Testing seafarers on Covid-19

- There is no use in testing anyone with throat swabs (PCR)* if they have no symptoms.
- If you test negative one day, you may feel sick the next day and test positive.
- Testing asymptomatic seafarers is a waste of resources.
- However, if possible test every seafarers with respiratory symptoms with a throat swab (PCR).
- If testing is not possible, isolate** the sick seafarer or get him off the ship. Any other crew member, developing symptoms in the days after such case should be treated the same way.
- Health certificates to declare a person “Corona-free” on the basis of a throat swab (PCR) test are not useful.
- But soon an antibody test (IgG) will be widely available that allows to determine if a person has antibodies against the virus.
- That may be helpful to find seafarers who are immune and do not get sick (needs to be confirmed still). Such test could be done prior to boarding.

* PCR: polymerase chain reaction, where small quantities of genetic material of the virus (or other germs) can be detected, proving that a person has been in contact with...

** Isolation means: to separate the sick from the healthy. Quarantine means to put all contacts of a sick person in isolation as well.