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Transport: Commission lifts ban on Georgian certified seafarers for EU vessels

On 22 November, the European Commission and Member States recognised efforts by Georgia to comply with international standards on training and certification for seafarers, thus effectively allowing seafarers with Georgian certificates again to work on EU vessels.

In November 2010, the European Commission withdrew the recognition of Georgian certificates of seafarers¹. Among other problems, the administration did not monitor effectively the maritime schools and there was an extended problem with forged certificates, leading the Commission to conclude that Georgia did not comply with the requirements of the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers.

In practice, seafarers without recognised certificates could not work onboard EU flagged ships. Those with valid endorsements could continue working onboard EU flagged ships only until the expiry of the 5 year validity of their endorsements.

After the withdrawal of recognition, the European Commission assisted Georgia to bring its system of training and certification of seafarers in line with the international standards. In this respect, Georgia benefited from several EU funded projects like SASEPOL² and TAIXE³.

In September 2012, Cyprus requested the re-recognition of Georgian certificates. Following this request, the European Commission re-assessed the Georgian system of training and certification of seafarers. The assessment was based on the results of an inspection carried out by experts of the European Maritime Safety Agency in October 2012 and on the corrective measures submitted by the Georgian authorities.

The final outcome of the European Commission assessment shows that Georgia has taken the necessary measures to bring its system in line with the international standards. Among others, it has redrafted completely its legislation and has taken effective measures to prevent fraudulent certificates. Therefore, the European Commission put on the table a proposal for the re-recognition of Georgia which was supported by the EU Member States in a meeting on 22 November. Once this decision formally adopted, EU Member States, who wish so, may start endorsing Georgian certificates again.

¹ Commission Decision 2010/705/EU

² Development of common security management, maritime safety and ship pollution prevention for the Black sea and Caspian Sea.

³ Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument

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