



People Claims Team

Within the last 12 months our team has noticed a changing trend of Stowaway activity around Europe, involving various nationalities including large numbers of Albanian nationals. Following the closure of several Refugee Camps in Northern France a large number of immigrants have dispersed into nearby countries such as Belgium, The Netherlands and in particular areas of Northern Spain.

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Through our continued liaison with P&I Correspondent networks around Europe it has become evident that people traffickers are actively operating close to the ports of Pasajes, Santander and La Corunna.

Due to Covid19 restrictions and reduced sailings there has been a shift away from Ferry operators being targeted, to commercial vessels both container and general cargo types.

In response to ongoing security related issues Spanish authorities have reacted by erecting a large wall around a vehicle waiting area outside of the Port of Bilbao, however other ports are evidently struggling with security. The location of the mentioned ports tends to be in close proximity to medium sized towns which only adds to security issues.

Recent cases here in the United Kingdom have involved Stowaways arriving at ports such as London Tilbury, Liverpool, Southampton, Plymouth, Immingham and Hull on a repeated basis.

The UKBF (Border Force) will normally attend subject to regional Covid19 restrictions, to complete arrival formalities. It is extremely important that Stowaways are where possible held in secure accommodation on board, searched if safe to do so and some basic personal information collected including evidence of nationality, Passports and National Id cards etc. Shipowners should be made aware that under section 40 of the UK Immigration

& Asylum Act 1999 penalties of £2000.00 per Stowaway are now regularly being imposed. These fines can be appealed within a 30-day period, however in recent months the UKBF have taken a much tougher stance in these cases.

Cases being dealt with are not limited to Albanian nationals; thus, shipowners should be aware that a general increase of Stowaways originating from the Middle East and West Africa has also been noticed.

Based on intelligence continuously gathered from around Europe, and directly from Stowaways being repatriated to their home countries by Air or Sea, it is essential that members vessels / crews remain on alert and maintain ISPI anti-Stowaway measures, including constant access control on the gangway, the use of lighting at night and conducting regular Stowaway searches. The use of external security resources should be utilised at high risk ports.



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