

News

Renault, Nissan
invest in South
Korea production



'Malta Maritime Pilots Co-op is an example to follow'

Infrastructure Minister Austin Gatt yesterday lauded the Malta Maritime Pilots Co-operative which he said should be a benchmark to co-operatives or similar organisations. He was speaking at the Certipilot International consultation event.

The Certipilot project, he said, proves in a practical and tangible way the benefits of EU membership and a smart way of making use of the Lifelong Learning Programme. "In this case, the availability of funds combined with the right idea have created an opportunity for professional development in a very specialised area which, in this case, will contribute to improved standards of service that should in return enhance the safety, efficiency and competitiveness of our ports."

Since the establishment of the Malta Maritime Pilots Co-operative in 2003, the maritime pilots have always worked closely with the Maritime Authority and more recently with Transport Malta to anticipate the needs of the industry. They have invested a considerable part of their earnings to ensure that they provide the highest level of service. Their investment includes the upgrade of the pilots' boats, including the investment in two new pilot boats costing €2 million, bringing the fleet to six pilot boats; each individual pilot has received the highest level of professional training available on the market; and the setting up of a Maritime Research Centre including a ship simulator that allows training in the local scenario, primarily pilotage and ship handling in the ports of Valletta and Marsaxlokk.

During 2011, 11,750 ships called at Maltese ports or were rendered a service in Maltese waters, and just 3,983 of the vessels made use of the pilotage service, Dr Gatt said.

2011 shipping

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In the first six months of this year, a total of 5,129 ships called at Maltese ports or were rendered a service in Maltese waters. 1,710 made use of the pilotage service. During the last 18 months, 374 of these ships were over 300 metres in length and these were either cruise liners calling at the cruise terminal in Valletta or containerships calling for transshipment operations at the Mata Freeport.

Certipilot paves the ground for mutual recognition of maritime pilots' vocational training undertaken in all those countries which will decide to adopt this system. In a world where ports and nautical services need to constantly adapt to the demands of shipping, it is a very useful tool to understand not only which skills and competences need to be enhanced, but also what type of training needs to be developed.



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