Overcoming the Seafarer Crisis: Enabling Crew Changes and Repatriation

The Covid-19 pandemic has created an unprecedented crew change crisis which has led to hundreds of thousands of seafarers being impacted and in many instances left stranded on ships, beyond the expiry of their contracts. Despite significant efforts by international organizations, governments, industry associations, labor unions, NGOs and individual companies including the adoption on 1 December 2020 by the UN General Assembly of a resolution on International cooperation to address challenges faced by seafarers as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic to support global supply chains, the issue is still far from resolved.

This is not an acceptable way to treat seafarers, who are the frontline workers of the maritime industry carrying 90% of global trade. Fatigue after extended periods at sea has significant consequences on the physical and mental wellbeing of seafarers. It also increases the risk of maritime incidents and environmental disasters, and poses a wider threat to the integrity of global supply chains, which depend on safe and reliable maritime transport.

This is why a taskforce of stakeholders from across the maritime value chain has identified the following key issues preventing crew changes, that require urgent action:

• While high-quality health protocols have been adopted internationally, they have not been consistently implemented in practice. This has led authorities to perceive seafarers as a Covid-19 risk, which has limited the possibilities of crew changes.
• Implementing high-quality crew change protocols will reduce the economic risk of disrupted supply chains but will lead to increased short-term costs.
• The disruption of international air travel has reduced the number of flights, causing connectivity issues between major crew change hubs and major seafaring nations, which has complicated crew changeovers.

Taking action to deliver on our shared responsibility

We, the signatories to The Neptune Declaration on Seafarer Wellbeing and Crew Change, recognize that we have a shared responsibility to ensure that the current crew change crisis is resolved as soon as possible and to use the learnings from the crisis as an opportunity to build a more resilient maritime supply chain.

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.

Therefore, we commit to take action to resolve the crew change crisis, based on our position and role in the value-chain, thereby ensuring the rights and wellbeing of the seafarers supporting global supply chains. We call on our peers and other stakeholders, in particular relevant government bodies, to join us in our efforts.

2 https://www.undocs.org/en/A/75/L.37
To make tangible improvements, the following actions should be implemented:

- **Recognize seafarers as key workers and give them priority access to Covid-19 vaccines**
  
  Seafarers should be recognized as key workers by all governments in line with the UN General Assembly resolution adopted on 1 December 2020 and the transition of seafarers across borders should be facilitated based on internationally agreed, high-quality health protocols. Governments and other stakeholders should work together with the maritime industry to ensure that seafarers, irrespective of their nationality, get priority access to Covid-19 vaccines alongside other key workers and health care professionals in recognition of their critical role in global supply chains and trade. This should include developing protocols that ensure vaccinations are correctly certified and effectively administered to seafarers as well as establishing a standardized format for health passes that contain tamper proof information about vaccination and testing status to facilitate crew changes.

- **Establish and implement gold standard health protocols based on existing best practice**
  
  The maritime industry and governments should implement The Recommended Framework of Protocols for ensuring safe ship crew changes and travel during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic\(^3\) which has been recognized by the International Maritime Organization. To minimize the risk of Covid-19, to build trust that crew changes can be carried out in a safe manner, and to ensure that the measures taken can be universally accepted, the implementation of the Framework of Protocols should be based on the highest practicable standards. The STAR Crew Change Protocols\(^4\), which are based on existing best practice, are thus recommended for industry-wide adoption.

- **Increase collaboration between ship operators and charterers to facilitate crew changes**\(^5\)
  
  Facilitating crew changes based on high-quality health protocols is a shared responsibility which will create benefits for all by minimizing the risk of Covid-19 spread on vessels, minimizing the risk of disruptions to global supply chains, while contributing to maritime safety and the wellbeing of seafarers. Ship owners and charterers should share relevant information transparently and collaborate to ensure that necessary crew changes can be carried out with the least impact possible in terms of cost and delays. The owner should provide the charterer with as much notice as possible on intended crew changes, while the charterer should make all reasonable efforts to accommodate crew changes including when the vessel has to make a reasonable deviation. No charter contracts should contain clauses preventing necessary crew changes from being carried out, as the aggregate effect of such clauses could be a serious obstacle to the safe operation of maritime trade and the protection of the wellbeing and rights of seafarers.

  By implementing high-quality health protocols, ship owners can reduce the risk of trade disruption due to Covid-19, which also creates benefits to charterers. These benefits should be reflected in chartering decisions to create incentives for shipowners to implement high-quality health protocols and be transparent about actions taken as well as costs incurred.

- **Ensure air connectivity between key maritime hubs for seafarers**
  
  The aviation industry should work together with the maritime industry to ensure that airlift capacity is established between major crew changing hubs and seafaring nations. Additionally, the aviation and maritime industries as well as governments – involving all relevant ministries and agencies – should work together to establish a universally accepted and harmonized framework of standards for the validation of trusted health data for seafarers to facilitate border crossing and ensure the long-term resilience of air connectivity.

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\(^3\) The reference is to the latest version of the Protocols, last updated on 22nd April 2021: [MSC.1-Circ.1636 - Industry Recommended Framework Of Protocols For Ensuring Safe Ship Crew Changes And Travel.pdf](https://imo.org)  

\(^4\) [http://www.globalmaritimeforum.org/content/2020/12/The-Neptune-Declaration-STAR-protocols.pdf](http://www.globalmaritimeforum.org/content/2020/12/The-Neptune-Declaration-STAR-protocols.pdf)  

\(^5\) A group of charterers from both the wet and dry bulk sectors has outlined a set of best practices they have used to turn the Neptune Declaration recommendations into concrete action: [http://www.globalmaritimeforum.org/content/2021/05/The-Neptune-Declaration-Best-Practices-for-Charterers.pdf](http://www.globalmaritimeforum.org/content/2021/05/The-Neptune-Declaration-Best-Practices-for-Charterers.pdf)
Signatories

2020 Bulkers
3Seas Shipping
7SHIPPING

A
A. M. Nomikos Transworld Maritime Agencies
A. O. Schifffahrt
A. P. Møller-Mærsk
A. Pérez y Cía
ABC Maritime
Aderco International
ADNOC Logistics & Services
Adriatic Crewing and Maritime Agency
Advanced Polymer Coatings
Advent International
Africa Ports & Ships
Airports Council International (ACI) World
Alandia
Alassia NewShips Management
Alberta Shipmanagement
Asahi Shipping
Alfa Laval
Alfa Ship & Crew Management
Algeciras Bay Port Community (COMPORT)
Allmode Global
All-Ukrainian Association of Crewing Companies
Alma Maritime Group Corporation
ALP Maritime Services
Altera Infrastructure
Amazon Crew Services
AMCF - Agents Maritimes et Consignataires de France
American Express Global Business Travel
American Maritime Services
AMSOI - African Marine Solutions
Anchor SM (Singapore)
Anglo-American
Anglo-Eastern Univan Group
Anker Crew Insurance
Anosis Maritime
Anglo International Shipping Operations
Anthony Veder Group
APEopleBusiness
Apex Ship Management
Apollo 1969 at Lloyd’s
Apollo Ship Management
APORMAR Seafarers Portuguese Agency
Apostleship of the Sea of the United States of America
AqualisBraemar LOC
Aquatrade
ARCADIA SHIPMANAGEMENT
Ardmore Shipping
ARGELAN SHIPS SERVICE
Argo Crew
Armateurs de France
Asahi Shipping
Ashley Chartering Limited
Astatic/Atlantic Lloyd Group
ASP Crew Management Group
Assarmatori
Associated Maritime (Hong Kong)
Associated Steamship Agents
Association of Canadian Port Authorities
Association of German Shipmasters and Ship Officers
Association of Malaysia’s Maritime Professionals/IKHTISAS KELAUTAN MALAYSIA (IKMAL)
Association of Marine Pilots Ireland
Atlantic Ship Management
Atlantska Plovidba
Atlas Marine Valves
Atlas Professionals
Atlas Sea Group
Atlas Ship Supply
ATPI Marine & Energy
Auerbach Schifffahrt
Australasian Institute of Marine Surveyors
Australian Mariners’ Welfare Society
Australian Seafarers’ Welfare Council
AV Global Marine
Avance Gas Holding
AVB Ahrenkiel Vogemann Bolten
Azimuth Ship Management

B
Bahri Ship Management
Bao-Island Enterprises
BAO-NYK Shipping
BBC Chartering
Belships Management (Singapore)
BEMAC Corporation
Ben Line Agencies
Berge Bulk
Bernhardt Schulte Shipmanagement
BHN Shipping Group
Bibby Marine
BIMCO
Black Sea Contractors
Blackbird Air Charter
Blue Ocean Marine and Offshore Solutions
Blue Planet Shipping
BMT
Bodrum Mariners Association
Boers Crew Services - a part of the BCS Group
Borealis Maritime
BOURBON
BP
Brentwood Communications
Bridgefort Crew Management
Signatories

Briese Crew Management
Briese Schiffahrts
BTH Business Travel Hamburg
Bureau Veritas
Burmester & Vogel
Burnley Marine Services
BW Group

C
C Solutions
Camellia Line
Canarship
Cape Shipping
Capital - Executive Ship Management
Capital Gas Ship Management
Capital Ship Management
Caralb Marítima
Caravel Group
Cardinal Maritime Limited
Cargill Ocean Transportation
Carisbrooke Shipping
Celsius Shipping
Centrum Marine Consultancy
CF Sharp Crew Management
Channel Bunker Services
Charles Taylor Investment Management Company
Chevron Shipping Company
China LNG Shipping (International)
China Merchants Energy Shipping (Singapore)
Chios Navigation (Hellas)
Chugoku Marine Paints
CIS Karkont Inspection Services – Turkey
Citi
CLC Projects
Cluster Maritime Français
CMA CGM Group

CMAF - Comité Marseillais des Armateurs de France
CNMAR Shipping
Coastal Shipping Limited
Coaster Ship Owners and Operators Association (KOSDER)
Columbia Cruise Services
Columbia Shipmanagement
Compagnie Maritime Nantaise - MN
Company of Master Mariner, Western Australia Branch
Company of Master Mariners, New South Wales Branch
Concordia Maritime
Confidence Shipping Company
CONFITARMA - Italian Shipowners’ Association
Contships Management
Copenhagen Commercial Platform
Corpus Christi International Seamen’s Center
COSCO SHIPPING Lines
CoShip
Cosmos Agency
CPO Containerschiffreederei
Cross Ocean Air & Sea Project Logistics Network
Crowley Maritime Corporation
Cusack & Co
Cymora Shipping Management
Cyprus Shipping Chamber
Cyrus

d’Amico Soc. di Navigazione
D. Oltmann Reederei
Daihatsu Diesel
Daikin MR Engineering
Daiwa Kisen
Danaos Shipping
Danica Crewing Specialists
Danz & Tietjens Schiffahrtsgruppe

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Demurrage Desk
Denholm Group
Deutsche Seemannsmission
DFDS
DHT Holdings
Diamond S Shipping
Diana Shipping Services
Djibouti Shipping Company
DOF Group
Döhle Seafront Crewing (Manila)
Donnelly Tanker Management
Dorian LPG Management
Doun Kisen
Drew Marine USA
Dromon Bureau of Shipping
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Dufferin Maritime
Dynarep Shipping Consultants

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Eagle Bulk Shipping
Eagle Industry
Eastern Pacific Shipping
EDT Offshore Group
Element Shipmanagement
Elettra
Elvictor Group
Emarat Maritime
Emirates Ship Investment Company
EMS-Fehn-Group
ENESEL Group
ENL Services
Enterprises Shipping and Trading
EP Resources
EPI Group Holdings
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Signatories

ING
Inmarsat
Institute of Marine Engineering, Science & Technology
Indian Maritime Foundation
INTERCARGO - International Association of Dry Cargo Shipowners
InterManager - International Association of Ship and Crew Managers
International Association of Classification Societies (IACS)
International Association of Geophysical Contractors (IAGC)
International Association of Ports and Harbours
International Bunker Industry Association
International Chamber of Shipping
International Christian Maritime Association
International Congress of Maritime Museums (ICMM)
International Federation of Shipmasters’ Associations
International Harbour Masters’ Association
International Life-saving Appliance Manufacturers’ Association (ILAMA)
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International Marine Purchasing Association (IMPA)
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IS Container
ISGAM
Island Navigation Corporation International Limited
Island Sailors Maldives
Isle of Man Maritime
ISM Shipping Solutions
ISSETA International Safety & Survival Equipment Technical Association
ITF Seafarers’ Trust
ITU Maritime Faculty Alumni Association (ITU Denizcilik Fakultesi Mezunları Derneği)

J
J&J Denholm
Japan Marine United Corporation
Japan Radio
JBG Shipping Agency
JCJ Consulting
JCRS
Jebesen PTC
Jebesen PTC Maritime
JIFMAR OFFSHORE SERVICES
John T. Essberger
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Junge & Co. Versicherungsmakler
K
K Line Ship Management (Singapore)
KAMER Marine Denizcilik
Kaptanoglu Shipping
Kawasaki Heavy Industries
Kawasaki Kisenn Kaisa (“K” LINE)
Klaveness Marine
KOTUG group of companies
Kristian Gerhard Jebsen Skipsrederi
KTU Maritime Transportation and Management Engineering Alumni Association (KTU DUIM MD)
Kumiai Navigation
Kumiai Senpaku
KVH Industries
Kyklades Maritime
Kyla Shipping
Kyoei Tanker

L
LADOL Free Zone
Lampe & Schwartz Marine Underwriting
Landbridge Ship Management (HK)
Latsco Marine Management
Lauritzen Bulkers
Lauritzen Kosan
Lemissoler
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Leonis Navigation
Leth Agencies
Let’s Talk Supply Chain
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Lighthouse Shipmanagement Phils
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Lloyd’s Register Foundation
Load Line Marine
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Lomar Shipping
London Ship Managers
Louis Dreyfus Armateurs
Louis Dreyfus Company
Lubeca Marine Management
Lucent Global Ship Services
Lydia Mar Shipping Co.

M
M.T. Maritime Management (USA)
MAC Equity Maritime Services
Maersk Drilling
Maersk Supply Service
Maersk Tankers
Maestro Shipmanagement
Magsaysay MOL Ship Management
Magsaysay People Resources Corporation (MPRC) / Magsaysay Maritime Corporation (MMC)
Manabe Zoki
Manaco Marine
MarCoPay
Mare Supply & Services
Marfin Management Monaco, Managers for Topic Fleet
Marin Shipmanagement
Marine & Offshore Div., Bureau Veritas Japan
Marine Benefits
Marine Capital
Marine One (Private) Limited
Marine Services Group
Marine Tours
Marine Transport Workers Trade Union of Ukraine
Marine Underwriting Services
MARINO Party-List
Maritima
Maritima Del Estrecho Gib
Maritime Association of Shipowners, Shipmanagers & Agents
Maritime Industry Australia
Maritime Museum Rotterdam
Maritime Safety Queensland
Maritime Trainer
Marlow Navigation
Marsh
Marshal Ship Management
Maritron Group
MarTrust Corporation
MarynarszWiatra.pl - The Polish Seafarer Blog
MasOceans
Mastermind Shipmanagement
Mastership (MASTER MARITIME AGENCIES)
Matrix Ship Management
MCC Maritime Competence Center
McNeal Law Firm
HURTWORKINGOFFSHORE.com
Melbourne Maritime Heritage Network
Memisoglu Kurun Law Firm
Mental Health Support Solutions
Merchant Navy Welfare Board
Mertech Marine
Metrostar Management
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MH Bland Group
Michele Bottiglieri Armatore
Milaha
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MINSHP Shipmanagement
Mintra
MISC Group comprising MISC Bhd, AET and Eaglestar Marine Holdings (L)
Mitsubishi Ore Transport
Mitsubishi Shipbuilding
Mitsui E&S Shipbuilding Company
Mitsui O.S.K. Lines
MK Centennial Maritime (Netherlands)
MK Centennial Maritime (Singapore)
MM Marine
MMA Offshore Limited
MMSL
MOL LNG Transport
MOL LNG Transport (Europe)
MOL LNG Transport (Asia)
MOL Ship Management
MOL Ship Management (S)
MOL Tankship Management
Mondiale VGL
MPC Container Ships
MR Marine Group
MRM Philippines
MSC Crewing Services Philippines
MSC Mediterranean Shipping Company
MSea Management
MTM Ship Management
Multiport Ship Agency Network
Munich Re Syndicate
MURELOIL

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Naftomar Shipping and Trading
Nagasaki Sempaku Sobi
Nakakita Seisakusho
Nakamura Shipbuilding
National Maritime Museum, Greenwich
Nautilus Labs
Naviera Ultranav
Navig8 Chemical Tankers
Navigator Gas
Neda Maritime Agency
Neptune Dry Management
Signatories

Neptune Lines Shipping & Managing Enterprises
NET Ship Management
Netvision
Nihon Shipyards
Niovis Shipping
Nippon Kaiji Kyokai (ClassNK)
Nippon Pusnes
Nissen Kaiun
Nitta Kisen Kaisha
Norbulk Shipping UK
Norden
Nordic Bulk Carriers
Nordic Hamburg Shipmanagement
Nordic P&I Group
Norse Shipholding
Norstar Ship Management
North American Maritime Ministry Association
Northern Lighthouse Board
Norwegian Coastal Shipowners
Northern Marine Group
Norwegian Shipowners’ Association
Nova Marine Carriers
NRP Finans
NRP Maritime Asset Management
NSB Group
NYK Bulk & Projects Carriers
NYK Bulkship (Asia)
NYK Bulkship [ATLANTIC]
NYK Bulkship (Korea)
NYK Cruises
NYK Energy Transport [Atlantic]
NYK Energy Transport [USA]
NYK FIL Maritime E-Training
NYK Line
NYK LNG Shipmanagement (UK)
NYK LNG Shipmanagement
NYK Shipmanagement
NYK-FIL Ship Management
NYK-TDG Maritime Academy
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OBT Shipping Group
Ocean Networks Express
Ocean Technologies Group
Oceanwide Expeditions
Odfjell SE
Offshore & Specialist Ships Australia
Olympic Shipping & Management
OMA Group West Africa
Oman Shipping Company
OMS Group
OneLearn Global Limited
Orange Marine
Orient Overseas Container Line
ORION Reederei
Ortaköy Maritime Alumni Association
Oshima Shipbuilding
Osiris Consultants
Oskar Wehr KG
OSM Maritime
OSPR - The Offshore Safe Professionals Register
P
P&O Maritime Logistics
Pacific Basin Shipping
Pacific Carriers Limited
PACIFIC GAS
Pacific International Lines
Pangaea Logistics Solutions
Penasco Group
Petredc
PetroStrat
Philippine Association of Manning Agencies and Ship Managers (PAMAS)
Philippine Transmarine Carriers
Philippine-Japan Manning Consultative Council (PJMCC)
Phoenix Shipping Group
Pleiaades Shipping Agents
Pole Star
Polski Zwiazek Przedsiebiorcow Zeglugowych (Polish Shipping Companies Association)
Ponant
Port Arthur International Seafarers’ Center
Ports Australia
POSH Fleet Services
POSH Saudi
Potentia Unleash The Power of People
Precious Shipping PCL
PREVENTION at Sea
Prime’s Bunkersplus Services
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Project Cargo Weekly
Promar
Promare | Rabb Carvalho Advogados
PROPEL Social
PSA International
Purus Marine
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Q88
Qatar Gas Transport (Nakilat)
Queensway Navigation
Queensway Services
Qwest Maritime
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Red Sea Marine Services
Rederei Stenersen
Rederei Bernd Sibum
Rederei Hamburger Lloyd
“Rederei Nord Shipmanagement on behalf of REEDEREI NORD Group”
Rederei Zurich
Republic of the Marshall Islands Maritime Administrator
Signatories

Ridgebury Tankers
RightShip
Rio Tinto
RISK4SEA
Rocktree Logistics
Roll Group
Royal Association of Netherlands Shipowners (KVNR)

S
SS Agency World
Safe Bulkers
Safe Bulkers Management
Safebridge
Safety Management Overseas
SAFETY4SEA
Saga Shipholding (Norway)
Saga Welco
Sailors’ Society
Samba Shipping
Samudera Indonesia
Santoku Senpaku
Sarikaya + Sahin Law Firm
Scalabrini Center for People on the Move
Scalabrini Development Office
Scalabrini International Migration Network (SIMN)
Scorpio
SE “Ukrainian Sea Ports Authority”
Sea Culture Association of Turkey
Sea Globe Management & Trading
Sea Trade Holdings
Sea Wellbeing
Sea World Management & Trading
Seacom Marine
Seafarers’ House
Seafarers Trade Union Organization/OMK NSZZ Solidarnosc
Seafarers UK
Seamar Management

Seamen’s Church Institute
Seanergy
Searock Marine Insurance Brokers
Sea-Side Shipping Agency Brazil
Seaspan Ship Management
SeaTankers Services (UK)
Seaways Psychology Services
Senator Crewing (Manila)
SFG Engineering Services
SFL Corporation
Shell Shipping & Maritime
Shin Kurushima Dockyard
Shinko
Shinkoh
Shinyang NF Shipping
ShipMed Medical Services
ShipMoney
ShipParts.com
Shipping Australia
Shipping Professional Network in Hamburg
Shipz
Shunzan Kaiun
SimMarine (India)
Singhai Marine Services (Shanghai)
Sirius Ship Management
Sitara Shipping
Skuld
SKV Group
SMT Shipping Poland
SOCATRA
Sogestran Shipping
Solstad Offshore
Someca Transport
Sonangol Marine Services
Songa Container
Songa Shipmanagement
South Trade Shipmanagement
South32
Southfield Agencies

SouthPoint Ship Management
Sovcomflot
SphereMD
SQE MARINE
ST Engineering iDirect
Star Bulk Carriers Corp.
Stealth Maritime
Stella Maris
Stella Maris - Arica, Chile
Stella Maris - Australia
Stella Maris - Cape Town
Stella Maris - Catholic Diocese of Beaumont, Texas USA
Stella Maris - Manila
Stella Maris Brasil - Tiplam Santos
Stella Maris Kaohsiung
STELLA MARIS Rio de Janeiro
Stella Maris Scalabrinian Network
Stella Maris/ Apostolatus Maris, Montevideo
Stena Bulk
Stena Shipping and Ferries
Stichting Pastoraat Werkers Overzee
Stewart World Port
Stolt Tankers
StratumFive
Subsea Global Solutions
Suisse-Atlantique
Sunrui Marine Environment Engineering
Sunship Schiffsahrtskantor
Sustainable Shipping Initiative
Swire Pacific Offshore
Swire Shipping
Swiss Ocean Yacht Management
Swiss Re Corporate Solutions
Swiss Shipowners Association
Synergy Marine Group

T
Tagashira Kaiun
**Signatories**

Western Shipping
Wilhelmsen Ahrenkiel Ship Management
Willis Towers Watson
Wilhelmsen Ship Management
Windward
Wintermar Offshore Marine
Wisby Shipmanagement
WISTA Canada
WISTA Colombia
WISTA International
WISTA USA
World Economic Forum
World Fuel Services Corporation
World Marine
World Marine Offshore

**X**
X-Press Feeders
Xiamen Hailong Manning Service
XT Management

**Y**
Yang Ming Marine Transport
YANMAR POWER TECHNOLOGY
YDK Technologies
Yieldstreet Marine
Yokogawa Electric Corporation

**Z**
Zeaborn Ship Management
Zephyr Group
Zeymarine Gemi Acentaligi Ve Hizmetleri Ticaret
ZIM Integrated Shipping Services
Z-Mariner
Zodiac Maritime