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MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT,
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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

CLARIFICATION
REGARDING CERTIFICATES OF COMPETENCY
ISSUED BY THE BULGARIAN MARITIME ADMINISTRATION

A lot of seafarers, holding Certificates of Competency (CoCs) issued by the Bulgarian Maritime Administration serve on board foreign flag vessels. In these cases the relevant foreign administrations issue them Endorsements in compliance with the provisions of Regulation I/10 of the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW). The Endorsement contains, amongst the other relevant information, the number of the CoC and the validity of the Endorsement. In line with the provisions of Regulation I/2, para 8.4 of the STCW the validity of the Endorsement itself cannot exceed the validity of the underlying CoC.

When the seafarer acquires higher competency or in case the CoC is lost, destroyed or damaged the Bulgarian Maritime Administration issues a new Certificate of Competency to the seafarer and assigns status "cancelled" to the previous Certificate of Competency.

Sometimes seafarers have to board a vessel as a matter of urgency. In such case the seafarer holds a valid Endorsement issued on the grounds of the cancelled Certificate of Competency.

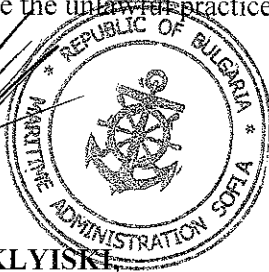
In this situation, until a new Endorsement, corresponding to the new Certificate of Competency is issued and in order to guarantee that the seafarers hold the required under the STCW documents, the Bulgarian Maritime Administration has instructed the seafarers working on board foreign flag vessels to carry:

- the new (valid) Certificate of Competency;
- the valid Endorsement, certifying the right of the seafarer to serve on board a vessel flying the flag of the respective State;
- the cancelled Certificate of Competency, on the grounds of which the Endorsement has been issued.

In these cases the cancelled CoC issued by the Bulgarian Maritime Administration will be left in the possession of the respective seafarer but it will be punched/perforated in order to indicate clearly and definitely that the CoC has been cancelled and has been left in the possession of the seafarer with the sole purpose to attest the legitimacy of the Endorsement.

The Bulgarian Maritime Administration adopted this approach for the following reasons:

- to avoid unnecessary administrative complications to seafarers holding Bulgarian Certificates of Competency;
- to avoid potential problems during Port State Control inspections of foreign flag vessels manned with seafarers holding Bulgarian Certificates of Competency;
- to minimize the unlawful practices associated with Certificates of Competency.



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