



Centro Studi "C.E. DI FO.P."

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Press release

**Training course funded by the European Social Fund concluded in Palermo.
But aspiring divers continue to miss several job opportunities**

OTS course students awaiting final exams Cedifop's “pressure” on regional bodies

Competent the Department of Labor, which in turn awaits the okay from the Department of Training



PALERMO (Jan. 16, 2025) - Waiting times are getting longer and longer for the realization of the final exams of the professional training course of Operatore Tecnico Subacqueo (OTS), organized by the Centro Studi Cedifop and financed with funds from the European Social Fund (ESF), which ended last Nov. 14 at the Sammuzzo pier, at the port of Palermo.

To date, no response to the pec where the Entity requested information on the competencies related to the final exams sent to the Department since October last year, and no response to the subsequent request for exams entered in the Training portal in early December.

According to the Entity, everything should have been simple and clear, as stated in Presidential Decree No. 9 of April 5, 2022, on the remodeling of the organizational structures of the Regional Departments and the subsequent communications issued by the Department of Training, regarding previous exams where it was specified that “the competencies were ascribed to the Regional Department of Labor.” But to date, no communication has yet been sent by the Training Department.

In the meantime, while waiting to find out which department will conduct the examinations, the result is that trainees are always left waiting.

An emblematic example is that of student Mattia Seminara, who in an email sent to

the institution wrote, “Good morning director, updates on the situation? Please know that I have already lost three job opportunities. Can you put more pressure on the Assessor?”

He was joined by the case of an Ecuadorian student who was unable to take up a job opportunity abroad, and many others who are in danger of losing concrete offers as well.

It has to be said that, of the 15 trainees participating in the course, 12 completed the additional Inshore training and earned the relevant underwater welder's certificate, making themselves immediately attractive to a Ravenna company operating in the Adriatic Sea. But, without recognition of the OTS certificate, even these job opportunities remain on hold.

It is crucial to remember that, the OTS level is the basis for accessing the subsequent Inshore and Offshore pathways, as regulated in 2016 by Sicilian regional legislation and in 2024 introduced in Friuli Venezia Giulia as well. Yet while in Friuli there is organic and rapid management, in Sicily-the region that first promoted a pioneering law on diving-the system appears paralyzed by inefficiencies.

What's more, the numbers leave no room for doubt: since 2020, Cedifop has documented a surplus of requests from various companies for divers over their own qualified operators, to which can now be added another 12 of the 15 OTS course students who have completed the requirements to register with the Telematic Directory of Industrial Diving at the Department of Labor. An online public archive, managed directly by Service VI of the Labor Department, which, to date, has 152 professional divers from all over Italy and abroad, all trained at Cedifop, in high demand in both the domestic and foreign markets.

Yet the institution is still stuck, with the Department of Training having received all the necessary documentation but no definitive response. This administrative stalemate is not only unacceptable, but is actually harming young people and the companies that apply for them.

“It is painful,” stresses Manos Kouvakis, director of the Cedifop Study Center, “to see how Friuli Venezia Giulia, which has in fact 'copied' the Sicilian law, manages to give maximum visibility, while here, where it all began, we continue to mistreat our own legislation, making it at times totally incomprehensible and confusing for not wanting to apply what the same legislation provides.”

Cedifop calls for greater clarity and definite timeframes to complete the bureaucratic process so that young people are no longer hostage to administrative inefficiencies. Sicily, a land of opportunity in the diving sector, risks compromising its future because of a system that, at least for the moment, is not working.

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