



REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

Maritime Administration

Our Ref.№ 577 / 19.03.2020

**HIS EXCELLENCY
MR. KITAK LIM,
SECRETARY GENERAL
INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION
4, Albert Embankment
London
SE1 7SR
United Kingdom**

Re: Republic of Bulgaria – guidelines for adoption of extraordinary measures of the seafarer's certificates of competency or certificates of proficiency issued by Bulgarian Maritime Administration resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Excellency,

In relation to the worldwide situation of the incidence and spread of COVID-19, a number of countries have put in place restrictive measures regarding the free movement of citizens. As a result, many ship owners face the inability to make scheduled crew changes, which in turn raises a number of serious issues, including: validity expiration of certificates of competence (CoC) and/or certificates of proficiency (CoP) for special and additional training of seafarer's onboard ships.

After the discussions held and the international research, upon considering the experience and the recommendations of the flag administrations including a considerable number of registered seafarers Bulgarian Maritime Administration consider the following guidelines for adoption of extraordinary measures of the seafarer's certificates of competency or certificates of proficiency issued by Bulgarian Maritime Administration:

Extension of the validity of seafarers documents beyond their expiry date

1 Certificates of Competency and Certificates of Proficiency

The Bulgarian Maritime Administration has decided that the validity of Bulgarian Certificates of Competency (CoC) and Certificates of Proficiency (CoP) of the seafarers on board vessels which will be expired before 13 June 2020 are granted a general extended validity of up to 3 (three) months.

The individual seafarer will not be required to submit an application.

1.2. Medical certificates

Considering the this situation as a force majeure, in respect of the Bulgarian medical certificates, the Bulgarian Maritime Administration has decided to follow provisions for urgent cases allowed by the Regulation I/9 of the STCW Convention 1978 as amended and Regulation 1.2. of the MLC Convention 2006 as amended.

Based on that, the Bulgarian Maritime Administration permits a seafarer to work without a valid medical certificate provided that:

- The period does not exceed 3 (three) months; and
- The seafarer concerned holds an expired medical certificate on recent date.

1.3. Endorsement of foreign certificates

The validity of Bulgarian endorsements will be linked to the validity of the seafarer's national CoC and CoP.

If the seafarer's national CoC or CoP is revalidated, it will be possible to apply for a new endorsement to the Executive Director of the Bulgarian Maritime Administration.

The seafarer will be granted a Temporary endorsement valid for the period of up to 3 (three) months.

If the administration that has issued the seafarer's national CoC or CoP chooses a general extension of the validity of the national CoC or CoP, the validity of the Bulgarian endorsements issued based on the current CoC or CoP will automatically considered extended accordingly.

The individual seafarer will not be required to submit an application.

I avail myself of this opportunity to renew to you the assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours sincerely,



Capt. Zhivko Petrov,
Executive Director
Bulgarian Maritime Administration