

UNION OF CROATIAN SHIPMASTERS' ASSOCIATIONS

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THE SUPREME COURT OF KOREA
219 Seocho-ro, Seocho-gu,
SEOUL 137-750, KOREA

Dear Sirs,

Catastrophic oil spill from MT Hebei Spirit.

All members of The Union of Croatian Shipmasters' Associations are deeply sorry for all suffering and damages caused by catastrophic oil spill from MT Hebei Spirit.

We are also strongly concerned for our colleagues Mr. Jasprit Chawla and Mr. Syam Chetan, Captain and Chief Officer of MT Hebei Spirit, and their families, and fear how the consequences of founding them guilty for oil spill would influence them and all seamen. For us it will be difficult to perform our job fearing that we can be sentenced for something that is out of our control, regardless that we have taken all precautionary measures.

We appeal to the Korean Judicial Authorities to carefully re-examine the case of Captain Mr. Jasprit Chawla and Chief Officer Mr. Syam Chetan regarding their responsibility for oil spill.

We welcome the Supreme Court decision to release on bail Mr. Chawla and Mr. Chetan.

For us is still fresh the memory of suffering of our Croatian colleague Captain Mr. Kristo Laptalo acquitted by The Appeal Court in Patras, Greece in November last year for trafficking of narcotics found aboard his MS "Coral Sea" concealed in the cargo of bananas. Earlier he was found guilty and he was given a sentence of 14 years in prison where he spent a year and a half before being acquitted. Together with him were accused Chief Officer Mr. Konstantin Metelev from Lithuania and Boatswain Mr. Narciso Garcia from Philippines, and they were acquitted after being held one year in pretrial custody. Prison has physically and mentally broken all three men, especially Mr. Konstantin Metelev who got seriously mentally ill in prison. He never recovered and he died in his home town Klaipeda on January 23rd this year.

We believe that the Korean Authorities will make effort to re-examine this case in close detail and find a positive outcome for Mr. Jasprit Chawla and Mr. Syam Chetan.

Taking such important decision would be most welcome among all semen and seafaring industry and serve to enhance Korea's reputation worldwide.

We thank you for your valuable attention.

Yours sincerely

Captain Nino Dunat, President of Union of Croatian Shipmasters' Associations