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PRESS RELEASE

Unapproved Courses Raise Concern for IMCA. Cedifop and Sicilian Region Set a Positive Example

Diver Training, Safety Alert Issued

The Importance of Minimum Standards According to the International Marine Contractors Association



PALERMO (7 July 2025) – Safety in professional diver training is of utmost importance, particularly in offshore contexts where operating conditions are often critical. The IMCA (International Marine Contractors Association) recently issued a warning regarding the spread of unrecognized or even fictitious courses offered by non-accredited diving schools.

IMCA has set specific minimum requirements for the training of offshore divers, including both theoretical and practical modules, as well as specific competencies related to the use of diving equipment and techniques. According to official circulars, these standards may be met by following the IDSA (International Diving Schools Association) protocol for Surface Supplied Offshore Air Divers (Level 3), provided that the training regime is subject to credible independent government oversight or a designated agency, with a single institutional point of contact.

IMCA only recognizes training certificates issued or approved by national or regional government bodies or their appointed agencies,

such as a country's Navy. Certificates issued solely by training schools are not deemed valid. This highlights the need for close collaboration between training centers and competent authorities to ensure that courses meet international standards and deliver high-quality professional preparation.

One initiative aligned with this approach is the Telematic Registry for Industrial Diving, managed by the Regional Department of Labor, Employment, Guidance, Services, and Vocational Training of the Sicilian Region. The registry includes divers who have undergone detailed verification of their individual logbooks, documenting the number and type of dives completed in line with IDSA standards.

A virtuous example at national level is represented by Cedifop, a professional training center for industrial diving based in the port of Palermo. Cedifop trains operators for both inshore and offshore work, and their names are recorded in the Sicilian Region's registry. The center is also accredited by the ETF (European Training Foundation) as a center of excellence for professional training, as confirmed by the official website of the agency, which supports skills development in non-EU partner countries.

Nonetheless, IMCA continues to identify unauthorized training schemes that put at risk not only divers, but also all personnel involved in offshore operations. This situation calls for prompt and coordinated action to protect both professionalism and workers' safety.

In conclusion, diver training remains a critical issue for ensuring the safety and quality of underwater operations. The joint efforts of IMCA, IDSA, the Sicilian Region, and Cedifop serve as a model for promoting high standards in industrial diving. Only through collective commitment can safe conditions and adequate competencies be guaranteed for those who choose this fascinating, yet inherently hazardous, profession.

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