

## Shipping & Transport - Cyprus

### Anti-piracy law enters into force

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The Protection of Cyprus Ships against Acts of Piracy and Other Unlawful Acts Law 2012 has entered into force following publication in the *Official Gazette* on June 15 2012 (for further information on this topic please see "[Draft law on protection of Cyprus ships from acts of piracy](#)"). The law incorporates the recommendations and guidance of the International Maritime Organisation regarding the use of privately contracted armed security personnel on board ships navigating in high-risk areas. It also takes into account the provisions of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, particularly the rights of a state as a port and a coastal state within its internal waters, territorial sea and contiguous zone.

The scope of the law extends beyond acts and attempts of piracy and purports to address all unlawful acts against a ship or attempts to violate the security of the ship. It includes a broad definition of 'unlawful acts' to include any act or suspicious act or circumstance which, by its nature or context, threatens the security of the ship or may cause damage to the ship, to persons on board or to the cargo.

The law provides that Cyprus ships navigating through high-risk areas must implement compulsory security measures over and above those set out in Chapter XI-2 of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea and the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code, taking into account the relevant recommendations and guidelines published by the International Maritime Organisation and the shipping industry. It also enables the operator of a Cyprus ship (whether owner, bareboat charterer or manager) to request permission to engage private contractors providing armed or unarmed security guards when the ship is navigating through high-risk areas. The request should be justified by a reasoned security risk assessment and the contractor and its personnel should be among those licensed by the government to provide such services.

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