



**TO PERSONS ACTING AS MANNING AGENTS IN EMPLOYMENT OF SEAFARERS HOLDING CERTIFICATES BY BULGARIAN MARITIME ADMINISTRATION**

**Re:** *how to proceed upon the expiration of the validity period of a certificate of competency and/or a certificate of professional competence for special and additional training issued by Bulgarian Maritime Administration when the seafarer is onboard a ship and no crew change is possible in the conditions of the worldwide pandemic of COVID-19.*

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 seafarers 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, until there is a uniform statement of IMO, the only possible decision is as follows:

The Bulgarian Maritime Administration, upon request by a particular flag administration, ship owner, manning agency company licensed in Bulgaria or crew recruitment agency abroad, shall perform the required checks and shall reply by e-mail that the seafarer onboard a ship is still professionally competent for the position held in case of expiration of the CoC or the CoP, as in the conditions of worldwide pandemic of COVID-19, this certificate cannot be renewed or extended. The expired certificate shall be reissued or extended immediately after the seafarer has returned to the Republic of Bulgaria.



**Capt. Zhivko Petrov,**  
*Executive Director*  
*Bulgarian Maritime Administration*