



End to EU Stalemate on the Transfer of Yachting Qualifications

As the EU-funded [TRECNET Project](#) draws to a close, yachtsmen across Europe should soon be able to freely transfer their qualifications from country to country. Mallorca-based Sea Teach has been leading this ground-breaking exercise.

Mike John, [TRECNET Project](#) Leader and Principal of RYA Training Centre, Sea Teach, explains, “Currently, the main problem is that no European country trusts another to have the same standard of training and qualifications as itself. If you hold Yachtmaster Offshore from the UK RYA, neither Spain nor Germany will accept it to work on a boat flagged to their country. Even if the boat is identical, they will ask you to re-qualify under their rules. However, the point is, how do they know that Yachtmaster Offshore is ‘no good’ for them? They don’t. This is where our TRECNET Project, breaking down each country’s qualifications into [component parts for comparison](#), makes sense of a unfortunate situation.”

Focussed on Small Commercial Vessels (SCV) up to 24 metres, [TRECNET](#) (Transnational Recognition of European Certification in Vocational Education and Training) has been working towards mutual recognition of comparable qualifications across EU member states. Initially tackling syllabi from the UK, Spain and Germany, the Project now has interactive software for interested parties to contrast the various curricula components. Industry feedback has been positive.

Phil Edwards, Managing Director of Palma-based Crew Agency, Dovaston, says, “As a former yacht captain I can see many benefits of the [TRECNET Project](#), particularly for centres in the Mediterranean where many nationalities of crew are employed. In an ideal world, yachtsmen should be able to use their qualifications on any suitable boat; not allowing this liberty seems to go against the EU ethos of free movement of labour. Transferable qualifications would certainly make our work at Dovaston much easier and allow us to give yachts a far greater choice of suitable candidates. We fully support the work that is being undertaken and will help in any way we can to move the Project forward.”



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John Wyborn, Director of Bluewater Crew Training, agrees, “Failure for EU countries to cross-recognize the smaller maritime qualifications is a major block to the free movement of labour supposedly guaranteed by the Union. At the moment UK Yachtmaster 200gt Certificates of Competency are recognised only by the French and Italians in a reciprocal arrangement. Even worse is the problem of basic STCW crew training. Those who have paid for the four courses that make up the STCW qualification in the UK are required to attend them again if they wish to work under either a Spanish or Italian flag. It’s a mess and the seafarer is paying for bureaucratic maladministration.”

Finally, Linda Revall, Principal of Aigua Sea School, comments, “We specialize in training and examining candidates at RYA Yachtmaster level – a qualification that is known and respected worldwide. Spanish candidates are well aware that their Yachtmaster qualification will serve them well outside of their own country and are frustrated that their own government will not recognise their title.”

The [TRECNET Project](#) has been underway for over a year and is operated by a consortium of maritime professionals from across Europe including the UK, Poland, Germany and Spain – plus support from the University of Barcelona. Project Leader Mike John finishes, “The next step is to present the results to the relevant maritime authorities and get them to sit together and work things out – for the good of the yachting industry and all those who work in it.”

TRECNET’s [End of Project Conference](#) is scheduled for 20 September 2013 and will be held in Palma de Mallorca - admission is free. Maritime authorities and institutions, crew agencies, accrediting bodies, shipping companies and journalists will be present at the Conference and an open invitation applies to all interested parties.

For more information about the Project and Conference visit www.trecnet.eu or write to info@trecnet.eu