

UNWTO and IMO Issue Joint Statement to Support Safe Resumption of Cruise Ship Operations

Madrid, Spain, 5 November 2020 – *In a joint statement issued today, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) highlight the importance of the cruise sector for the world economy.*

According to industry data, the cruise sector supports 1.2 million jobs and contributes US\$150 billion to the global economy every year. Tourism is vitally important for Small Islands States, where it sustains millions of livelihoods and brings substantial socio-economic benefits.

The two UN agencies also recognise the efforts made by the industry, countries and international organizations to protect the safety, health and well-being of passengers and crew, as well as the health of the population of destination port States of cruise ships. Since cruise operations were suspended worldwide due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the industry has been reviewing and enhancing its protocols to identify ways to go further in protecting the health of passengers, crew and the general public.

The [joint statement](#) invites governments to use the Guidance on the gradual and safe resumption of operations of cruise ships in the European Union in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic ([shared by IMO in Circular Letter No 4204/Add.26](#)) to facilitate the recovery of the sector under safe conditions, as well as three framework documents (operator framework, passenger framework and seafarer framework) developed by the United Kingdom's Chamber of Shipping together with CLIA.

IMO and UNWTO emphasise that the resumption of cruise ship operations will also benefit the wider maritime community, since passenger ships participate in the automated mutual-assistance vessel rescue (AMVER) and are often requested by Rescue Coordination Centres to offer assistance to ships in distress at sea.

IMO and UNWTO reiterate their call to Governments to designate all seafarers and marine personnel as key workers and remove any barriers to crew changes.

Related Links:

[UNWTO: Tourism and COVID-19 – Putting People First](#)

[New International Code to Provide Greater Legal Protection for Tourists](#)

[75 Years of the United Nations: Cooperation and Trust as Important as Ever](#)

[Joint statement to support the safe resumption of cruise ship operations following the COVID-19](#)