



## Pressemeldung

### **First AIDA Volunteer on Board the Africa Mercy Engineer Tomislav Zubovic joins the crew to help and support Mercy Ships in West Africa**

Mercy Ships and AIDA have reached a key milestone in their recently announced cooperation by kicking-off a joint volunteer program for employees and crew who will from now on provide practical help on board. For a total of four months, the first AIDA volunteer Tomislav Zubovic will serve as an engineer on board the Africa Mercy to support the ship's staff and pass on his seafaring experiences.

Michael Thamm, Group CEO Costa Group & Carnival Asia, is thrilled about the quick results that follow the signing of a memorandum of understanding in March 2017: "The collaboration with Mercy Ships enables us to support the people who need it most. As this reflects our key values, our crews are very much looking forward to becoming active and giving back to society. I am proud of the overwhelming resonance of our employees."

The Africa Mercy is the largest non-governmental hospital ship in the world and provides free surgeries and dental care to patients with urgent medical needs. It hosts over 400 volunteers from more than 40 nations. AIDA Cruises has committed to continuously man one Engineer position on board.

"Tomislav Zubovic and future volunteers will not only lend a helping hand but will also share their knowledge with the other volunteers on board. This way, we can ensure to provide sustainable benefits beyond this program", explains Michael Thamm.

28-year old Zubovic holds a degree in Marine Engineering and has already worked on different AIDA ships, such as AIDASol and AIDAluna. "I am very excited about this challenge", says Zubovic. "We are truly making a difference here and I am looking forward to help operate this ship that gives hope to so many people."

The volunteer program is only one of several activities AIDA Cruises and Mercy Ships agreed on in their partnership. The Rostock-based cruise company will furthermore sensitize guests travelling on board the AIDA fleet for Mercy Ships and its activities. Additionally, officers and engineers with Mercy Ships have the opportunity to gain sea-service experience and nautical expertise on board AIDA ships. To grant immediate help, Costa Group, which includes AIDA Cruises, has also made a donation of 100.000 euros.

The Africa Mercy is operated by the charity organization Mercy Ships and is about to set course to Douala, Cameroon in August 2017. The former capital is the country's biggest city and home to West Africa's largest port. Quality of healthcare in Cameroon is still relatively low and average life expectancy is only 56 years<sup>1</sup>. The country however enjoys

<sup>1</sup> <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/CMR>



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relatively high political and social stability which facilitated the development of agriculture, roads, railways, and various industries.

### **Mercy Ships**

*Mercy Ships uses hospital ships to deliver free, world-class healthcare services, capacity building and sustainable development to those with little access in the developing world. Founded in 1978 by Don and Deyon Stephens, Mercy Ships has worked in more than 70 countries providing services valued at more than \$1.3 billion, treating more than 2.56 million direct beneficiaries. The Africa Mercy is crewed by 400 volunteers from up to 40 nations, an average of 1000 each year. Professionals including surgeons, dentists, nurses, healthcare trainers, teachers, cooks, seamen, engineers, and agriculturalists donate their time and skills to the effort. With offices in 16 nations, Mercy Ships seeks to transform individuals and serve nations one at a time. For more information click on [www.mercyships.org](http://www.mercyships.org).*

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