

REPORT

SELECTION OF THE SYSTEM FOR CERTIFICATION OF COMPETENCIES IN A PROFESSIONAL SECTOR IN ROMANIA

About IMO

Shipping is perhaps the most international of the world's industries, serving more than 90 per cent of global trade by carrying huge quantities of cargo cost effectively, cleanly and safely.

The ownership and management chain surrounding any ship can embrace many countries and ships spend their economic life moving between different jurisdictions, often far from the country of registry. There is, therefore, a need for international standards to regulate shipping-which can be adopted and accepted by all.

The first maritime treaties date back to the 19th century. Later, the Titanic disaster of 1912 spawned the first international safety of life at sea-SOLAS convention, still the most important treaty addressing maritime safety.

The Convention establishing the International Maritime Organization (IMO) was adopted in Geneva in 1948 and IMO first met in 1959. IMO's main task has been to develop and maintain a comprehensive regulatory framework for shipping and its remit today includes safety, environmental concerns, legal matters, technical co-operation, maritime security and the efficiency of shipping.

A specialized agency of the United Nations with 169 Member States and three Associate Members, IMO is based in the United Kingdom with around 300 international staff.

IMO's specialized committees and sub-committees are the focus for the technical work to update existing legislation or develop and adopt new regulations, with meetings attended by maritime experts from Member Governments, together with those from interested intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

The result is a comprehensive body of international conventions, supported by hundreds of recommendations governing every facet of shipping. There

are, firstly, measures aimed at the prevention of accidents, including standards for ship design, construction, equipment, operation and manning - key treaties include SOLAS, the MARPOL convention for the prevention of pollution by ships and the STCW convention on standards of training for seafarers.

Then there are measures which recognize that accidents do happen, including rules concerning distress and safety communications, the International Convention on Search and Rescue and the International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation.

Thirdly, there are conventions which establish compensation and liability regimes - including the International Convention on Civil Liability for Oil Pollution Damage, the convention establishing the International Fund for Compensation for Oil Pollution Damage and the Athens Convention covering liability and compensation for passengers at sea.

Inspection and monitoring of compliance are the responsibility of member States, but the adoption of a Voluntary IMO Member State Audit Scheme is expected to play a key role in enhancing implementation of IMO standards.

IMO has an extensive technical co-operation programme, which identifies needs among resource-shy Members and matches them to assistance, such as training. IMO has founded three advanced level maritime educational institutes in Malmö, Malta and Trieste.

Today, we live in a society which is supported by a global economy, which simply could not function if it were not for shipping. IMO plays a key role in ensuring that lives at sea are not put at risk and that the marine environment is not polluted by shipping - as summed up in IMO's mission statement: **Safe, Secure and Efficient Shipping on Clean Oceans.**

IMO adopts international shipping regulations but it is the responsibility of Governments to implement those regulations. IMO has developed a Technical Co-operation Programme which is designed to assist Governments which lack the technical knowledge and resources that are needed to operate a shipping industry successfully.

The emphasis of this programme is very much **on training** and perhaps the best example is the World Maritime University in Malmö, Sweden, which was

established in 1983 and provides advanced training for the men and women involved in maritime administration, education and management.

Training and Certification

The International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW), 1978, as amended, sets the standards of competence for seafarers internationally.

Amongst its provisions is a requirement for Parties to the Convention to communicate information to IMO on the measures adopted to implement the Convention nationally. That information is subject to scrutiny to ensure that the Convention is being given 'full and complete effect' and, if this is so, the Party features on the "List of confirmed STCW Parties" and "Information related to Reports of Independent Evaluation".

One key STCW Convention provision requires Parties to provide information to allow others to check the validity and authenticity of seafarers' certificates of competency. This is important as unqualified seafarers holding fraudulent certificates of competency are a clear danger to themselves, others on board and the marine environment.

In order to assist with uniform interpretation of the STCW Convention, IMO has agreed a number of clarifications of the Convention's provisions and has also developed further guidance to assist Parties to meet their Convention obligations.

Why IMO ?

We identified in Romania, at CERONAV Constanta and Galati, a strong interest to improve new pedagogical technologies, including on-line courses. For maritime training purposes, they want to develop a series of model courses which provide suggested syllabi, course timetables and e-learning objectives in order to assist instructors developing training programmes and courses according to the standards for seafarers.

The instructors and students need to improve their ability to comply with international rules and standards relating to maritime safety and the prevention and control of maritime pollution, giving priority to technical assistance programmes that focus on human resources development and institutional capacity-building.