



To our valued  
Customers, agents and business partners

**Hamburg, February 2021**

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION ON THE CURRENT SITUATION  
IN THE LINER SHIPPING INDUSTRY**

Dear Sir or Madam:

With this letter we would like to inform you about the current situation in the global container and liner shipping industry, which has been challenging both shippers and forwarders in Europe and worldwide with severe impact.

We are currently facing an exceptional situation in global container shipping, which we have not seen before. Shipping lines on major trade lanes between Europe, Asia and North America (and v.v.) have been advising us of fully-booked vessels, combined with a massive shortage of empty equipment and vessel space worldwide, and especially in German and European seaports and inland terminals.

Container bookings have been rejected by shipping lines due to lack of empty equipment, or have been postponed to much later vessel departures (leaving in March/April). Container freight rates have been rising at high speed to unknown levels, or have been hit with Peak Season or Emergency Surcharges, especially on Far East Outbound trades.

This problem has become even worse by heavily delayed vessel departures on all important trade lanes. Delays have been resulting from a very high cargo volume, paired with limited performance of container terminals around the world which are affected by Covid19 measures and reduced staff. In addition, winter season and bad weather in the Northern Hemisphere have been negatively affecting vessel schedules, e.g. in the North Atlantic. The upcoming Chinese New Year festival, and the ongoing Covid19-restrictions in the country will certainly have another negative impact on vessel schedules and supply chains.

Vessel delays have been causing terminal congestion in major European loading ports such as Hamburg where export containers have been piling up, blocking storage capacities. Terminals have reacted by implementing 48-hour time slots for delivery of export containers. Customers are not allowed to deliver full containers for export before this window. This leads to additional challenges and expenses for truckers, freight forwarders and shippers for interim storage and additional truckings.

As your proven and longstanding partner in global ocean freight business, we have been doing our utmost on a daily basis to reduce the impact of all these problems to your business to a minimum. In many cases, we have been very successful. Nevertheless, in most cases additional expenses from this situation can not be avoided.

**We would like to advise you that all extra charges and expenses, resulting from this force majeure situation such as lack of empty equipment, lack of vessel space, vessel delays, receiving stops at container terminals, etc, will not be borne by us and will be charged for the account of the cargo.**

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**Alfons Köster**



**GLOBAL FREIGHT LOGISTICS**

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We would also like to recommend you to book your ocean freight shipments with good pre-advice, if possible at least four weeks in advance on major trade lanes from Europe to Asia and North America.

Please contact your **Alfons Koester specialist** as soon as possible to find the right solution for your cargo.

Thanks for also keeping in mind that this problem affects supply chains, ports and terminals around the world – not only in Europe, but also in Asia and especially in the United States of America. Delays caused by port and terminal congestion have been a daily problem and the situation has not changed. We will inform you in more detail on a case by case basis in separate communication.

Please note that a part of our staff has been working from home for the purpose of safety in regards to Covid19. All employees are well equipped with latest technology to work from home without restrictions, and are available 100 % by phone or email.

At Alfons Koester & Co. GmbH, we are well set up and prepared for these difficult times. We are convinced that we will successfully manage this special situation together, with a positive approach to this challenge. We assure you of our best and unlimited support to your transportation needs at all times.

Please be safe.

Kind regards,

**your Alfons Koester team**