Recognition of professional qualifications in inland navigation

2016/0050(COD) - 12/12/2017 - Final act

PURPOSE: promote inland navigation by ensuring the mutual recognition of professions.

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Directive (EU) 2017/2397 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the recognition of professional qualifications in inland navigation and repealing Council Directives 91/672 /EEC and 96/50/EC.

CONTENT: the Directive lays down the conditions and procedures for the **certification of the qualifications of persons involved in the operation of a craft navigating on Union inland waterways,** as well as for the recognition of such qualifications in the Member States. Workers in the EU inland navigation sector will thus have a single certification system that will allow them to operate throughout Europe.

Scope: the single certification system applies to **all deck crewmembers, liquefied natural gas experts and passenger navigation experts**. It does not apply to persons navigating in a Member State where none of the inland waterways are linked to the navigable network of another Member State, or those navigating limited journeys of local interest, or navigating seasonally.

From a **geographical** point of view, the system will apply to activities on the EU inland waterways falling within the scope of the Directive, including the Rhine.

Union certificates of qualification: the Directive provides for:

- the obligation for deck crew members and for navigation experts with passengers and persons involved in the refuelling of vessels operating on liquefied natural gas navigating the inland waterways of the Union, to possess a Union certificate of qualification;
- the obligation for boat masters to hold **specific authorisations** if: (i) they navigate on waterways that have been identified as sections of inland waterways with specific risks; (ii) they are navigating by radar; (iii) they operate vessels operating on liquefied natural gas; iv) if they are sailing large convoys.

Recognition: Union certificates of qualification and service record books and logbooks issued by the competent authorities in accordance with the Directive will be valid on all inland waterways of the Union.

In addition, any **third country** may submit to the Commission an application for recognition of the certificates, service record books or logbooks issued by its authorities. Every eight years the Commission will assess the conformity of the certification scheme in the requesting third country with the requirements of the Directive.

Certification of qualifications: Member States should ensure that persons receiving certificates of qualification have the corresponding minimum levels of competence, verified following an appropriate assessment. Such assessments could take the form of an **administrative examination**, or could form part of approved training programmes carried out in accordance with common standards in order to ensure a comparable minimum level of competence in all Member States for various qualifications.

The existence of approved training programs may **facilitate the entry into the professional inland navigation market** of workers from other sectors and with prior experience.

Approved **simulators** may be used for practical testing to make the assessment of competencies easier.

The Directive stresses the importance of the ability to use an **on-board radio** to ensure the safety of inland navigation. Any deck crewmember who may be required to navigate a craft will be encouraged to undergo training and certification on the use of such radios. This training and certification will be mandatory for boat masters and helmsmen.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: 16.1.2018.

TRANSPOSITION: by 17.1.2022.

DELEGATED ACTS: the Commission may adopt delegated acts in respect of the setting of standards of competence, standards for medical fitness, standards for practical examinations, standards for the approval of simulators and standards defining the characteristics and conditions of use for the database to be managed by the Commission. The power to adopt such acts is conferred on the Commission for a **period of five years from 16 January 2018**. The European Parliament or the Council may object to a delegated act within a period of two months (which may be extended by two months) from the notification of the act.