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4 ALBERT EMBANKMENT  
LONDON SE1 7SR  
Telephone: +44 (0)20 7735 7611 Fax: +44 (0)20 7587 3210

Circular Letter No.4255/Add.2  
29 July 2021

To: All IMO Members  
Intergovernmental organizations  
Non-governmental organizations in consultative status

Subject: **Communication from the Kingdom of Belgium**

The Government of the Kingdom of Belgium has sent the attached communication, dated 28 July 2021, with the request that it be circulated by the Organization.

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Rue du Progrès 56  
1210 Brussels  
info@mobilif.fgov.be  
+32 2 277 31 11

International Maritime Organisation  
Attn. His Excellency Mr Kitack Lim, Secretary-General  
Albert Embankment, 4  
SE1 7SR London  
United Kingdom

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Contact person	Number of contact	Date
Gentiana Bilali seafarers@mobilif.fgov.be	+32 32 29 00 60	28/07/2021

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**Subject: Belgium starts campaign to vaccinate foreign seafarers**

Dear Mr Secretary-General,

Firstly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for your outstanding work as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, especially with the adoption of the MSC resolution MSC 490 (103) where vaccination of foreign seafarers, in addition to prioritizing seafarers in national vaccination programmes, was recommended.

Following the successful national COVID-19 vaccination campaign of Belgian seafarers, the Minister of the North Sea, Mr. Vincent Van Quickenborne, the Royal Belgian Shipowner Association and the Directorate General Shipping initiated, together with the Taskforce Vaccination and the Interministerial Conference on Public Health, a new vaccination plan to inoculate all seafarers calling with a ship in the Belgian ports of Antwerp, Zeebruges and Ghent. Considering that, on an annual basis, approximately 5,500 ships and 80,000 seafarers call at Belgian ports, Belgium hopes to contribute in fighting the global pandemic and improve the difficult situations seafarers find themselves in. Belgium would like to use this opportunity to reiterate its commitment to declare seafarers as key workers. To give further effect to this commitment, Belgium has decided to include seafarers in its priority vaccination programme and this approach can only be effective if carried out at large scale. Therefore, we invite other Member States to do the same.

The Johnson & Johnson vaccine will be administered as from 26 July 2021 to all seafarers by mobile medical teams, who will board docked vessels, thus becoming the first country in the world to use this time-saving approach. This large scale initiative will continue to contribute towards reducing risks for seafarers and improves their work and living conditions.



FPS MOBILITY AND TRANSPORT  
DG SHIPPING

Rue du Progrès 56  
1210 Brussels  
info@mobilit.fgov.be  
+32 2 277 31 11

I would be most grateful if this information is communicated by Circular Letter to all Member States and any interested parties.

Yours sincerely,

Bart Heylbroeck  
(Signature)

Digitaal ondertekend  
door Bart Heylbroeck  
(Signature)

*Bart Heylbroeck*  
*Director-General a.i.*

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