

**Press release 02/2021 of IG RiverCruise and EBU**

***Although various countries in Europe do not yet allow cross-border river cruises due to travel and accommodation restrictions, the industry is preparing its ships and crew for a re-launch. The revised protection concept serves as reference.***

River cruise lines are still not allowed to welcome passengers on board to offer river cruises in Europe. Various restrictions force the shipping companies to keep their vessels anchored.

However, the passenger ships are preparing for the re-start. The basis for this – as was the case last year – is a detailed protection concept for all people on board a passenger ship on the river. The aim is to protect passengers and crew from infection with Covid-19 as effectively as possible.

Based on this protection concept, the river cruise companies were able to operate their vessels in a safe, reliable, and successful manner for several months in 2020.

IG RiverCruise – together with experts – has updated \* the protection concept issued in 2020 and added an additional guidance in case of an outbreak of the disease on board \*\*. The two documents have been approved by the European Barge Union (EBU) and are also distributed to all ports along the European rivers by the partner organization RCE (River Cruise Europe).

The IGRC and EBU emphasize the fact that this is a minimum standard for **shipboard work**. The tour operators or service providers responsible for transporting passengers to the gangway of the ships adhere to their own protection concepts.

EBU and IGRC hope for a speedy consensus on the digital green certificate proposed by the European Commission and its recognition by all European states without additional conditions to facilitate free movement within the EU during the Covid-19 pandemic. As is well known, this industry has been dramatically affected by the consequences of the pandemic and hopes to resume not only river cruise but also day excursion shipping as soon as possible.

\* *Guideline for a Minimum Standard for the Resumption of River Cruises in Europe under Covid-19, Version 1/2021*

\*\* *River Cruises Covid-19 Outbreak Management Guidelines, Version 1/2021*

Both documents are available on the IGRC website ([www.igrivercruise.com/en/](http://www.igrivercruise.com/en/)).

**About IG RiverCruise**

To represent the interests of the river cruise shipping companies (operators), the interest group IG RiverCruise was founded in 2000. In the meantime, IG RiverCruise is a registered association based in Basel, Switzerland, and currently represents around 326 river cruise ships (83,8 % of the European market).

In addition to representing common, fundamental interests and concerns of members relevant to river cruise shipping vis-à-vis third parties, IG RiverCruise also sees itself as a contact and representative of the European river cruise industry.

Further responsibilities include the promotion and development of the image of the river cruise industry, with special emphasis on the topics of environment and sustainability, safety and training, and the maintenance of contacts with organizations, institutions, umbrella associations and associations related to the industry.

Further information:

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**About EBU**

The European Barge Union (EBU) is the European association representing the inland navigation freight and passenger carrying industry on a Pan-European level. Its members are the national associations of barge owners and barge operators as well as (international) associations in the field of inland navigation and related areas. EBU's mission is to contribute to the development of a sustainable and efficient Pan-European transport system via a larger share of inland waterway transport.

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