

Minimum level of training for seafarers: recognition of certificates issued by third countries

2003/0001(COD) - 13/01/2003 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE : to present a proposal for a Directive amending European Parliament and Council Directive 2001/25/EC on the minimum level of training of seafarers. **CONTENT** : the Commission proposes the improvement of the current procedure for the recognition of mariners' certificates of competency issued outside the Union through a system of Community-wide recognition of certificates from labour-supplying third countries. In addition, the Commission proposes to bring the provisions of the existing Directive on seafarers' training concerning language requirements for certificates of competency and safety communications between the ship and the land-based authorities in line with the relevant international requirements. The main aim of the proposal is to amend an existing Directive, in order to strengthen and simplify certain aspects its provisions. Since the proposal is to revise an existing Directive, a Directive is the only possible form of Community measure. This proposal for a Directive puts forward an amendment to Directive 2001/25/EC in the following way, to: - improve, strengthen and simplify the current procedure for the recognition of certificates issued by third countries, by introducing a system of Community-wide recognition of third countries complying with the minimum requirements of the STCW Convention: The new procedure proposed by the Commission is based on the recognition of a third country, following the evaluation of maritime training and certification systems, rather than the recognition of an individual certificate, as is the case under the current procedure. According to the proposed procedure, the evaluation of the Member States' requests for recognition shall be carried out by the Commission, with the assistance of the European Maritime Safety Agency (the Agency). The decision on the recognition of a third country shall be taken by the Commission within three months from the date of the request for recognition. If granted, the recognition shall be valid for a period of five years. The Member State that submitted the request shall take appropriate measures to implement the decision. According to the Community approach, the decision, which will be taken at Community level, will then form the basis for the Member States' to recognise by endorsement certificates from this country without further evaluation. An annex details the criteria for the recognition of third countries that have issued a certificate or under the authority of which was issued a certificate. - introduce specific procedures for the extension and withdrawal of the Community-wide recognition of third countries, as well as the continuous monitoring of compliance of the third countries with the relevant requirements of the STCW Convention; - update the Directive as regards language requirements for certification of seafarers and communication between the ship and the shore-based authorities, in line with the relevant requirements of the STCW Convention and the International Convention for the safety of life at sea, 1974, as amended (SOLAS Convention); - provide for specific amendment procedures for adapting the Directive to future changes in Community law.