



REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

**SHIPPING DEPUTY MINISTRY TO THE PRESIDENT**

Our ref: 04.03.001

5 April 2022

Chair Reporter

Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination  
High Commission of UN for Human Rights, Geneva

[OHCHR-mercenaries@un.org](mailto:OHCHR-mercenaries@un.org)

**Subject: Call for inputs: report on Maritime Security, input by Shipping Deputy Ministry, Republic of Cyprus**

— In order to regulate unlawful acts against Cyprus flag ships, the Government of the Republic of Cyprus enacted Law 77(I) of 2012 (**attachment 1**).

The Competent Authority for the implementation of the provisions of the Law is the Shipping Deputy Minister (SDM), acting through public officials authorized for that purpose by the Minister. Cyprus flag ships may carry armed guards on board while transiting High Risk Areas (HRA) as defined within the Law (First Schedule). The authorized armed guards are members of an approved and authorized Private Ship Security Company (PSSC) with the use of regulated and approved firearms.

— The process by which a PSSC is approved, is quite extensive and is guided by an SDM Circular 09/2017 (**attachment 2**). At the end of the process, if the application is successful, the PSSC is issued a Certificate of Approval. All companies with valid certificates are listed on the website of the Shipping Deputy Ministry ([www.shipping.gov.cy](http://www.shipping.gov.cy)). There are currently eleven certified Companies as PSSC.

The number of firearms with their series numbers are controlled as are the armed guards, their training, competence and clean criminal record. The firearms are kept in controlled floating armories and are only embarked on the Cyprus flag vessel in question at the start of the passage through the High Risk Area. During the passage, the firearms are kept locked by the Captain and are only provided to the Guards if there is imminent threat. The firearms are subsequently disembarked at the end of the passage to floating armories.

Typically within a year, there are about 250 passages through HRA for which armed guards are requested to board. Each boarding is authorized on a case by case by officials of the SDM. Since 2012, when the implementation of the provisions of the law commenced, there are no significant incidents recorded regarding safety of life at sea.



For any further detail clarifications and inquiries about implementation of the Law, please do not hesitate to contact directly the Shipping Deputy Ministry of the Republic of Cyprus [shipscontrol@dms.gov.cy](mailto:shipscontrol@dms.gov.cy).

Please be informed that you can publish our submission to the website of the working group.

A handwritten signature in black ink, enclosed in a hand-drawn oval. The signature appears to be 'Ioannis Efstratiou' written in a cursive style.

Ioannis Efstratiou  
Director, Safety and Environmental Protection Directorate  
For Acting Permanent Secretary

Attachment 1. Cyprus Law 77(I) of 2012  
Attachment 2. SDM Circular 09 of 2017

CC Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
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