

This article was circulated to the Club by Dias Marine Consulting P.C.

Ukraine is going to officially close sea ports in Crimea for international shipping

On June 16, 2014, the Ministry of Infrastructure of Ukraine issued the Directive № 255 “On Closure of Sea Ports”. According to its clause 1 the Ukraine shall close its sea ports on the territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, which has been officially recognized by Ukrainian Parliament as the temporarily occupied territory by the Ukraine, for international shipping. In particular, the following ports shall be closed: Kerch, Theodosia, Sevastopol, Yalta and Evpatoria. Moreover, there is an announcement that Ukrainian maritime authorities are not active now on the above territory and the Administrations of the above mentioned ports are to be liquidated by virtue of clause 2 of the said Directive.

The Directive № 255, registered with the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine on 24.06.2014 under № 690/25467, will come into force after it is officially published. It is expected to be published on July 15, 2014, and thus takes legal force immediately.

The said document has been adopted following the resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine dd. 30.04.2014, № 578-p covering some issues of sea and river transportation, and in pursuance of general rules provided under the Law of Ukraine No.1207-VII “On Assurance of Rights and Freedoms and Legal Regime on the Temporarily Occupied Territory of Ukraine”, the breach of which may entail negative consequences to and penalties to be imposed on the ships master and crew members, as well as on a ship and a ship-owner at the rest of the territory of Ukraine after visiting any Crimean port. And we reported about this fact in our Notifications. If you remember we have recommended to the Members to refrain from their vessels calls to Crimean ports in our Notification dd. 20.06.2014). There is also a special article on the above subject article posted on our company’s website at <http://www.dias-co.com/index.php?page=114>).

So, the above Directive is the next step in the chain of events.

It is worth noting, that although the Directive № 255 has not come into force Moldavia has already expressed their willingness to support a prohibition to call the Crimean ports for vessels flying under the flag of the above state and there is an expectation that more countries are yet to come to a decision to join this practice in the near future as the Ukrainian Authorities informed the International Maritime Organization about their intention to close the Crimean sea ports for international shipping in the mid of May, 2014.

As the situation develops and in view of avoiding consecutive restrictions and fines, we would strongly recommend to the shipowners to keep their ships away from Crimean ports now, at least in case if a further call at a Ukrainian port is planned.