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Dear <<First Name>>

Corona Measures and Pilot / Vessel interface

Please see the letter below received this afternoon. GEFO are a German shipping company. It is a timely reminder that the potential transmission of the virus is multidirectional. Being mindful of ships' safety regimes and mutual respect and sympathy for each other's concerns is not inappropriate.

The letter was addressed to numerous international recipients and no particular body was identified.

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Dear Sirs,

I sincerely hope you are well.

Given these challenging times to stay healthy, all of us are aware of and subject to strict measures implemented to avoid the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Throughout society, the most important measure is isolation of individuals, followed by maintaining hygienic etiquette and social distancing, both being equally important.

Our crews and your pilots, are the front runners of the supply chains. They are warranting a steady supply of raw materials and products to the major ports and as such keeping the infrastructure of society upright and I respect them for that.

My concern goes out to business continuity, but certainly to the health of our crews on board and their families. Just as well, I am concerned about the health of the pilots boarding our vessels, and their respective colleagues, families and friends. Our crews have been instructed to strictly adhere and respect the measures, for protection of themselves and any third parties on board. During the large majority of piloted passages, the Pilots act very respectful to our crews. Our vessels are under pilotage almost daily, the aim is to comply with a rate of 100% to avoid spread of infection, and – once again – most pilots fully supportive in applying the measures.

Unfortunately, following experiences have been reported by the captains of our fleet, without being specific in which port or river this has occurred (the "bec" list contains the pilot services of the geographical area in which our fleet regularly operates):

- Pilots not having protective masks with them (acknowledging the fact that supply of such masks is scarce for obvious reasons)
- Pilots showing symptoms of a flue / viral infection arriving on the bridge, some of them even rejecting offered mouthmasks (in case of the above) è in line with HSE procedures, persons showing symptoms, should be excluded from service and quarantained
- Passenger pilots and Trainee pilots on the inbound or outbound leg è on small vessels this should be discontinued as long as the isolation measures are in place, no spare cabin or isolated space can be offered and the wheelhouse is not large enough to cater for many persons respecting social distancing
- Pilots not respecting social distancing è pilots and crew are all human beings, and the virus can only be stopped if people stay at the required minimum distance from one another

May I kindly though urgently petition to jointly lay the rudder hard to Starboard, and count on the support of your organizations, to respect and apply all measures implemented by society, your own organizations, WHO, shipping companies, ... ?

We can only address our mutual concerns – together, and keep our ships and the supply chain operational – together!

I would like to thank you very much for your understanding,

Have a nice day, and above all: stay healthy.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen - Best Regards - Beleefde Groeten - Cordialement

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Best regards,

Don Cockrill,
Secretary General

