

The IMO has participated in the UN-brokered deal to establish a maritime humanitarian corridor and a Joint Co-Operation Centre (JCC) in Turkey to oversee the export of key commodities from selected Ukrainian ports during the conflict in order to alleviate a global food crisis. It is advised that the agreement is currently at a high diplomatic level and many practicalities remain to be resolved before ships can safely utilise the corridors.

Industry representatives were briefed by the IMO Secretariat on progress made in establishing both the corridors and the JCC on 27 July. The following points of note were provided:

- The agreement only extends to the three ports of Odessa, Chernomorsk and Yuzhny;
- The JCC is developing operating procedures for ships in and out of the area;
- A maritime humanitarian corridor is being established for inbound and outbound lanes, which will operate from selected Ukrainian ports to the Bosphorus;
- An IMO Circular Letter will be issued in due course regarding the detailed procedures for use of the corridor both inbound and outbound;
- Vessels will be inspected inbound to ensure that they are empty and cleared in Turkish territorial waters by the JCC;
- Vessels will be inspected outbound to ensure that they only have authorised cargoes on board;
- Inbound vessels must follow the transit route with no deviations;
- Outbound vessels may be able to leave the corridor early if transiting to a Black Sea port;
- The JCC are working on a stand-off de-militarised area within the region;
- An IMO Circular Letter will be issued in due course regarding registration of vessels, supplemented by information through Navtex, details are being working on;
- The JCC will authorise transits;
- Inbound vessels will be met by an escort vessel and escorted to an area where a pilot will board to bring the vessel into port via a safe mine free route ;
- Ukraine has not de-mined at present and may not need to, but de-mining will be their responsibility;
- Ukraine has the responsibility to ensure the safety of vessels in the corridors, and the Russians have agreed not to attack ships in the corridor;
- Outbound cargoes will only be grain and ammonia products at present
- The monitoring of loading operations, is under consideration by the JCC;
- The JCC will not be undertaking safety inspections for ships currently in port, and safety compliance will be left to owners responsibility;
- If a test passage is undertaken, it would be by a merchant vessel not a warship.

This initiative will be undertaken whilst the conflict continues and is not part of any end-game, and that there are a number of issues to be resolved which the JCC is currently working:

- Which ships currently on the berths in Ukrainian ports will be moved or allowed to sail;
- Whether there will be any nationality restrictions for crews on board vessels using the corridors;

- What the timeline is for the first vessels using the corridors, although IMO advised that is anticipated to be very soon and that the first departures will serve as a proof of concept;
- Whether there will be a Merchant Navy Liaison Officer in the JCC;
- How to address ships currently stuck in Ukrainian ports, which are in various states of readiness to leave, some needing additional crew members. IMO is taking manning into consideration and liaising with crewing agents as necessary;
- Whether Ukrainian flagged vessels will be allowed to use the corridors within the confines of the agreement;
- What security arrangements for shore-based inspectors will be implemented;