

# SAFETY OF UNDERWATER ACTIVITIES

The national reform builds on Sicily's experience and reshapes the sector's training standards from our full member Cedefop.



**PALERMO (1 February 2026) – The Chamber of Deputies and the Senate of the Republic have approved Law No. 9 of 26 January 2026 on “Provisions concerning the safety of underwater activities.”**

The law introduces several measures regarding the training and professional qualification of underwater and hyperbaric operators. The Agency for the Safety of Underwater Activities is tasked with defining training pathways and professional qualifications for underwater and hyperbaric operators (Art. 6). Registration in a dedicated professional register is mandatory for technical underwater operators working in shallow, medium, and deep waters, as well as for hyperbaric technicians (Art. 19).

Training and professional qualification of underwater and hyperbaric operators are regulated by a decree of the President of the Republic, following an agreement within the Unified Conference (Art. 25). The Agency for the Safety of Underwater Activities may promote specialist training, including through university programs, scholarships, doctoral programs, research contracts, and initiatives related to the universal civil service (Art. 6).

## **Requirements for registration in the professional register**

The law establishes that the require-

ments for registration in the professional register of underwater and hyperbaric operators will be defined by a decree of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport (Art. 21). These requirements include participation in specific training courses and passing a qualification examination. Recognition of qualifications obtained abroad.

The law regulates the procedure for recognizing qualifications obtained abroad for the practice of underwater and hyperbaric activities in Italy (Art. 22). The recognition procedure will be defined by a decree of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport and may include the assessment of submitted documentation and verification of the operator's skills.

Overall, the law aims to ensure the safety and professional qualifications of underwater and hyperbaric operators by defining training pathways and professional standards, as well as regulating registration in the professional register and recognition of foreign qualifications. This will help reduce safety risks and improve the quality of services provi-

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ded by underwater and hyperbaric operators. It is worth noting that Sicily already has a law regulating training pathways for industrial diving activities: Regional Law No. 7 of 21 April 2016. This law defines the training content for industrial diving and could serve as a model for the new national legislation. The new law may therefore represent an opportunity to harmonize training provisions at the national level and ensure greater safety and professional qualification for underwater and hyperbaric operators throughout Italy.