



Merchant Shipping Directorate



## USE OF ELECTRONIC CERTIFICATES

### Merchant Shipping Notice 139

*Notice to Shipowners, Ship Operators, Managers, Masters,  
Owners' Representatives and Recognised Organisations*

This Administration advocates the maritime industry's transformation towards smarter ships and intelligent ports, so as to facilitate greater administrative and operational efficiencies. To this effect, Recognised Organisations (ROs) acting under the authority of the Government of Malta are encouraged to develop such capabilities that align with our objective to bring about greater efficiency for the multiple stakeholders.

In view of the above, particular reference is made to the Guidelines for the Use of Electronic Certificates (FAL.5/Circ.39/Rev.2) adopted by the International Maritime Organization (IMO). The Guidelines provide guidance to facilitate the use and acceptance of electronic certificates with the aim to reduce the administrative burden on Administrations, port State control officials, ships' crew and other stakeholders caused by, amongst other reasons, the reliance on traditional paper certificates.

In this regard, ROs issuing statutory certificates to ships flying the Malta Flag are being authorised and encouraged to develop capabilities to issue electronic versions of the statutory certificates to replace the traditional paper statutory certificates.

The electronic statutory certificates issued by ROs to Maltese registered ships shall comply with FAL.5/Circ.39/Rev.2 which, *inter alia*, identifies the following features:

- (i) validity and consistency with the format and content required by the relevant international convention or instrument;
- (ii) protected from edits, modifications or revisions;
- (iii) a unique tracking number for verification;
- (iv) reliably and securely verifiable through a conveniently accessible and continuously available platform; and
- (v) a printable and visible symbol that confirms the source of issuance.

The electronic statutory certificates issued by ROs in accordance to FAL.5/Circ.39/Rev.2 shall be deemed valid in accordance with all applicable international instruments. In addition, the RO must provide clear and simple instructions for any party who may wish to verify the validity and authenticity of the electronic statutory certificates.

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Merchant Shipping Directorate  
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Notwithstanding the compliance with requirements under the Malta flag, owners of ships flying the Malta flag should still continue to exercise the necessary due diligence to address any entry and clearance requirements that are specific to foreign ports that the ship calls at.

Owners of Maltese ships who wish to be issued with electronic certificates should approach the RO to enquire if they were ready to issue the electronic certificates and to confirm the suitability of ship to replace the traditional paper certificates with electronic versions.

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26 October 2017

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