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PRESS RELEASE

*Industrial diving: the Cedifop Study Centre Director's reply
to the e-mail from a young man wishing to complete the training course*

**Manos Kouvakis: 'Everything has to be redone because a
a 'simple' OTS course to access Inshore Diver'.**



PALERMO (30 September 2024) - A few days ago, a request arrived on Cedifop's mailbox from a young man who here in Sicily is completing a course for OTS (Operatore tecnico subacqueo - Technical Diving Operator) financed by the Sicilian Region. At the end of the course, the young man would like to continue by enrolling in the next Cedifop 'Inshore Diver' course. The reply to the email came directly from Manos Kouvakis, director of the Cedifop study centre, a professional training centre for industrial divers operating in the port of Palermo.

'Despite having the same titles,' Manos Kouvakis explains, 'in reality, the Cedifop's OTS has several differences in content with all the other courses that take place in Sicily (with respect to Law 07/2016 and Presidential Decree no. 31/2018). In fact, this difference makes it impossible to continue without repeating the financed or paid OTS course. During the activities of the OTS course (which has no depth limits with dives within the port area, ed.) at Cedifop, as per the Sicilian Region Presidential Decree No. 31/2018 published (for the Inshore level) on page 7 of the Pdf thematic areas, inserted in the Sicilian Region portal: <https://pti.regione.sicilia.it>, we carry out about

80% of the dives'.

'The remaining 20 per cent,' Kouvakis continues, 'is completed with the subsequent Inshore Diver course, which provides training credits for those who have already done the OTS. All other diving schools do not even manage to cover the 20% of the course indicated by law. This huge gap prevents those who have already been trained elsewhere from continuing their training with us. Dura lex, sed lex. With the Ots course that we are currently running, we have so far completed 90 days out of the 125 provided by the training course with these characteristics: Scuba from 0-19 metres completed 337 dives with 13,459 minutes; Scuba from 20-30 metres completed 88 dives with 3,063 minutes; Surface (air via umbilical from the surface) from 0-19 metres made 216 dives with 3,897 minutes; Surface (air via umbilical from the surface) from 20-30 metres made 51 dives with 1,735 minutes; communication (assistant dive supervisor) made 2,700 minutes; umbilical management made 7,319 minutes; dressing assistance made 2,312 minutes. Finally, as stand-by, 2288 minutes were realised. These eight steps are monitored daily by the Cedifop training staff and are first reported on special sheets and then passed on to an Excel file which checks the times and averages of each trainee. All this precisely as stated in Article 2 of the Cedifop Study Centre regulations'.

'Finally, according to the Idsa standards, provided for by LR 07/2016 (art. 3.2) and DPRS no. 31/2018, for each step the minutes of individual activity are recorded, from the sum of the same is then deducted the class average for which a tolerance of 20% is allowed. If a student falls below the average/class average in more than 2 steps, he/she will not be admitted to the final examinations of the course taken up to that point. All this allows an even distribution of the course activities over all learners, who are updated almost daily on the results achieved in order to correct the course if necessary, and are then able to be admitted to the final examinations. Almost all of the students who are taking the OTS course, financed by the European Social Fund, will go on to the paid Inshore course, which will allow them a rapid employment outlet, given the many requests that reach Cedifop from underwater work companies. Our organisation had also requested a course that would have taken the students directly to the OTS-Inshore level, but the region did not fund it. And so the selected students who decided to pay for it out of their own pockets are all already working. A reflection should be made by the competent bodies at this point.

While waiting for new calls for tenders, to start publicly funded courses in 2025, Cedifop is preparing a free OTS course for a fee (already authorised by the Department of Labour) scheduled to start on 2 December. And when there are still two months to go until the start, there are already 18 students from all over the world who have completed registration for the course. Chile, Croatia, Morocco, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Verona, Gavardo, Rimini just to name a few countries of origin and only two from Sicily and the 'neighbouring' Calabria and Puglia.

'The small number of Sicilians enrolling in the courses,' Manos Kouvakis concludes, 'is unfortunately determined by the high costs that many of them or their parents cannot cope with. And it is a pity that, although it is currently the only one at national level to have enacted an appropriate law, which is also appreciated at international level, the Sicilian Region has not yet implemented this concept'.

CENTRO STUDI CEDIFOP – Formazione professionale subacquea industriale

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Centro accreditato dalla Regione Siciliana CIR AC4847 – Socio Camera di Commercio Italiana per la Germania

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