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Circular for P&I Clubs

DATE: 15 MARCH 2020

Correspondents for:

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Positive Coronavirus (COVID-19) cases confirmed in Venezuela

Although the government initially confirmed two positive coronavirus cases in Venezuela early Friday morning, after more than 80 tests were performed, today 15 March 2020 President Maduro has informed that there are now 17 confirmed cases in different states or regions.

The Venezuelan president had declared a state of permanent emergency in the country's health system to prevent and contain the coronavirus. The state of alarm is based on article 338 of the Constitution, which rules that it can be applied when there are catastrophes, public calamities or other similar events that seriously endanger the security of the nation or the population. This decree is valid for up to 30 days, and it can be extended for another 30 days. A Presidential Command Post was set up at the Miraflores Presidential Palace in Caracas, led by the Venezuelan Vice President Delcy Rodríguez and involve members of the Bolivarian Armed Forces (FANB), sectorial vice presidents and authorities of the Capital District government. The body was formed pursuant to the instruction given by President Maduro, who called for the implementation of permanent monitoring mechanisms in public and private hospitals and healthcare centers throughout the country.

Among the measures taken by the Executive are: 1) The temporary suspension of flights from Colombia and Europe for a month. This ban is recently said to have been extended to Panama; 2) A decree preventing people who do not have face masks from entering the underground and

rail systems; and 3) The suspension of all activities in the educational centers. Additionally, and presumably in view of the increase in positive cases during the weekend, today 15 March 2020 President Maduro has activated a social quarantine to contain the propagation for Caracas and the states of La Guaira (Vargas) and Miranda, extending also to Zulia, Guarico, Tachira, Apure and Cojedes, this from 16 March at 0500 local time, ordering people to stay at home, prohibiting all sort of commercial and labor activities with exception of the distribution and sale of food, health, security and transport services.

At regional level, governors of states such as Miranda (where a number of positive cases have been found) and Carabobo (where the port of Puerto Cabello is located) have issued decrees prohibiting the opening of commercial retailers and shopping centers in general, except those supplying food, medical services and gas stations; suspending activities in public spaces such as stadiums, cinemas, theaters, public beaches, rivers, swimming pools, etc. These prohibitions or suspensions will be in force for 15 continuous days, renewed if necessary.

No doubt the above measures will have impact on the normal functioning of the shipping and port activities. Bear in mind that extraordinary measures apply to states where the ports of La Guaira, Maracaibo and Puerto Cabello are located and so disruptions on stevedoring and land transportation might be expected, for which reason our office is continuously monitoring the matter to revert with updates.

In the meantime, Members are suggested to make the necessary enquiries with ship agents and local Correspondents in case information on specific ports of call is needed.

Should you need any assistance or further information regarding the topic stated above, please feel free to contact:

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