



## **New Neptune Declaration Crew Change Indicator takes the temperature of the crew change crisis**

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*Data from top 10 ship managers on their seafarers is the basis of an indicator which provides up-to-date information on the impact of the crew change crisis and will allow for the monitoring of developments over time. The Neptune Declaration Crew Change Indicator is part of the ongoing efforts that a multi-stakeholder taskforce is undertaking to resolve the situation.*

Well into the second year of the coronavirus pandemic, the crew change crisis remains unresolved. Despite the concerted efforts by international organizations and companies, seafarers are still unable to disembark from vessels while new strains of Covid-19 create a risk of making the situation worse. Currently, data that gives access to the number of seafarers who are impacted by the crew change crisis is limited. The new Neptune Declaration Crew Change Indicator aims to inform the situation.

*"To better understand and address the crew change crisis, there is a need to have access to accurate data that will allow stakeholders to monitor and respond to the situation. This is why we created the Neptune Declaration Crew Change Indicator," says **Graham Westgarth, Chairman of V. Group.***

The first Neptune Declaration Crew Change Indicator shows that by mid-April 2021, 5.8% of seafarers were onboard vessels beyond the expiry of their contracts of employment. 0.4% of seafarers had been onboard vessels for over 11 months. The Maritime Labour Convention states that the maximum continuous period a seafarer should serve on board a vessel without leave is 11 months.

*"While the percentages of the first indicator appear low, this should not be interpreted as an indication that the crew change crisis is over. On the contrary, we see worrying signs with the rapid spread of new strains of Covid, in India and other countries, which should be a big cause for concern for our industry," says **Rajesh Unni, CEO of Synergy Group.***

The Neptune Declaration Crew Change Indicator builds on aggregated data from 10 leading ship managers: **Anglo-Eastern, Bernhard Schulte, Columbia Shipmanagement, Fleet Management (FLEET), OSM, Synergy Marine, Thome, V.Group, Wallem, and Wilhelmsen Ship Management**, which collectively have about 90,000 seafarers currently onboard. **Watson Farley & Williams LLP** provided legal advice on the project.

*"The willingness of ship managers to contribute to the Neptune Declaration Crew Change Indicator is a great example of the desire of the maritime industry to work together to address the crew change crisis and help seafarers," says **Kasper Søgaard, Head of Research at the Global Maritime Forum.***

The Neptune Declaration Crew Change Indicator will be published once a month and builds on aggregated data provided by the ship managers to the Global Maritime Forum. The data is used to calculate a weighted average of the percentage of seafarers who have been onboard vessels beyond the expiry of their contract of employment as well as a weighted average of the percentage of seafarers who have been onboard vessels for over 11 months. As top ship managers are making significant efforts – and are often better placed – in facilitating crew changes, the Neptune Declaration Crew Change Indicator cannot be used directly to calculate the full numbers of seafarers impacted by the crew change crisis.

The first report of the Neptune Declaration Crew Change Indicator can be found [here](#).

The Neptune Declaration Crew Change Indicator follows the launch of the [Neptune Declaration on Seafarer Wellbeing and Crew Change](#) in January 2021. The Declaration has since been signed by more than 800 companies and organizations. It defines four main actions to facilitate crew changes 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; and ensure air connectivity between key maritime hubs for seafarers.

The Neptune Declaration has been developed by a taskforce of stakeholders from across the maritime value chain including **A. M. Nomikos, Cargill, Dorian LPG, GasLog, Global Maritime Forum, International Chamber of Shipping, International Maritime Employers' Council, International Transport Workers' Federation, ONE, Philippine Transmarine Carriers, Sustainable Shipping Initiative, Synergy Group, V. Group, and World Economic Forum.**

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## **Leading ship managers comment:**

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### **Anglo-Eastern Univan Group**

*"The crew rotation crisis is far from over. In fact, 2021 is set to be worse than last year, with the recent surge in COVID cases in many crew supply countries making crew change in many cases impossible, due to ports' shutting down for these nationality seafarers. The current very low number reported by leading ship management companies is not representative for the actual situation on the ground, and the worsening development in the next few months. What our industry needs is priority vaccination for seafarers and for ports/countries to allow vaccinated seafarers to rotate unimpeded on the world's merchant fleet."*

**Bjorn Hojgaard, Chief Executive Officer, Anglo-Eastern Univan Group**

### **Fleet Management (FLEET)**

*"The Neptune Declaration Crew Change Indicator is a step forward to addressing the escalating crew change crisis and the emotional wellbeing of our seafarers. It allows us to marshal our collective knowledge and data to respond effectively to the situation. For the maritime trade to continue unabated, governments and international bodies must prioritise seafarers as 'key workers' and speed up the rollout of seafarer vaccines."*

**Kishore Rajvanshy, Managing Director, Fleet Management (FLEET)**

### **OSM Maritime Crew**

*"For more than a year crew changes have been a major challenge to the industry, putting a lot of stress on the crew. The crew change crisis is by far from over and we must continue to put efforts into getting seafarers to be prioritized as key workers for easy travel and to get priority for vaccines."*

**Peter Burkal, Managing Director, OSM Maritime Crew**

### **Thome Group**

*"After a long period where the Seafarers' community has been exposed to safety risks by traveling to and from their vessels, we are now looking at another challenging period with the global surge in Covid 19 positive cases. We as companies, together with all stakeholders in the maritime industry, owe it to our seafarers to show more respect to the crew change procedures now – and the Neptune initiative is an excellent community to drive this agenda."*

**Simon Frank, Chief Human Resources Officer, Thome Group**