

COMMUNITY COMES TOGETHER TO MITIGATE CORONAVIRUS EFFECTS

Better-qualified observers than me are undecided about what the length and severity of the impact of the coronavirus pandemic will be on bulk terminal operations.

Rate predictions from shipping organisations such as BIMCO, being influenced by supply as well as demand, are of course only part of the equation in predicting the volumes for our bulk terminals sector — as any other. For some trades, seasonality adds to the rate predictions.

But it seems fairly safe to predict that covid-19 will limit the world economy for the rest of this year and beyond. The recovery may be beginning in China, but the effects have yet to peak for other countries. And some demand has been destroyed permanently by the economic impact of the coronavirus.

What can the maritime community do to mitigate the effects of covid-19? What is clear is that ports and terminals need ships to call on them to operate. Without crew changes, the maritime fleet cannot operate, even where demand picks up. Regional and international organisations recognise this and have called for measures to deal with the problem.

The European Commission has called on member states to designate ports to fast-track crew changes, which was welcomed by the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS). The guidelines followed soon after a call from the ICS and International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) to G20 leaders to identify ports and airports to facilitate the early resumption of crew changes, in the interests of crew health and wellbeing.

Adina Vălean, European Commissioner for Transport, says: "Seafarers are keeping the vital channels for our economy and supply chains open, as 75% of EU trade and 30% of all goods with the EU are transported by sea. The guidelines include sanitary advice, recommendations for crew changes, disembarking, and repatriation for seafarers and passengers. I am asking the member states to designate ports where fast-track crew changes take place."

Guy Platten, ICS Secretary General, comments: "We welcome the leadership provided by the European Commission in its call to EU member states to facilitate the essential movement of seafarers and marine personnel. Crew change is a massive problem for the entire shipping industry, in addition to ship operators based in Europe, and we hope that this quick response to our calls to the G20 for action globally will act as a catalyst for other nations, and that the G20, in conjunction with IMO, will quickly put in place pragmatic and coordinated arrangements to allow crew changes to take place."

Members of associations such as ABTO and other international organisations gain much from the ability to network with each other and exchange best practice with peers at events. Covid-19 has put paid for the time being to any such activity. ICHCA International's Spring 2020 Meeting, which was due to take place at Buxton in the UK earlier this month has been postponed, probably until next year. ABTO and ICHCA International signed an MoU at our Amsterdam conference last October. ICHCA will be participating in an initiative launched at the beginning of April under the umbrella of the *Continued...*

SEA EUROPE URGES SUPPORT

SEA Europe has called for urgent, tailor-made sectoral support to safeguard the survival of Europe's strategic maritime technology industry.

"If the EU fails to adopt tailor-made sectoral policies and financial support beyond its horizontal industrial policies, Europe risks losing its strategic maritime technology sector to Asia, while European shipyards and maritime equipment manufacturers are key for the European Green Deal, for Europe's Blue Economy and mobility, for Europe's defence, security and autonomy and for Europe's access to seas and trade of goods and passengers", says Kjersti Kleven, SEA Europe's chairwoman.

"Such a loss would make Europe entirely dependent on Asia for the design, building, repair, retrofitting, and equipment of civilian ships, with devastating effects for Europe's autonomy, defence and security, maritime economy and workforce.

Like other sectors, the covid-19 outbreak has hit Europe's maritime technology sector very hard: production has been reduced or stopped, supply chain activities are disrupted, workforce is in temporary unemployment and many companies face serious liquidity problems or are in need of bank credit, which is a very serious problem for an industry that is — by nature — highly capital-intensive.

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World Ports Sustainability Program for an information portal on covid-19: sustainableworld-ports.org.

Fortunately, just before travel restrictions started to impact, The Wolfson Centre for Bulk Solids Handling and ABTO held its short course "Port and Terminal Operations for Bulk Cargoes 2020". It will be repeated as Skype sessions for those that could not attend. The other short courses that The Wolfson Centre runs will also be offered in the same way for the foreseeable future, such as its "Pneumatic Conveying of Bulk Solids", which is being held at the end of April. ABTO members have been kindly offered a discount on course fees. To join in, visit The Wolfson Centre's website at bulksolids.com contact Caroline Chapman

on +44 (0)20 8331 8646 or email wolfson-enquiries@gre.ac.uk for further details.

Plans for our ABTO Bulk Terminals 2020 event in Riga from 6-8 October are continuing, with a conference over the two days and a terminal visit for early arrivals on the afternoon of the first day. It's your event, so please let me have any suggestions or ideas for what you would like to see included.

Meanwhile, don't miss the Spring edition of our magazine, Bulk Terminals international, out now and available on our website bulkterminals.org. I hope you enjoy it!

Simon Gutteridge
Chief Executive, ABTO

SIMPLE STACKERS

Hyster Europe is extending its range of warehouse equipment with the launch of a simplified, cost-effective range of pallet and stacker trucks, ideal for general-purpose operations.

According to Rob O'Donoghue, Hyster's director of solutions – Europe, Middle East and Africa: "These additional options are straightforward, affordable trucks that will suit many general-purpose operations, but are particularly suitable for lower intensity applications."

With a capacity of 2t and with variable speed control, the new Hyster P2.OUT S platform pallet truck is ideal for pallet transportation over short or long distances. The small turning radius also makes it suitable for lorry loading and unloading, with electric steering available as an option.

For stacking pallets in the warehouse, as well as some picking operations, there is the Hyster S1.5UT pedestrian stacker truck. Different mast options include a two-stage NFL up to 3.5m and three-stage FFL up to 5.6m, with the low centre of gravity enhancing stability at full height.

PSCS AND IMO LINK UP TO ADDRESS CORONAVIRUS CHALLENGES

As coronavirus dominates the headlines, caring for seafarers, keeping the supply chain up and running, and coming up with new ways of carrying out remote operations have been major issues for ports.

The Port State Control (PSC) regimes, which carry out inspections on ships to monitor and enforce compliance with international regulations, have highlighted their commitment to ensuring shipping continues to trade safely, securely and efficiently during the coronavirus pandemic, while respecting the important role of seafarers as key workers and protecting the environment.

Representatives of the 10 PSC regimes worldwide were present at an online video meeting called by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) recently.

The PSC regimes said that while the number of physical on-board ship inspections has reduced considerably, to protect PSC officers and seafarers, the regimes continue to work to target high-risk ships that may be substandard.

They reported taking a "pragmatic, practical and flexible" approach, recognising that exemptions, waivers and extensions to certificates have been granted by many flag states. They called for such practices to be standardised and harmonised.

The PSC regimes agreed on the need to work together to develop harmonised port state control practices and policies to ensure a consistent approach across the world and also welcomed the co-ordinating role of IMO.

Some of the regimes have already issued guidance and information on conducting ship inspections during the covid-19 pandemic, which can be found on the IMO website.

At the meeting, IMO Secretary-General Kitack Lim reiterated his message that the maritime industry continues to be a vital artery for the global economy and highlighted the need for all involved to work collaboratively to address practical issues caused by the unprecedented global situation.

In a joint statement, the PSC regimes and IMO highlighted the unprecedented impact of the covid-19 crisis and recognised the need to maintain crucial sea trade supply chains, including the flow of vital medical supplies, critical agricultural products and other goods and services.

"The respective roles of flag states and port states to solve this crisis, in terms of supporting maritime trade, are paramount and can also be significantly assisted by the industry. At the same time, the safety of life at sea, the protection of the marine environment and the respect of seafarers as keyworkers must remain shared priorities," the statement said.

ICS WELCOMES EU EFFORTS TO AID SEAFARERS

Ensuring the safety of seafarers and crew movements as shipping companies look to keep supply chains running is another vital plank in the battle to keep vital supplies moving efficiently.

The International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) has welcomed guidance issued by the European Commission that calls on EU member states to designate ports around EU shores for fast-track crew changes, with adequate facilities for seafarers to undertake medical checks, quarantine if required by the country in question and transport connections onward to their home country.

Guy Platten, Secretary General of the ICS, says: "We welcome the leadership provided by the European Commission in their call to EU member states to facilitate the essential movement of seafarers and marine personnel.

"Crew change is a massive problem for the entire shipping industry, in addition to ship operators based in Europe, and we hope that this quick response to our calls to the G20 for action globally will act as a catalyst for other nations, and that the G20, in conjunction with IMO, will quickly put in place pragmatic and co-ordinated arrangements to allow crew changes to take place," Platten continues.

"Seafarers are the unsung heroes keeping supply chains open. It is right that we support them as they quietly support all of us."

The ICS, along with seafarers' union the International Transport Workers' Federation, sent a letter to the G20 leaders on 7 April, including the EU, to support the "Unsung Heroes of Global Trade" and put in place co-ordinated measures to facilitate safe and effective crew changes.

TT WARNS ON FRAUD

Stakeholders in the international supply chain can find themselves unwittingly exposed to many types of fraud during the normal course of business, TT Club warns in its online newsletter. "Connectedness provides fraudsters greater ease to transact and a lower risk of apprehension. The current pandemic-induced dislocation and additional logistics challenges simply increase the risks. Be alert!"

Digitalisation trends result in smokescreens, giving fraudsters the opportunity to minimise risk while being selective in their approach, it warns. "Victims are typically tracked over a period of time, with the fraudster striking when the victim is at their most vulnerable. However, these fraudsters are already exploiting the current covid-19 situation and users are highly exposed. Stakeholders should not underestimate how lucrative an industry fraud is; using sophisticated, low-risk tactics, fraudsters can easily steal large amounts of money or cargo.

"Operationally, stakeholders in the supply chain find themselves short on workforce through mandated isolation or illness, with some forced to rely on an increased number of temporary workers and some having to work remotely, but while handling unusual and unpredictable volumes. These are perfect circumstances for the fraudster, given that your ordinary business processes are disrupted and under strain. The exposures are arguably heightened further since the focus of the authorities naturally lies elsewhere – and reduced legitimate work may induce more to try their hand at fraudulent activity."

ITIC SOUNDS ALARM ON SCAMS

There have been many stories recently of people seeking to take advantage of the coronavirus situation to perpetuate fraud on individuals and organisations, which has led the International Transport Intermediaries Club (ITIC) to issue advice that warns port agents of problems with receiving original bills of lading.

Port agents may be asked by consignees to deliver goods to them without providing a bill of lading in return, ITIC says. "The consignee may claim that they have not received the bill of lading from the shipper or cannot present it to the port agent because of lockdown.

"In the instance that the original bills of lading remain with the load port agent, ITIC recommends that its 'Telex Release' guidance be followed."

In cases where the original bills of lading are not with the load port agent, ITIC says port agents should protect themselves by:

- obtaining written permission from the principal to release any cargo without receiving a bill of lading in return.
- asking the principal if a Letter of Indemnity from the consignee is required.
- checking all freight has been paid.

"The principal may ask the agent to check with the shipper (or the 'to order party' if the original shipper has already sold the goods on) as to whether they have released the bill of lading to the consignee or to the party requesting the goods," ITIC says. "This will help avoid releasing the goods to a fraudulent party. The agent should ensure they pass all relevant information to their principal for review and approval."

CYPRUS DROPS OFF USCG LIST

Cyprus is no longer part of the targeted flag list of the US Coastguard (USCG) for flag administrations' safety performance, the Cypriot authorities have announced.

The three-year average detention ratio of Cyprus for the period 2017-2019 was 0.96% compared to an average USCG ratio of 1.08%. In 2019, the annual detention ratio of Cyprus ships was reduced to 0.55%, down from 1.79% in 2018, while the USCG's 2019 ratio was 1.12%.

While from a practical point of view, this may lead to fewer inspections for Cyprus vessels at US ports, it adds to the flag's status as a high-quality flag, which is consistently part of the "white lists" of the Paris and Tokyo MoUs, the flag state says.

TASK FORCE RESPONDS TO PORTS' PRESSING ISSUES

In response to requests from members of the International Association of Ports and Harbors (IAPH), the World Ports Sustainability Program has set up a task force comprising some of the world's top experts to inform and guide port authorities and users via a newly-established World Ports Covid19 Information Portal.

The task force and information portal have been set up to help ports worldwide handle the immense challenges they are all facing with the global covid-19 outbreak.

"Using the simplified format of five frequently asked questions, we will provide guidance on current best practices, the industry's collective recommendations to governments as well as regularly updated, useful information," says IAPH managing director Patrick Verhoeven.



Tessa Major

The task force will be headed up by Tessa Major, IAPH vice-president for Central and South America. The task force includes multidisciplinary port experts and professionals from the ports of Açu, Antwerp, Busan, Felixstowe, Guangzhou, London, Los Angeles and Rotterdam, as well as Maritime Street, a consultancy specialising in digital trade logistics.

In addition, to keep track of the economic implications, two internationally-renowned port economists, Professor Theo Notteboom and Professor Thanos Pallis, will be working on the production of a weekly economic impact barometer.

The five main questions being permanently addressed and updated are:

- What is the current operational status of ports worldwide?
- Where can I find information as a shipowner on port regulations and restrictions?
- Where do I find operational guidance as a port, based on global best practice?
- What support should I as a port request from my government?
- What is the economic impact on the global port sector?

The portal will be updated with the guidance of the task force and using the most reliable sources of information. The portal features latest industry updates based on a daily screening of reports from individual ports, port associations, shipping organisations, governments, international regulators and specialised news outlets.

According to Patrick Verhoeven: "The operation of ports is of vital importance to face the coronavirus crisis. Ports ensure that the world's medical supplies, food, energy raw materials, as well as manufactured goods and components vital to the preservation of employment, continue to reach their intended destinations. We will play our part in assisting our members and the maritime community through this task force and information portal."

CUTTING-EDGE CONVEYOR CUTS ACROSS CHINA'S COUNTRYSIDE

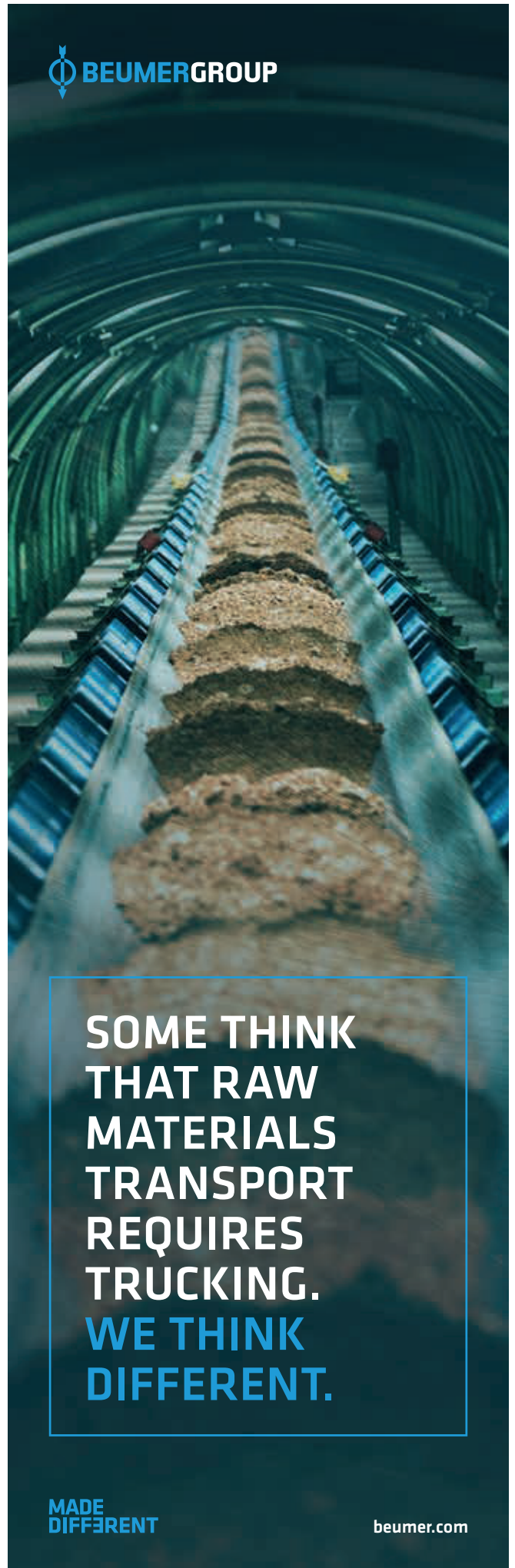
Sichuan Yadong Cement Co. in Pengzhou, China, has been relying on a 12.5 km overland conveyor from Beumer Group in order to convey limestone from its quarry to its silo. When constructed in 2009 it was the longest belt conveying system in Beumer history (Beumer installed a longer system in 2016). The troughed belt conveyor runs through hilly terrain and nature reserves, over streams and unstable ground. The second project includes two additional overland conveyors, with an overall length of 13.7km, transporting limestone to the cement plant. Unlike the first project, the task here was to build the conveyor across inhabited areas. Noise emission limitations set forth by the government also needed to be considered.

The route of the overland conveyor was coordinated between Beumer Group and the cement manufacturer. The system supplier calculated the tractive forces of the belt considering the eight horizontal curves with radii of 1,000-5,000m. The routing was checked for its feasibility on site. The complete route was checked by employees on foot, passing through rough terrain, in order to reliably check the predefined positions for the 460 supports for their suitability directly on site. Whenever technically possible, the routing of the conveyor was adapted to the topography. Height differences of up to 100m had to be overcome within shortest distances, so several sections were equipped with bridges of up to 55m. One section was realised with a 130m long tunnel.

Both overland conveyors have four horizontal curves with radii of 1,200, 1,500 and 1,800m. "We provided the engineering and the individual parts such as pulleys, motors, drive and control technology and the entire automation," says Dr. Echelmeyer. The installation was monitored by a Beumer Group supervisor and the wiring of the system was supported by a Beumer electrical engineer. The system supplier was also in charge of the commissioning in May 2016. The troughed belt conveyor is now supplying three kiln lines, with a fourth line planned.



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