



Brussels
MOVE.D.2/JB

Ferry companies

Subject: FARE Study – Request for participation of Ferry Operators

Dear Madam, Sir,

Passenger ferry services play a vital role in Europe's transport system, facilitating connectivity, economic activity and territorial cohesion throughout maritime regions. Maintaining the health, readiness, and operational capabilities of seafarers working on passenger ferries is crucial for upholding high standards of maritime safety.

In this context, the Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport of the European Commission (DG MOVE) has initiated a research study titled Fatigue and Rosters in Ferry Operations hereinafter to as "FARE". The aim of this study is to develop robust, evidence-based insights into fatigue within passenger ferry operations, thereby supporting future improvements in safety, working conditions and regulatory frameworks at European level.

The study will be conducted in a scientific manner by a multidisciplinary consortium led by Welbees (project coordinator and scientific leadership) and including: ORPHY, the International Maritime Health Association, Antwerp Maritime Academy, the Maritime Medical Consultation Centre, and the French Marine Accident Investigation Office.

The study will concentrate on four principal areas of focus:

- An evaluation of fatigue levels and the factors influencing it among seafarers involved in passenger ferry operations, encompassing psychological, cognitive, physical, and environmental elements.
- A review of work schedules and shift patterns, considering aspects such as split shifts, night work, brief turnaround times at ports, sleep arrangements on board versus during commuting, and the cumulative effects of fatigue.
- An analysis of how fatigue impacts safety and operational effectiveness, focusing on cognitive performance, situational awareness, emergency response capabilities, and connections to incidents.
- The formulation of strategies to mitigate fatigue and policy recommendations, ensuring alignment with pertinent international, European, and national regulatory frameworks.

To achieve these objectives, close collaboration with ferry operators and seafarers is crucial.

With this letter, DG MOVE would like to invite your organisation to collaborate in this research study.

In the initial phase, Welbees, the contracted consortium, will reach out to operators with questionnaires, structured interviews, and requests for anonymised roster and operational data.

In the following phase, a select group of companies will be invited to engage in more comprehensive research activities. These activities may involve stepwise fatigue assessments, beginning with bio-mathematical analyses of existing work schedules, followed by the collection of subjective data to pinpoint areas with operational fatigue risks, and finally objective measurements on a voluntary sample of seafarers, employing established scientific methodologies.

Welbees and its consortium partners will handle any information provided by your organisation in accordance with confidentiality and privacy rules in force in the EU, and will not use it for any purposes which are not agreed with participants. Wherever suitable, results will be anonymised.

The follow-up actions stemming from this study will be determined based on its findings and will be discussed with relevant stakeholders and Member States.

Should you wish to receive further information concerning the study or indicate your interest in participating, please contact the project coordination team at seafarer-fatigue@welbees.com.

We would like to stress the importance we place on your cooperation and would be immensely grateful for your contribution to this significant European initiative.

Yours sincerely,

Barbara SELLIER
Head of Unit

Contact: seafarer-fatigue@welbees.com.