



getafix-Newsletter



‘Lack of Recognition is widespread’

‘Lack of Recognition is widespread’ say professional skippers. ‘GETAFIX’, the 2-year EU-funded project, which researches the lack of recognition of skipper licences for the Small Commercial Vessel (SCV) Sector between the European Member States, has recently held its 2nd partnership meeting in Greenwich, London. During this meeting the partners discussed the most recent results of the Getafix Survey.

The Partners asked hundreds of sea schools, boating associations, charter companies, skippers and other interested parties from all over Europe to take part in the project’s survey. This survey can be found at: <http://www.getafix.eu/survey.html>.

So far, the survey has produced some very interesting results and here are some early indicators. Following are a few of the questions from the Getafix survey with the results and some of the comments received.

Question: “Are you aware of the lack of recognition of professional boating qualifications in the SCV sector between member states?”

62% of those who answered said, ‘Yes’

... and here are a few of their experiences:

• “I have UK licences but the boat I was destined to sail got registered under the French flag. For French skippers with MCA/RYA accreditation it is possible to just request regularisation with the French

system. But for foreign skippers with the same MCA/RYA licences this is not possible. They need to take a test about French maritime law and the French language. The only problem is that these tests are rarely organised. So it becomes impossible to sail as a skipper on French vessels for foreigners. The easiest way to achieve the French certificates is to take a full Captain 200 course.”

• “UK does not accept my Belgian Officer 500gt qualification (nor master 500 gt)”

• “I have the German SportHochSeeschifferSchein, but in Italy where I live and work it is not recognized as professional qualification. So I can’t work officially as skipper of commercial yachts with Italian flag.”

• “To work in Portugal you are required to carry Portuguese license (Patroa da Costa). The bureaucratic procedure to obtain this license is such that as a foreigner you won’t get it on the basis of your RYA or Dutch licenses. Why is unclear?”

Most of these accounts support the direct experiences of the Getafix project team by confirming that a lack of recognition of qualifications between Member States is a widespread problem that exists across Europe and causes restrictions in work opportunities to qualified personnel of several different European Nationalities.



Question: "Did a lack of recognition of qualifications restrict work mobility between EU Member States with regard to:"

Working (Skippering/ instructing/ etc) on certain vessels	39.37%
Working in certain countries	25.20%
Receiving certain qualifications	10.24%
none	25.20%

In conclusion:

More than 74% of the participants confirmed that their work mobility is restricted because of a lack of recognition of qualifications. These problems were experienced across several different borders and we received various accounts of these situations. Here are a few examples:

- "yes as a british skipper i cannot work on boats flagged in other countries"
- "Professional skipper qualifications of foreign skippers are not always recognised by the Portuguese local authorities"
- "Traditional German ships may not navigate in Danmark. German rules, which allow such ships to transport paying guests, are not only not accepted in Danmark, but also Traditional ships transporting only members of the owner's association are not allowed in Danmark."
- "I have to employ different skippers for different vessels dependig on their flags and skipper nationalities (all under

24 meters) even though they all have the same charter license, and all are European - it is ridiculous."

Question: 'What do you think is the cause of lack of recognition?'

From the 6 answer options offered, here are the results:

Protectionism	35%
Misinformation	19%
Level of Qualifications	17%
Disinterest	12%
Language	9%
Quality of Education	8%

These survey results indicate that the majority of the participants consider that the lack of recognition is NOT due to the standard of qualifications but mainly due to National Authorities protecting their own interests and being misinformed about foreign qualification standards.

The project will continue running the survey over the next 6 months and it is planned to reach many more interested parties during this period. We would therefore like to thank all those who have taken part so far and would appreciate if you could spread the word further and invite others to take part in the survey as well.

The Getafix Partnership Project Team.

... Further News ... Further News ... Further News ... Further News ...

Another important aspect of the project is to gather data and to provide a comparison of all European Skipper qualifications for Small Commercial Vessels. First results of this 'comparison' tool are now available on the GETAFIX website: <http://www.getafix.eu/compare.html>

Next partner meeting: in Istanbul, October 2012

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