Basic information

2016/0050(COD) COD - Ordinary legislative procedure (ex-codecision procedure) Directive	Procedure completed
Recognition of professional qualifications in inland navigation Repealing Directive 96/50/EC 1994/0196(SYN) Amended by 2021/0039(COD) **Subject** 3.20.04 Inland waterway transport 4.15.06 Professional qualifications, recognition of qualifications	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
TRAN Transport and Tourism	MEISSNER Gesine (ALDE)	02/05/2016
	Shadow rapporteur MUSELIER Renaud (PPE) ȚAPARDEL Claudia (S&D) VAN DALEN Peter (ECR) KYLLÖNEN Merja (GUE/NGL) TAYLOR Keith (Verts/ALE) AIUTO Daniela (EFDD) ARNAUTU Marie-Christine (ENF)	

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
EMPL Employment and Social Affairs (Associated committee)	BOYLAN Lynn (GUE/NGL)	24/05/2016
IMCO Internal Market and Consumer Protection	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
JURI Legal Affairs	BERGERON Joëlle (EFDD)	15/03/2016

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date

	Transport, Telecommunications and Energy	3472	2016-06-06
	Transport, Telecommunications and Energy	3581	2017-12-04

European Commission	**Commission DG**	**Commissioner**
	Mobility and Transport	BULC Violeta

European Economic and Social Committee

European Committee of the Regions

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
18/02/2016	Legislative proposal published	COM(2016)0082	Summary
11/04/2016	Committee referral announced in Parliament, 1st reading		
06/06/2016	Debate in Council		
15/09/2016	Referral to associated committees announced in Parliament		
10/11/2016	Vote in committee, 1st reading		
10/11/2016	Committee decision to open interinstitutional negotiations with report adopted in committee		
28/11/2016	Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading	A8-0338/2016	Summary
11/07/2017	Approval in committee of the text agreed at 1st reading interinstitutional negotiations	PE609.546 GEDA/A/(2017)007961	
13/11/2017	Debate in Parliament		
14/11/2017	Decision by Parliament, 1st reading	T8-0425/2017	Summary
14/11/2017	Results of vote in Parliament		
04/12/2017	Act adopted by Council after Parliament's 1st reading		
05/12/2017	Final act signed		
12/12/2017	End of procedure in Parliament		
27/12/2017	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2016/0050(COD)
Procedure type	COD - Ordinary legislative procedure (ex-codecision procedure)
Procedure subtype	Legislation
Legislative instrument	Directive
Amendments and repeals	Repealing Directive 96/50/EC 1994/0196(SYN) Amended by 2021/0039(COD)

Legal basis	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union TFEU 091-p1
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 165
Mandatory consultation of other institutions	European Economic and Social Committee European Committee of the Regions
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	TRAN/8/05827

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee opinion	JURI	PE582.398	13/07/2016	
Committee draft report		PE585.776	13/09/2016	
Committee opinion	EMPL	PE585.569	13/10/2016	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE592.172	17/10/2016	
Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading		A8-0338/2016	28/11/2016	Summary
Text agreed during interinstitutional negotiations		PE609.546	30/06/2017	
Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading		T8-0425/2017	14/11/2017	Summary

Council of the EU

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Coreper letter confirming interinstitutional agreement	GEDA/A/(2017)007961	30/06/2017	
Draft final act	00042/2017/LEX	13/12/2017	

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Legislative proposal	COM(2016)0082	18/02/2016	Summary
Document attached to the procedure	SWD(2016)0035	18/02/2016	
Document attached to the procedure	SWD(2016)0036	18/02/2016	
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2018)8	10/01/2018	
Follow-up document	COM(2024)0203	28/05/2024	

National parliaments

Document type	Parliament /Chamber	Reference	Date	Summary

Contribution	ES_PARLIAMENT	COM(2016)0082	09/05/2016	
Contribution	IT_SENATE	COM(2016)0082	10/05/2016	
Contribution	PT_PARLIAMENT	COM(2016)0082	19/05/2016	

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
EESC	Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report	CES2684/2016	13/07/2016	

Additional information

Source	Document	Date
European Parliament	Briefing	
European Parliament	Briefing	
European Commission	EUR-Lex	

Final act

Corrigendum to final act 32017L2397R(03)
OJ OJ L 15.10.2026

Directive 2017/2397
OJ L 345 27.12.2017, p. 0053 Summary

Delegated acts

Reference	Subject
2020/2528(DEA)	Examination of delegated act
2019/2780(DEA)	Examination of delegated act
2021/2993(DEA)	Examination of delegated act
2025/2968(DEA)	Examination of delegated act

Recognition of professional qualifications in inland navigation

2016/0050(COD) - 18/02/2016 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to facilitate labour mobility in the inland waterway transport sector by ensuring that skilled workers' qualifications are recognised throughout the Union.

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: **inland waterway transport (IWT) is a cost-saving and energy-efficient transport mode** that could be used more efficiently to support the European Union's energy efficiency, growth and industrial development goals. However, its contribution is hampered by difficulties in terms of labour mobility, persistent vacancies and skills mismatches, which continue in spite of attempts by the sector to tackle the problems at bilateral and multilateral level.

Varying minimum requirements for professional qualifications across the Member States do not provide sufficient assurance for individual countries as regards the recognition of professional qualifications of crew from other Member States, in particular as this also affects the safety of navigation.

Based on over 19 years of experience with the implementation of Directives 96/50/EC and 91/672/EEC, the Commission considered it necessary to propose to extend the scope of recognition of professional qualifications beyond the level of boat masters to all crew involved in the operation of vessels, including on the Rhine river.

The initiative responds to long-standing calls from the sector and Member States to revise the existing outdated legal framework and replace it with a modern, competence-based framework. It has been prepared under the Commission's policy framework for promoting inland waterway transport, NAIADES II.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT: the policy option introducing **minimum competence requirements for boatmen and boat masters**, including examination standards for training institutes, has been chosen. This option is preferred as it offers a more effective way to improve labour mobility than the 'do nothing' and the 'voluntary measures' options.

CONTENT: the proposal repeals Directive 91/672/EEC and Directive 96/50/EC and provides for gradual phasing-in with transitional measures and **extends the requirements to cover all crew in inland navigation in the EU, including on the Rhine river**.

This Directive lays down the conditions and procedures for the certification of the qualifications of persons involved in the operation of a vessel for the carriage of goods and passengers by inland waterways in the Union, as well as the recognition of such qualifications in the Member States.

Union certificate of qualification: the proposal lays down:

- the obligation for **deck crew members, persons in charge of emergency situations** on board passenger vessels and persons involved in the bunkering of liquefied natural gas-fuelled vessels to hold certificates of qualification proving their qualifications;
- that boat masters sailing in circumstances presenting a **particular safety hazard** should hold a specific authorisation, in particular, for sailing large convoys, sailing liquefied natural gas-fuelled vessels, sailing in conditions of reduced visibility, sailing on waterways with a maritime character or sailing on waterways with specific risks for navigation. In order to obtain such authorisation, boat masters should be required to demonstrate **additional competences**.

For ensuring safety of navigation, Member States should **identify waterways with a maritime character**, in accordance with harmonised criteria. They should also have the possibility to identify the waterways entailing specific risks for navigation.

Member States should issue certificates of qualification only to persons that have the **minimum levels of competence, the minimum age, the minimum medical fitness and the navigation time** required for obtaining a specific qualification.

Recognition: certificates of qualification, service record books and logbooks, issued in accordance with the Rhine Navigation Personnel Regulation under the Revised Convention for Rhine Navigation which lay down requirements that are identical to those of this Directive should be valid on all Union inland waterways.

To instil the necessary confidence among the Member States in the mechanism for mutual recognition, the requirements in terms of quality standards with respect to **assessment of competences and skills, recognition of training programmes**.

The proposal includes information on certified qualifications in a database kept by the Commission or a designated body is necessary to streamline the exchange of information between the Member States and to ensure efficient implementation of the initiative.

DELEGATED ACT: the proposal contains provisions empowering the Commission to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 290 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

Recognition of professional qualifications in inland navigation

2016/0050(COD) - 28/11/2016 - Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading

The Committee on Transport and Tourism adopted the report by Gesine MEISSNER (ADLE, DE) on the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the recognition of professional qualifications in inland navigation and repealing Council Directive 96/50/EC and Council Directive 91/672/EEC.

The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, exercising its prerogative as an associated committee in accordance with Rule 54 of the Rules of Procedure, also gave its opinion on the report.

The committee recommended that Parliament's position adopted in first reading should amend the Commission as follows:

Scope: Members excluded from the scope of the Directive:

- crafts used by armed forces, forces maintaining public order, civil defence services, waterway administrations, fire services and other emergency services;
- crafts navigating seasonally within a Member State on isolated lakes not connected to a navigable inland waterway of another Member State.

'Deck crew members': the text states that this means persons involved in the operation of a vessel carrying out tasks related to controlling the operation of the vessel, marine engineering, communication, safety, health and environmental protection, cargo and passenger handling.

Exemptions: holding Union certificates of qualification should not be made compulsory on national inland waterways that are not linked to a navigable inland waterway of another Member State.

Inland waterway stretches presenting specific risks: a high frequency of accidents at a specific location on the river should form part of the criteria for determining whether a particular stretch of water involves a specific risk. For stretches with specific risks, it shall be compulsory for a limited number of journeys to be carried out on the stretch concerned.

Recognition of certificates issued by a third country: Members suggested confining such recognition to third countries that are linked to a navigable inland waterway of a Member State. When a Member State considers that a third country no longer complies with the requirements of this Article, it shall notify the Commission immediately, giving substantiated reasons for its contention.

Assessment of competences: the demonstration of compliance with the standards of competence shall include a practical examination for obtaining, inter alia, a certificate of qualification for navigational safety experts on passenger vessels. Member States shall issue a **practical examination certificate** to applicants who have passed the practical examination. They shall **recognise,** without further requirements or assessments, practical examination certificates issued by competent authorities in other Member States.

Practical examinations may take place on board a vessel or **on a simulator**. As far as possible, nationals of other Member States must be guaranteed access to simulators.

Examiners must be qualified to assess the competences and the corresponding knowledge and skills and must not have a conflict of interest.

Training programmes: Member States may approve training programmes at national level on condition that such programmes meet the common criteria defined by **CESNI** (*Comité Européen pour l'Élaboration de Standards dans le Domaine de Navigation Intérieure).* Where the conditions laid down in the Directive are met, the Commission should refer to CESNI standards when adopting implementing and delegated acts in accordance with this Directive.

The competence acquisition and assessment activities, and the administration of Union certificates of qualifications, services record books and logbooks, should be evaluated at intervals of **no more than six years** by independent bodies.

Essential competence requirements: Members also added other competences which they considered essential for obtaining the qualification of boatmaster:

- assist the vessel's management in providing services to passengers, know and initiate the application of relevant passenger rights, including special measures for persons with reduced mobility;
- know traffic regulations and basic knowledge of the carriage of dangerous goods;
- give instructions and monitor all tasks undertaken by other members of the deck crew;
- ensure good communication at all times with other ships and ground authorities and be able to communicate in elementary English.

Member States must apply the Directive within **4 years** of entry into force.

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.

Recognition of professional qualifications in inland navigation

2016/0050(COD) - 14/11/2017 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 609 votes to 32, with 44 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the recognition of professional qualifications in inland navigation and repealing Council Directive 96/50/EC and Council Directive 91/672/EEC.

Scope: Parliament excluded from the scope of the Directive:

persons sailing for sporting or recreational purposes or involved in the operation of bins that do not move independently, and in navigation by the armed forces or emergency services;

persons navigating in Member States which **do not have inland waterways connected to the waterway network of another Member State** and who: (i) make only limited journeys in a small geographical area; or ii) operate only on a seasonal basis.

Members of the deck crew: the amended text specified that these persons should also be able to carry out tasks related to the control of the operation of the vessel, the transport of passengers, the naval machinery, the communication, the health and safety, and the protection of the environment.

Exemptions: Member States shall have the possibility of **not making Union certificates of qualification compulsory** on national inland waterways that are not linked to a navigable inland waterway of another Member State

A Member State that grants exemptions may issue certificates of qualification to persons under conditions that differ from the general conditions set out in this Directive, provided that such certificates ensure an **adequate level of safety**. The recognition of those certificates in other Member States shall be governed by Directive 2005/36/EC or Directive 2005/45/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, as applicable.

Member States shall inform **the Commission of the exemptions granted in accordance with paragraph 1. The Commission shall make information on those granted exemptions publicly available.**

Special risk stretches: Member States that identify stretches of inland waterways with specific risks in their territories shall specify the additional competence required from boatmasters navigating on those stretches of inland waterways, and shall specify the means necessary to prove that such requirements are met. Member States should, subject to the consent of the Member State in which a stretch of inland waterway with specific risks is located, be allowed to assess the competences necessary for navigating on that specific stretch of inland waterway.

Recognition of certificates issued by a third country: the text provides that any third country may submit to the Commission a request for recognition of certificates, service record books or logbooks that have been issued by its authorities. When a Member State considers that a third country no longer complies with the requirements of this Article, it shall notify the Commission immediately, giving substantiated reasons for its contention.

Every eight years, the Commission shall assess the compliance of the certification system in the third country with the requirements laid down in this Directive.

Competence assessment: a **practical examination certificate** shall be issued to applicants who have passed the practical test where that examination took place on a **simulator** approved by another Member State. Certificates issued by the competent authorities of other Member States shall be recognised without further requirements or assessments. Examiners and qualified supervisors shall be free from **conflicts of interest**.

Any Member State may temporarily suspend a Union certificate of qualification where it considers that such suspension is necessary for reasons of safety or public order.

Approval of training programmes: Member States may establish training programmes leading to diplomas or certificates that demonstrate compliance with the standards of competence are **approved** by the competent authorities of the Member States in whose territory the relevant education or training institute conducts its training programmes.

The quality assessment and assurance of the training programmes shall be ensured by the application of a **national or international quality standard**.

Member States shall recognise any diplomas or certificates awarded after the completion of training programmes approved by other Member States.

Member States shall issue certificates of qualification only to persons who have the minimum levels of competence, the minimum age, the medical fitness and the navigation time required for obtaining a specific qualification.

Where the conditions laid down in the Directive are met, the Commission shall refer to CESNI (**Comité Européen pour l'Élaboration de Standards dans le Domaine de Navigation Intérieure**) standards when adopting implementing and delegated acts in accordance with this Directive.

Radio operating skills: the amended text stressed the importance of skills to operate the on-board radio to ensure the safety of inland navigation. It is important that Member States encourage any deck crew member who might need to navigate the craft to have training and certification regarding the operation of such radios. For boatmasters and helmsmen, such training and certification is compulsory

Essential competence requirements: Parliament also added other competences which they considered essential for obtaining the qualification of boatmaster:

- give instructions to other deck crew members and supervise the tasks they exercise;
- apply knowledge of the applicable rules on the manning of craft, including knowledge on resting time and on deck crew members composition;
- sail and manoeuvre, ensuring the safe operation of the craft in all conditions on inland waterways, including in situations that involve high traffic density or where other craft carry dangerous goods;
- plan and ensure the safe transport of and care for passengers during the voyage, including providing direct assistance to disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility.

Passenger navigation expert: every applicant shall be able to communicate in elementary English.

Member States must apply the Directive within **4 years** of entry into force.