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July 7, 2006

# PRESS RELEASE FROM HOLIDAYTRAVELWATCH™

## CONSUMER GROUP CONDEMNS RECENT SAFETY STANDARDS ON CRUISE SHIPS

It is reported that MV The Black Prince has recently returned to port, with a large number of cruise passengers reporting illnesses. This ship is one of many, recently reported to be returning to UK or Canary Island ports, with serious illness or holiday complaints. HolidayTravelWatch advises that they have received a number of holiday complaints from cruise loving holidaymakers.

This Organisation has received complaints about the following cruise ships: The Celebration, MV Funchal, The Sea Princess, MV Van Gogh and MV The Black Prince.

In all cases, holidaymakers were affected either by Norovirus or serious gastric illnesses. In 2 cases, the holidaymakers were advised by a letter when they got on board, that the Norovrirus bug had been present in the previous cruises. It was clear that the Tour Operator knew of the existence of Norovirus before the holidaymakers left the UK. In other cases it became clear that the initial and subsequent cruises were suffering from a serious on board illness.

Holidaymakers reported witnessing large numbers of people being ill, including crew members, and being confined to their cabins - some missing a proportion of their holiday of a lifetime.

HolidayTravelWatch has noted comments within some cruise forums, criticising cruise holidaymakers for complaining about an illness that supposedly lasts for 2/3 days. HolidayTravelWatch rejects such comments. Holidaymakers complaining to HolidayTravelWatch made a wide range of complaints, such as:

- Being so violently sick, vomit poured through their noses;
- One holidaymaker became so weak, he collapsed in the bathroom and suffered a head injury;

- The plumbing on board one ship became so overworked, waste products regurgitated themselves causing sewage smells;
- Holidaymakers were confined to cabins, even if any member of their family or travelling companion was ill;
- One holidaymaker was advised that he could not leave the cabin, he spent 2 nights sleeping on the deck of the ship in order to avoid the illness;
- Holidaymakers not affected by illness, advised that some ships looked like the scene of a science-fiction movie, with crew members dressed in masks and protective clothing;
- Holidaymakers again not affected by illness, reported that they suffered a state of anxiety, avoiding areas of the ship, concerned not to touch handrails, worried in case they were affected by illness.

Frank Brehany, the MD of HolidayTravelWatch states, "These scenarios are an appalling way for the main holiday season to get started. Many holidaymakers were unnecessarily exposed to a dreadful illness".

He adds, "It seems that these operators have put this down to one of those things, with one operator quoting their terms and conditions as if it were a 'get out of jail free' card".

He concludes, "as long as these operators put profit and schedules before safety, then they will continue to receive travel claims. They know full well that these ships should have been taken out of service, instead some of them resembled the set of a science-fiction movie. Is it any wonder that holidaymakers are angry?"

HolidayTravelWatch has assisted some 50 holidaymakers with advices, and some have gone on to join group actions or receive initial free legal advices. HolidayTravelWatch advises those affected by any of these cruises, whether they were ill or not, to contact their helpline, and on no account to accept any offer of compensation without receiving independent advices.

**HolidayTravelWatch is a National Consumer Organisation which provides information, advice and assistance to the holidaymaker or independent traveller, who experiences problems with their travel arrangements. In ten years 100,000 people have benefited from the help provided by HolidayTravelWatch, with some 40% being empowered to resolve their own claims by the information the organisation provides on their consumer rights.**

**HolidayTravelWatch has campaigned in the past for improvements in travel safety and is proud to have been associated with some of the leading broadcast and print media projects aimed at informing the consumer. HolidayTravelWatch continues with that campaigning spirit and continues to work closely with the media and government departments alike.**

**Full details of the work of HolidayTravelWatch can be found on www.holidaytravelwatch.com**

**For further information on this press release and any other associated matters please contact Frank Brehany on 01217478100**

www.holidaytravelwatch.com