Minimum level of training of seafarers

2018/0162(COD) - 24/05/2018 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to improve the level of knowledge and skills of the Union seafarers.

PROPOSED ACT: Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: the European Parliament decides in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure and on an equal footing with the Council.

BACKGROUND: in order to maintain a high level of maritime safety and pollution prevention at sea, it is essential to improve the level of knowledge and skills of the Union seafarers by developing maritime training and certification in line with the international rules.

The training and certification of seafarers is regulated at the international level by the **International Maritime Organisation (IMO) Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978** ('STCW Convention') which was revised in 2010. Further amendments to the STCW Convention were adopted in 2015 and 2016.

Directive 2008/106/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council incorporates the STCW Convention into the Union law. It also contains a centralised mechanism for the recognition of seafarers' certificates issued by third countries.

Directive 2005/45/EC aimed to foster the professional mobility of seafarers within the EU, by facilitating the mutual recognition of seafarers' certificates issued by the Member States.

An evaluation was carried out and concluded that both Directives are fit for purpose and have met to a great extent the initial objectives and expectations. However, it also identified elements that have hindered the effectiveness and the efficiency of the legislative framework.

CONTENT: this proposal seeks to amend Directive 2008/106/EC currently in force and repeals Directive 2005/45/EC. The objective of the proposed revision is to **simplify and streamline the current EU regulatory framework** for the training and certification of seafarers in order to:

- **to maintain the alignment of EU rules with the international framework**: the proposal incorporates the new amendments to the STCW Convention relating to the new qualification and training requirements for seafarers working on board passenger ships and ships falling under the IGF Code and the Polar Code;
- **increase legal clarity regarding the mutual recognition of seafarers' certificates issued by the Member States** by clarifying which certificates are mutually recognised for the purpose of authorising seafarers whose certificates have been issued by another Member State to work on board ships flying the flag of another Member State;
- **modernise the centralised mechanism for the recognition of third countries in order to increase its effectiveness**: the proposal provides for an implementing decision on the need to initiate the procedure for recognising new third countries. This new procedural step shall allow the requesting Member State to present the reasons for submitting the recognition request while the Member States will have an opportunity to discuss and decide on the relevant request.

The deadline for the adoption of a Commission decision should be extended from 18 to 24 months. Lastly, it is proposed to extend the interval of reassessment of third countries to up to 10 years on the basis of priority criteria.