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Circular Letter No.4791
17 October 2023

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

Subject: **Communication from the Governments of Belgium and the Kingdom of the Netherlands**

The Governments of Belgium and the Kingdom of the Netherlands have sent the attached communication, received on 9 October 2023, with the request that it be circulated by the Organization.

ANNEX



Ministry of Infrastructure
and Water Management

> Return address Postbus 20904 2500 EX Den Haag

His Excellency Kitack Lim
Secretary General
International Maritime Organization
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SE1 7SR London
United Kingdom

Bestuurskern
Dir. Maritieme Zaken
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Our reference
IENW/BSK-2023/286769

Date 2 October 2023
Subject Operating VHF channel of Nieuwe Sluis Terneuzen

Dear Mr. Secretary General,

On behalf of the Governments of the Kingdom of Belgium and the Kingdom of the Netherlands I have the honour to inform you about the use of operating VHF channels for ships using the Kieldrecht lock at the port of Antwerp **as from 1 January 2024**, as well as the use of operating VHF channels for ships transiting the Nieuwe Sluis Terneuzen in the Scheldt estuary **as from 1 October 2024**.

We would like to bring to your attention that the operation channel for the Kieldrecht lock at the port of Antwerp will be altered from VHF voice channel 88 to **VHF voice channel 1027**, after careful consideration between the port authorities and the relevant stakeholders. The change of the voice channel will be implemented **as from 1 January 2024**.

In addition we bring to your attention that Belgium and the Netherlands are cooperatively realising a new lock at the port of Terneuzen alongside the Scheldt river ('Nieuwe Sluis Terneuzen'), next to the existing two locks. It replaces an old lock that is out of commission since 2020. This new lock allows larger seagoing vessels to enter the Ghent Terneuzen Canal. The new lock is expected to be operational for all vessels from Q4 of 2024.

Due to the expansion of this new lock and its increased capacity and operational hours, it is not feasible to assign the same VHF voice channel to it as in use for the existing other locks. This has amongst others to do with the challenge to implement the assigned frequencies of Appendix 18 of the ITU Radio Regulations in relation to voice, DSC, AIS and VDES, while having to accommodate the high demand of operational use of frequencies by the many stakeholders in the area.

Therefore, after careful consultation between the Governments of Belgium and the Netherlands with the involvement of stakeholders, it has been decided to assign **VHF voice channel 1028 (28L)** to support the operation of the new lock.

In practice this means that ships approaching the Kieldrecht lock at the port of Antwerp and/or the new lock in Terneuzen for transit are required to follow the regular reporting regime as in place, with the difference that the new simplex VHF voice channel 1027 (27L) for the Kieldrecht lock and channel 1028 (28L) for the

new lock in Terneuzen will have to be used to report and operate on, thus enabling continuous communication during entrance, locking and departure of the ship between all parties involved (lock master, ship, tugs, boatmen).

Bestuurskern
Dir. Maritieme Zaken
Afdeling Zeevaart

Therefore ship owners, operators and masters of ships passing through the Kieldrecht lock at Antwerp are strongly advised to update their VHF equipment accordingly **before 1 January 2024**.

Date
2 October 2023

Our reference
IENW/BSK-2023/286769

Ship owners, operators and masters of ships passing through the new lock at Terneuzen (Nieuwe Sluis Terneuzen) are strongly advised to update their VHF equipment accordingly **before 1 October 2024**. Without the possibility to use the new simplex VHF voice channel 1028 (28L), as per decision of the competent authority, ships will not be allowed entrance to the new lock at Terneuzen (Nieuwe Sluis Terneuzen).

It would be highly appreciated if you could bring this notification to the attention of all IMO Members, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations in consultative status by means of a circular letter.

Yours sincerely,



M.A. van Kruiningen (Michiel)
Director Maritime Affairs
Ministry of Infrastructure and
Water Management

Peter

Digitaal ondertekend
door Peter Claeysens
(Signature)
Datum: 2023.10.03

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Peter Claeysens
Director-general
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