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'I' ITEM NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Permanent Representatives Committee (Part 1)

No. Cion doc.: 6209/21
No. prev. doc.: 8604/1/21 REV 1

Subject: Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive (EU) 2017/2397 as regards the transitional measures for the recognition of third countries certificates
– *Confirmation of the final compromise text with a view to agreement*

CONTEXT AND CONTENT OF THE PROPOSAL

1. On 18 February 2021, the Commission transmitted the above-mentioned proposal to the European Parliament and to the Council.
2. The objective of the proposal is to amend the transitional provisions of Directive (EU) 2017/2397 on the recognition of professional qualifications in inland navigation¹ to cover third country certificates recognised unilaterally by Member States or through their international agreements.

¹ Directive (EU) 2017/2397 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2017 on the recognition of professional qualifications in inland navigation and repealing Council Directives 91/672/EEC and 96/50/EC (OJ L 345, 27.12.2017, p. 53).

WORK WITHIN THE COUNCIL

3. The members of the Shipping Working Party examined the proposal at several informal meetings during the first semester of 2021, starting with a presentation by the Commission and a first examination on 1 March 2021.
4. Based on the deliberations, a small number of amendments were proposed and agreed in order to clarify the proposal or make it more flexible.
5. On 3 June 2021, the Council (Transport, Telecommunications and Energy) agreed on a general approach.

WORK WITHIN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OTHER UNION BODIES

6. The European Parliament Committee for Transport and Tourism (TRAN) appointed Mr Andris Ameriks (S&D-Latvia) as rapporteur on 18 March 2021.
7. On 17 June 2021, the TRAN Committee voted on the report. On 21 June, the report was tabled for the Parliament plenary².
8. The European Economic and Social Committee adopted its opinion on 24 March 2021³.
9. The European Committee of the Regions decided not to give an opinion.

NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

10. After the TRAN Committee vote, informal contacts took place between the Presidency and the European Parliament. It was noted that the Council general approach⁴ and the amendments voted by the TRAN Committee were identical. This being the case, there is agreement at first reading between the co-legislators on the Commission proposal as amended.

² A9-0210/2021

³ 7463/21

⁴ 8604/1/21 REV 1

CONCLUSION

11. In the light of the above, the Permanent Representatives Committee is invited to:
- confirm the agreement reached with the European Parliament as set out in the annex to this note;
 - allow the Presidency to send a letter to the European Parliament stating that should the European Parliament adopt its position at first reading the amended text of the draft Directive as set out in the Annex to this note, subject to revision of the text by the legal-linguist experts, the Council would approve the European Parliament's position and the act would be adopted in the wording which corresponds to the European Parliament's position.
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**Proposal for a DIRECTIVE
OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL**

**amending Directive (EU) 2017/2397 as regards the transitional measures
for the recognition of third countries certificates**

(Text with EEA relevance)

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 91(1) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

After transmission of the draft legislative act to the national parliaments,

Having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee¹,

Having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions²,

Acting in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure,

Whereas:

¹ OJ C [...], [...], p. [...].

² OJ C [...], [...], p. [...].

- (1) Directive (EU) 2017/2397 of the European Parliament and of the Council¹ sets out transitional measures in order to ensure the continued validity of certificates of qualification, service record books and logbooks issued before the end of its transposition period and to give skilled crew members reasonable time in which to apply for a Union certificate of qualification or another certificate recognised as equivalent. However, with the exception of the Rhine navigation licences referred to in Article 1(5) of Council Directive 96/50/EC², those transitional measures do not apply to the certificates of qualification, service record books and logbooks issued by third countries that are currently recognised by Member States under their national requirements *or international agreements applicable* before the entry into force of Directive (EU) 2017/2397.
- (2) Article 10(3), (4) and (5) of Directive (EU) 2017/2397 lay down the procedure and the conditions for the recognition of certificates, service record books or logbooks issued by the authorities of a third country.
- (3) Given that the procedure for recognition of third country documents is based on the assessment of the certification systems in the requesting third country, with the purpose to determine whether the issuing of the certificates, service record books or logbooks specified in the request is subject to requirements that are identical to those laid down in Directive (EU) 2017/2397, it is unlikely that the recognition procedure will be completed before 17 January 2022.

¹ Directive (EU) 2017/2397 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2017 on the recognition of professional qualifications in inland navigation and repealing Council Directives 91/672/EEC and 96/50/EC (OJ L 345, 27.12.2017, p. 53).

² Council Directive 96/50/EC of 23 July 1996 on the harmonization of the conditions for obtaining national boatmasters' certificates for the carriage of goods and passengers by inland waterway in the Community (OJ L 235, 17.9.1996, p. 31).

- (4) In order to ensure a smooth transition to the system of the recognition of third country documents provided for in Article 10 of Directive (EU) 2017/2397, it is necessary to provide for transitional measures which would allow the time needed for the third countries to align their requirements to those laid down in that Directive, as well as for the Commission to assess their certification systems and, where appropriate to adopt an implementing act under Article 10(5) of that Directive. Those measures would also ensure legal certainty to the individuals and economic operators active in the inland waterway transport sector. In the light of those objectives, it is appropriate to set the cut-off date for third country documents falling within the scope of those transitional measures, by reference to the period for the transposition of that Directive extended by *two years*.
- (5) To ensure consistency with the transitional measures applicable to the Member States pursuant to Article 38 of Directive (EU) 2017/2397, the transitional measures applicable to certificates of qualification, service record books and logbooks issued by third countries and recognised by the Member States should not apply beyond 17 January 2032. Moreover, the recognition of such certificates of qualification, service record books and logbooks should be restricted to the Union inland waterways situated in the Member State concerned.
- (6) In order to ensure consistency with the transitional measures applicable to certificates of qualification issued by Member States, it is appropriate to clarify that *as regards third country -certificates, the identical requirements referred to in Article 10(3) of Directive (EU) 2017/2397 also include the requirements for the exchange of the existing certificates set out in Article 38(1) and (3) of that Directive*.
- (7) Therefore, in order to provide inland waterway transport companies and workers with legal clarity and certainty, Directive (EU) 2017/2397 should be amended accordingly.
- (8) In order to enable Member States to promptly proceed with the transposition of the measures for which this Directive provides, it should enter into force on the day following that of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.
- (9) *In accordance with Article 39(4) of Directive (EU) 2017/2397, Member States where inland waterway navigation is not technically possible are not obliged to transpose that Directive. The same derogation should apply to this Directive,*

HAVE ADOPTED THIS DIRECTIVE:

Article 1

Directive (EU) 2017/2397 *is amended as follows:*

(1) *in Article 10, paragraph 3 is replaced by the following:*

‘3. Without prejudice to paragraph 2, any certificate of qualification, service record book or logbook that has been issued in accordance with the national rules of a third country laying down requirements that are identical to those of this Directive, including those set out in Article 38(1) and (3), shall be valid on all Union inland waterways, subject to the procedure and the conditions set out in paragraphs 4 and 5.’;

(2) *in Article 38, the following paragraph is added:*

‘7. Until 17 January 2032, Member States may continue to recognise, on the basis of national Member State’s requirements *or international agreements applicable* before 16 January 2018, certificates of qualification, service record books and logbooks that have been issued by a third country before 18 January 2024. The recognition shall be limited to the inland waterways on the territory of the Member State concerned.

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Article 2

1. Member States shall bring into force the laws, regulations and administrative provisions necessary to comply with this Directive by 17 January 2022 at the latest. They shall forthwith communicate to the Commission the text of those provisions.

When Member States adopt those provisions, they shall contain a reference to this Directive or be accompanied by such a reference on the occasion of their official publication. Member States shall determine how such reference is to be made.

The derogation laid down in Article 39(4) of Directive 2017/2397 shall apply accordingly.

2. Member States shall communicate to the Commission the text of the main provisions of national law which they adopt in the field covered by this Directive.

Article 3

This Directive shall enter into force on the day following that of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

Article 4

This Directive is addressed to the Member States.

Done at Brussels,

For the European Parliament

The President

For the Council

The President
