workers” making clear our thoughts on the importance of these vital workers.

We have been a strong voice advocating that States take decisive action to facilitate crew rotations, and we have supported similar resolutions in the International Maritime Organization and the United Nations General Assembly. We have worked tirelessly to that end, and have successfully facilitated numerous crew changes and repatriations of seafarers in this difficult period. The United States also has ensured access to emergency medical care, consistent with our international obligations, to address the serious impacts of COVID on the seafarer community, while at the same time taking into account the legitimate health concerns of coastal states.

We interpret the term “multinational and national enterprises” to have the same scope as “business enterprises” in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. We note that this non-binding resolution does not impose legal obligations on States and, as such, it does not impute obligations from the Maritime Labor Convention, 2006, to States that have not ratified it. Nevertheless, it is our hope that in drawing the world’s attention to the plight of so many seafarers, this resolution can help spur efforts to assist them.

Commentaire du Royaume du Maroc sur le projet de résolution concernant les questions relatives au travail maritime et la pandémie de COVID-19

Le Royaume du Maroc n'a pas d'objections ou de remarques quant au texte révisé de la résolution. Par ailleurs face à la pandémie du COVID-19, des actions ont été entreprises par le Maroc dans le but de faciliter le travail des gens de mer et de prévenir la contamination par le COVID 19:

- Élaboration d'une note directoriale en date du 15 Mars 2020 ayant objet de prolonger tous les certificats STCW déchués des gens de mer jusqu'au 1er juillet 2020;
- Diffusion d'une Note aux armateurs en date du 27 mars 2020 dont l'objet est la dématérialisation du traitement des enregistrements des mouvements des gens de mer via une application informatique;
- Décentralisation et dématérialisation de la délivrance des certificats STCW et sa délégation aux services extérieurs de la marine marchande à partir du 3 Août 2020;
- Le service central des gens de mer assure quotidiennement une réponse rapide via mail pour les autorisations des changements d'équipage (embarquement et débarquement des gens de mer marocains ou étrangers) ainsi que pour les demandes d'accès des marins aux soins médicaux a terre à travers tous les ports du Royaume.