



A PONANT ship commissioned for the repatriation of Wallis & Futuna residents



During the Covid-19 pandemic, PONANT was entrusted by the official authorities of Wallis and Futuna with the repatriation of several of its residents stranded in New Caledonia. A first repatriation trip was thus completed on Sunday the 24th of May, allowing more than a hundred residents of Wallis and Futuna to return home.

While the French islands of Wallis and Futuna have closed their borders since 16th March, they have not been subject to any Covid-19 contamination. The health situation is identical for the PONANT fleet, which has ceased all its cruise activities since 15th March. There have been no cases of contamination on board its 11 ships. In this strict sanitary context, an unprecedented operation was launched on the 8th of May to repatriate the population of Wallis and Futuna stranded in Noumea.

It was on board the ship *Le Lapérouse*, chartered by the State Services in Wallis and Futuna, that 112 residents were able to return to their homes under the strictest medical conditions possible and according to a precise protocol. After 5 days of navigation from Noumea to Mata Utu, the ship remained at anchor for 9 days to complete their quarantine in compliance with the instructions imposed by the health authorities and PONANT procedures.

During their stay on board, passengers were able to enjoy a program of entertainment relayed by the on-board internal television. Disembarkation, which took place in several stages between Friday the 22nd of May and Sunday the 24th of May, was carried out deck by deck according to the results of medical checks and PCR tests carried out on all passengers all of which were negative.

"This mission illustrates the ties between PONANT and Wallis and Futuna. We are very attached to the islands of Wallis and Futuna where our vessels have been registered since the company was founded more than 30 years ago. We are glad to contribute to the support of the population during this period," says Jean-Philippe Lemaire, Captain of *Le Lapérouse*.

No case of Covid-19 was reported during this exceptional operation.

ABOUT PONANT

Established in 1988 by Jean Emmanuel Sauvée and a dozen officers from the French Merchant Navy, PONANT has led the way with a new style of luxury cruising through a unique concept of sea travel which combines exceptional itineraries and sustainable tourism with luxury hotel services aboard smaller-scale ships.

The small size of its vessels, the medical infrastructure and teams on board, its protocols and the professionalism of its crews ensured that there were no cases of Covid-19 contamination throughout the PONANT's fleet. To prepare for the resumption of its activity, PONANT is collaborating with the IHU (Institut Hospitalo-Universitaire) Méditerranée Infection of Marseilles, one of the World's leading centers in the field of infectious diseases, as well as with the Battalion of Marine Firemen of Marseilles. The "Covid-Safe" protocol developed by PONANT is based on health standards that exceed international regulations.

For more information, visit www.ponant.com

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