

I am Georg Scharfenberg from the city of Regensburg in Germany.

I am incredibly lucky and I would like to talk to you about this. After being rescued from a dangerous health situation by a helicopter crew on the night of March 18 to 19, 2022, I regained my full health. This took until around November of that year. But I'm not just happy about this situation, only. What's really special is, that I met the captain of the helicopter crew in a digital call yesterday and so I can speak now directly to the entire crew who flew the rescue mission.

Of course I had personal contact, even physical contact, with a crew member who took me on my lift.

So today I have the chance to express my sincere thanks to the whole team.

I know today we have difficult times these days. But we find people, yes people, who reach out for help, even in difficult times. We don't have a solution for everything.

But I am sure we must not stop trying to find the right way.

Let me briefly reflect on the situation on the Sea-Eye4. We were 22 crew members and sailed from Burriana in Spain against wind and waves for 11 days to the south of Sicily. I was responsible for the weather forecast, for example. The weather didn't get any better and then I had started my health problem.

Two doctors on board warned me that I had to go ashore immediately for treatment because I was in serious danger.

I can't say what the communication with you was like. There were various suggestions. But then, perhaps 30 minutes before your arrival, the helicopter was called in.

It was not at all easy for the helicopter crew and the pilot - to find a suitable place for me to take to the sky. It took a long time for the decision to be made and for the site to be cleared. The videos of the mission clearly show how difficult it was to reach the position, the wind with strong gusts had a strong influence on the flight as well.

I was given a very warm welcome once I was in the helicopter and the crew looked after me during the flight. After all, I was in the clinic in Trapani for a few hours and was well adjusted with the medication.

Afterwards, transport to Palermo was organized and I was able to continue my recovery in the hotel there. Another outstanding setting was the visit from the mayor, Leoluca Orlando.

So I must recall! It was a prominent surprise and a tangible thank you for all of you and the organization they stand for and for which you are all visible. Incredible as it is, it was on Italian Father's Day when a father and grandfather were rescued.

But I can generally say that I really like Italy. I have been to Italy many times. More than 10 times I have shown your country to my students in different regions. We visited institutes, companies and universities. I had lectures in Turin and at the University of Salerno.

Let me summarize. I am deeply grateful and look forward to the chance to meet you in person. My family with six grandchildren is sincerely happy that so many hands have been there in time to save the father and grandfather.

Grazie ancora a tutti loro.

Georg Scharfenberg