

Section 1 – Brief Overview of the Union of Comoros International Ships Registry

1.1 – The Country of the Union of Comoros

Geography

The Comoro Islands are an archipelago of four islands and several islets located in western Indian Ocean about ten to twelve degrees south of the Equator and less than 200 miles off the East African coast. The archipelago is the result of volcanic action along a fissure in the seabed running west-northwest to east-southeast. The four major islands are Ngazidja, Mwali, Nzwani, and Mayotte. The total area of the four islands is 785 square miles (2,034 square kilometers).

Population

The total **population** of the Comoro Islands is estimated to be over 700,000 people today. Over 27% live in urban areas.

In recent decades the population was increased by the forced evacuation of Comorians from Madagascar and Zanzibar. The present population increase is an estimated 3.5% per year with an annual birth rate of 47 births per 1,000 and an annual death rate of 12 deaths per 1,000 population. The most recent estimate of the total fertility rate is 6.8 children born per woman. Life expectancy at birth is 54 years for males and 59 for females.

The inhabitants are a blend of various peoples of the Indian Ocean littoral. African, Malagasy, and Arabic features are clearly evident. Maritime commerce before entry of Europeans into the Indian Ocean brought Comorians into contact with peoples from southern Africa to southeast Asia. Since the end of the fifteenth century European influence has also impacted upon Comorian life.

Language

The official languages of The Union of the Comoros are French and Arabic. French is the language of government while Arabic is the language of Islam, the major religion in the Republic. French is used as the official language on the island of Mayotte.

In daily life, most people speak one or more varieties of Comorian, the language group indigenous to the islands. It is closely related to the Swahili of the East African coast. Comorian is typical of a Bantu language with a large number of noun classes and an elaborate set of verb tenses and aspects. For centuries, people have used Arabic script to write Comorian and there is an attempt presently to normalize an orthography for writing the varieties of the language in Roman script.

The rich vocabulary of Comorian has been enhanced by the borrowing of words from many other languages. Since Comorians have been involved in maritime trade for a thousand years or more, they have come into contact with a number of different peoples and their language reflects this contact. Words of Indian, Persian, Arabic, Portuguese, English, and French origin have been added to those of African ancestry.

There are four varieties of Comorian spoken in the islands: Shingazidja, Shimwali, Shinzwani, and Shimaore, each one named for the primary island on which it is spoken.

Economy

Traditionally, seaborne trade played an important role in the islands' economy. Today, agriculture is the principal economic activity with crops grown both for domestic consumption and export. The major food crops are cassava, coconut, bananas, rice, sweet potatoes, pulses, and corn. Vanilla, ylang-ylang, cloves, and copra have been the major export crops.

The Comoros were the world's leading producer of the essence of ylang-ylang, and oil widely used in the perfume industry. The islands were also the world's second-largest producer of vanilla. Some animal husbandry is undertaken by individual farmers and a small scale fishing industry exists. Coelacanth specimens provided some income for fishermen and the government. This fish was thought by western scientists to have been extinct for 70 million years but has been caught by local fishermen for years. At one time it was sold to the local government and resold to museums and research centers all over the world.

There is a small tourist industry on the Islands which had been recently promoted by South African interests.

France has been the major trading partner of the Comoros. The Islands have a relatively large negative trade balance and the government has been for many years dependent upon external aid.

The currency of the country is the Comorian franc. Its value is tied to the French franc at 75 Comorian francs to 1 French franc. There are banks on the islands of Ngazidja, Nzwani, and Maore but no bank on Mwali.

Located in a strategic position at the northern end of the Mozambique Channel, the Union of Comoros Islands once played a major role in a thriving world economy of the western Indian Ocean. The archipelago arose from the seabed of the western Indian Ocean as a result of volcanic activity. The four major islands are Ngazidja (Grande Comore), Mwali (Moheli), Nzwani (Anjouan) and Maore (Mayotte).

1.2 – The Union of Comoros Maritime Administration's Legal Framework

The Maritime Administration of the Union of Comoros, headed by the Commissioner of Maritime Affairs, whilst being administered by the State's Ministry of International Transport, has been delegated to with the full operation, development and protection of the Union of Comoros Ships International Registry, worldwide.

1.3 – The Maritime Administration's duties and functions

The duties and functions of the Maritime Administration of the Union of Comoros include the following-although non-exhaustive:

- a. Registration of ships
- b. Administration and enforcement of the Merchant Shipping Act 2001 legislation
- c. To develop shipping and to ensure that the country's maritime activities are conducted in accordance with the local and international standards of maritime safety and pollution prevention.
- d. Enforcement of International Maritime Conventions and safety regulations for its registered fleet.
- e. Investigation of Marine Casualties

1.4 – Union of Comoros Modern Legal Regime

The Union of Comoros Merchant Shipping Act 2001 provides a modern legal framework for the operation of a competitive international Ship Registry. The Shipping Act 2001:

- a. Makes full provision for modern trends in relation to ownership and registration
- b. Provides simplified yet secure mortgage recording and enforcement provisions
- c. Implements all major IMO Conventions.

1.5 – IMO & Comoros Participation activities

The Union of Comoros has active presence and participation at the IMO so to maintain a close pace with the evolvments and developments on the issues effecting safety and environmental protection.

Professional staff and executives from the Union of Comoros Maritime Administration, participate in the numerous IMO working groups, sub-committee meetings.

1.6 – Union of Comoros International Ships Registry Highlights

- a. Member of the United Nations
- b. Member to the International Maritime Organization
- c. Signatory state to numerous IMO Conventions
- d. Member to the IMO White List
- e. Democratic country with a free market economy
- f. Full protection for financiers & mortgagees
- g. Competitive Ship Registration Costs
- h. Highly qualified managerial, clerical, & administrative staff available

Section 2 – Registration Procedures & Applicable Requirements

2.1 – Provisional Registration

For the Provisional registration of a vessel (certificates with six month validity) copies of the here below documents are required:

1. APPLICATION FORM TO REGISTER A SHIP

The application form should be completed as appropriate. Upon completion must be stamped and signed by ship's owners/managers.

2. BILL OF SALE

- In case that the ownership under the flag will be the same as under ship's existing flag, a copy of the last Bill of Sale is required. In this Bill of Sale the signature of sellers must be notarised and a notary, lawyer, consul, or any other official authority should authenticate the copy as "certified true copy of the original one."
- In case that a new Bill of Sale is executed and consequently the ownership under the flag will be a different one than the owner under existing flag, this Bill of Sale is required. In this Bill of Sale a notary, lawyer, consul, or any other official authority must verify the signatures of both Sellers and Buyers.

3. GOOD-STANDING CERTIFICATE

An updated good-standing certificate of the owning company of the vessel is necessary.

4. NON OF ENCUMBRANCES OR DELETION CERTIFICATE

Also is mandatory an updated Non of Encumbrances or Deletion certificate of the vessel from its existing registry.

5. CONFIRMATION OF SHIP'S CLASS SOCIETY

A fax confirmation should be sent directly to the Maritime Administration by the ship's Classification Society confirming that they will issue its Class & Trading certificates under the flag upon completion of its registration and surveys.

6. CONFIRMATION FROM RADIO TRAFFIC ACCOUNTING AUTHORITY

A fax confirmation addressed to the Maritime Administration must be sent directly from ship's Radio Traffic Accounting Authority confirming that the vessel is in contact with them.

7. CONFIRMATION FROM VESSEL'S P&I CLUB.

A fax confirmation addressed to the Maritime Administration must be sent directly from vessel's P&I club confirming that the vessel has been insured.

8. ITC'69

Copy of ship's ITC'69 (International Tonnage Certificate 1969) under the existing flag is required.

9. COPIES OF SHIP'S EXISTING GOVERNMENTAL CERTIFICATES

Copies of Registration, Radio Station License and Minimum Safe Manning certificates of the vessel under the existing flag are required.

10. ISM certificates

If ISM Code is applicable for the vessel, copies of existing DOC and SMC certificates are required for submission or a copy of the DOC of managing company in the case of a new purchase vessel.

By the receipt of all previous mentioned documents through fax or e-mail and provided the simultaneously settlement of the fee applicable, the Provisional Registration can be performed.

2.3 – Permanent Registration

Later or within three months from the date of Provisional Registration of the vessel, following documents must be submitted to us in original in order to be able to proceed in ship's permanent registration:

- a. Original Application Form
- b. Original or Certified true copy of notarized Bill of Sale
- c. Continuous Synopsis Record (CSR) from the previous flag, in which the date that the ship "ceased to register with" must be mentioned
- d. Original Deletion Certificate from previous Flag
- e. Original ships Carving and Making note Filled in and Stamped by Class surveyor
- f. Original radio installation survey report Filled in & stamped by Class Surveyor
- g. Copies of valid Class & Statutory Certificates under the flag (if applicable)
- h. Copies of ISM SMC/DOC certificates under the flag

2.5 – Parallel Registration

Requirements for Bareboat Registration

For a bare boat Registration under the Union of Comoros Flag the here below documents are required:

- Application Form
- Updating Good standing Certificate (of the owning company)
- Copies of ISM Certificates (DOC & SMC) if applicable
- Copy of International Tonnage Certificate
- Confirmation from vessel's Classification Society (if applicable)
- Confirmation from responsible Radio Accounting Authority plus AAIC
- Payment of Registration Fees and Annual Taxes (as per Master Tariff)
- Transcript of Register from the Foreign Registry
- Copy of the Bareboat Charter party
- Written consent from the Foreign Registry

Requirements for Registration of Bareboat under Foreign Flag

For Registration of Bareboat under Foreign Flag the here below documents are required:

- Payment of Fees
- Copy of Barefoot Charter Party
- Confirmation from the intended foreign Flag that dual Registration is permitted
- Return of the Original Comoros Registration Certificates

2.6 – Mortgages

Registration of Mortgage

For the registration of a mortgage under the Union of Comoros Flag the following documents are required:

- Application Form dully signed
- Original Mortgage deed signed by both Parties (signatures should be notarized)
- Affidavit of Good Faith dully notarized
- Minutes of meeting of the mortgagor, Legalized
- Power of attorney (of the Mortgagor) dully notarized
- Payment of Mortgage Registration Fees (as per Tariff)

Discharge of Mortgage

For the discharge of mortgage the following documents are required:

- a. Application Form dully signed
- b. Original Discharge Certificate signed by the mortgage, dully notarized
- c. Power of Attorney (of the Mortgagee) dully notarized

Section 3 – Recognized Classification Societies

3.1 – Class and statutory

The Union of Comoros Maritime Administration has delegated the statutory and certification services only to the worldwide recognized Classification Societies members to:

- **The International Association of Classification Societies** (known as IACS)
- **The International Association of Technical Survey and Classification Institutions** (known as TSCI)

Thus ensuring the efficient and effective technical inspections of the Comoros flagged vessels in line with the applicable safety regulations.

More specifically, the classification societies recognized by the Union of Comoros Maritime Administration, according to the State's Merchant Shipping Act 2001, are:

American Bureau of Shipping	Lloyd's Register
Bulgarian Register	Nippon Kaiji Kyokai
Bureau Veritas	Polish Register of Shipping
Croatian Register of Shipping	Russian Maritime Register of Shipping
Cuban Register of Shipping	Russian River Register
Germanischer Lloyd	Shipping Register of Ukraine
Indian Register of Shipping	Slovak Lloyd
International Naval Surveys Bureau	Vietnamese Register
Korean Register of Shipping	

Section 4 – Mariners

Shortly after its establishment, and having communicated the required information to the Secretary-General of IMO, the Comorian registry was recognized by the International Maritime Organization as a party to the International Convention on Standards of Training Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW) 1978, as amended, that gives full and complete effect to the relevant provisions for the Convention.

Since December 7th, 2001, when the Secretary general of IMO communicated to the Commissioner for Maritime Affairs that the Comorian registry had joined the White List of the STCW parties, this Flag Administration has been doing its utmost to ensure the effective and continuous implementation of the revised Convention's provisions, promoting safety of life at sea.

Applicants are kindly requested to submit the following documents for the issuance of endorsements of recognition of their certificates of competency under the provisions of the STCW 78/95 convention:

Original application form, duly completed and signed.

Original or true certified copy of a valid STCW '95 certificate of officer issued by a "White List" administration

Officer's Medical fitness certificate issued during the last 12 months (maximum)

Four (4) colored passport photographs

Sample of the officer's signature in case the **application form** is not signed by him.

Copy of the officer's valid national passport.