

MEASURES, ADOPTED AND ENFORCED BY THE BULGARIAN MARITIME ADMINISTRATION WITH RESPECT TO COVID-19

I. General

On the 13 March 2020 in relation to COVID-19 outbreak the Bulgarian government announced “emergency situation”, introducing number of restrictive measures, affecting all areas of our life. Following these measures and the prescriptions of the specially assigned National task force COVID-19, as well as the communications and guidelines of the European Commission, the International Maritime Organization, the World Health Organization, and other international bodies, the Bulgarian Maritime Administration has adopted and enforced emergency procedures with respect to maritime transport and calls of Bulgarian ports. Subsequently, on the 14 th of May 2020 was announced epidemic situation until 14th of June 2020. Updated information is available on the BMA’s website: www.marad.bg

II. Port State Control & State Environmental Control

- **Resumption of port and environmental control inspections under the following conditions:**
 1. Compliance with the orders of the Minister of Health and the instructions of the health authorities.
 2. Observance of the instructions of the Paris Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control (Paris MoU) relating to COVID-19.
 3. Before selecting ships for inspection, the regional coordinators or the designated inspectors shall collect the whole available information about these ships, such as: last port (s) of call; crew nationality; any recent shifts in ports; any symptoms of COVID-19 on board; any instructions from the health authorities regarding the ship/crew. Based on the collected information, the regional coordinators assess the risk to the ship and if they determine a ship to be inspected, appoint the inspector(s) to carry out the inspection.
 4. During the on board inspection, inspector(s) shall wear appropriate personal protective clothing and equipment and observe the distance as these are stipulated in the orders of the Minister of Health and the instructions of the health authorities.

These measures should be valid until the end of the emergency epidemiological situation (14.06.2020), after which the normal inspections procedures should be restored in accordance with Ordinance № 12 on Port State Control (PSC) inspections.

III. 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.
- Seafarers holding Certificates of Proficiency (CoP) for special and additional training, issued by the Bulgarian Maritime Administration, which expires by 30 June 2020 and refresher courses are required for their renewal, are extended until the end of calendar year 2020, proceeding as follows:
 - The seafarer submits by electronic means (e-mail) or a licensed postal operator, an application for extension, indicating the certificates which expires and attaches of a contract

of employment or a letter from a management agent or shipowner for departure by the end of 2020.

- The verification carried out by officials of the Bulgarian Maritime Administration has shown that the seafarer concerned has continued professional competence in accordance with Regulation I/11, para 1.2 of the Annex of the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978 (STCW), as amended, by one of the methods listed in Section A- I/11 of the STCW Code with respect to the required seagoing service.
- The seafarer shall be sent electronically on his/her e-mail an individual letter of extension signed electronically by the officials authorized, for the extension of the validity of the relevant certificate/certificates until the end of the 2020 without passing the required refresher courses.
- No administrative fee will be charged and paid for the extension of the relevant certificates.
- The Certificates of Competency (CoC) of seafarers, issued by the Maritime Bulgarian Maritime Administration, whose expiration date is up to 30 June 2020 and their renewal/extension requires an examination before the Agency due to positions on board the vessels of the seafarers with one or more degrees lower than the specified level of responsibility in the certificate or failure to cover one or more functions are extended up to 31 December 2020, provided that the requirements for continued professional competence are fulfilled. The extension of certificates of competency shall be made with the appropriate entry on the certificate, upon presentation by the seafarer of a copy of the employment contract or letter from a management agent or shipowner for departure by the end of 2020.
 - The Bulgarian Maritime Administration is ready to send confirmation of requests for verification for the authenticity and validity of the seafarer's certificates issued, as well as to the individual letters via bma@marad.bg or verification@marad.bg.
 - Applications for extending the period of validity of the certificates under item I, inquiries and questions may be submitted to the following e-mails: stw_bs@marad.bg or stw_vn@marad.bg.

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 be considered extended accordingly.

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