



# **The Workboat Association** **Post Brexit overseas continuity**

Edition 2



31<sup>st</sup> October 2019

# UK domestic vessels operating in EU waters

## Post Brexit continuity

Prior to this week's [\(fl\)extension agreement from the EU](#) regarding the withdrawal Brexit date, possibilities that the UK were to leave the EU with a hard Brexit was high. This [28.10.2019] news means that the UK could now leave the EU with a deal on the last day of November or December 2019 or January 2020. Though, we now need to consider the recently planned General Election for December 12<sup>th</sup> 2019, with the opportunity for a 'snap' Referendum still on the cards. With UK political stability replicating that of a '[stiff](#)' ship, the need to hold individual agreements with non-UK [Workboat] stakeholder countries to ensure operable continuity is paramount.

The Workboat Association has identified the key European stakeholder countries where UK Workboats operate, as;

- Denmark
- Germany
- The Netherlands
- Belgium
- France

The above mentioned not only for their geographical neighbouring location but also the applicable high commercial activity, *if there is any other flag states that members have significant interest in or contrary knowledge of, please can you contact the Workboat Association via; [chiefexecutive@workboatassociation.org](mailto:chiefexecutive@workboatassociation.org) .*

The Workboat Association has been researching and speaking unofficially with the individual flag state administrations of these nominated key European stakeholder countries [where UK Workboats operate] to establish what operating restrictions may be in place following the UK's exit of the European Union.

The current understanding as of 31.10.2019 is as follows;

### **Denmark**

It is confirmed by the UK Department for Transport that there are no known trading restrictions in place for Denmark, in regards to Cabotage. Contact with the survey team of the 'Danish Maritime Authority' (Danish flag administration) has unofficially confirmed that there has been no instruction to the Inspectorate or its stakeholders that UK vessels will be treated any differently following Brexit – though they are confirming this internally and will revert.

### **Germany**

Captain Hans-Joachim Wiegmann, Head of Nautical Department for the Ship Safety Division of the BG Verkehr has informed the Workboat Association directly that Germany are happy to accept UK (or other non-German domestic Workboats) in German waters to operate commercially as long as they have a valid German Certificate of Equivalence and meet the requirements regarding Masters Certification; (Master Workboat <500gt near coastal + cargo module) or above. Captain Wiegmann is double checking with the Ministry but is confident that there is no negative affect following Brexit to harm UK domestic vessels.

## Netherlands

Contact with the survey team of the 'Netherlands Shipping Inspectorate' (Dutch flag administration) has unofficially confirmed that there has been no instruction to the Inspectorate or its stakeholders that UK vessels will be treated any differently following Brexit, deal or no-deal and therefore it is not predicted by them at this late stage that this would change - though this is not officially documented anywhere and has not come from the Ministry.

## Belgium

The Belgian and UK governments are in communication with interest to form an agreement to allow for operations to continue unaffected following Brexit; separate to an EU deal. Captain Bart Heylbroeck, Adviser General of the Belgian Maritime Inspectorate, has explained the following; UK coded Workboats are welcomed to work in Belgian waters following they meet the following criteria; only vessels certified to [IACS99](#) (see link) by a recognised organisation are permitted to work in Belgian waters, single person operations are at no times permitted in Belgian waters, and the minimum Master CoC accepted in Belgian waters is a Commercially Endorsed Yacht Master Offshore. [An overview of this is available on the WA website](#) for further reference.

## France

It is yet to be established what the French interpretation of the situation is, I have contacted the 'Sous-direction de la sécurité maritime' (French Flag state) though currently we have not received a reply. Reflecting on previous operating experience and the published media surrounding the vision of the post-Brexit Anglo-French relationship, it is anticipated that the creation of a similar agreement structure such as the Belgian flag could be possible. *Unconfirmed.*

More Brexit preparation information can be found on the [Department for International Trade's website](#) or by contacting the Workboat Association [via this link](#).

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