

CIRCULAR

Subject: Amendments to the Turkish Straits Vessel Traffic Regulation Implementation Directive

Date of Entry into Force: 13 October 2025

Dear Sirs,

We would like to provide you with an update regarding the latest regulatory development issued by the Turkish Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure, Directorate General of Maritime Affairs.

The Ministry has recently published a revised version of the “Turkish Straits Vessel Traffic Regulation Implementation Directive”, aligning it with current maritime operational requirements and recently enacted maritime legislation. The revised Directive was approved by Ministerial Decree No. 306827 dated 01.10.2025 and entered into force on 13.10.2025.

The previous Directive, implemented under Ministerial Decree No. 13855 dated 2018, provided the primary framework governing vessel traffic management, reporting obligations, pilotage and tug assistance requirements, and operational safety measures within the Turkish Straits system (comprising the İstanbul Strait, Çanakkale Strait, and the Sea of Marmara). The newly revised version aims to modernize these provisions, ensuring consistency with current navigational practices, digital traffic monitoring systems, and updated safety protocols.

We will shortly provide a detailed overview of the key amendments introduced by the revised Directive and their potential implications for vessels transiting the Straits.

The Turkish Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure, Directorate General of Maritime Affairs, has issued a revised version of the 'Turkish Straits Vessel Traffic Regulation Implementation Directive'. The amendments were made to align with current maritime operational needs and recently enacted maritime legislation. The revised Directive was approved by Ministerial Decree No. 306827 dated 01.10.2025 and entered into force on 13.10.2025.

KEY AMENDMENTS

Topic	Previous Provision (2024)	New Provision (2025)	Purpose of Amendment
Night Passage – Container Vessels	Only passenger vessels of 300m and above were allowed to transit the Çanakkale Strait at night.	Container vessels of 300m and above are now also permitted to transit the Çanakkale Strait at night.	To ensure smoother flow of increasing container traffic.
ETA Notification Obligation	No specific provision for large container or passenger vessels.	Vessels of 300m and above (container and passenger) must notify any ETA change at least 6 hours in advance to the TBGTH Centre.	Enhance predictability and traffic planning efficiency.
Tug and Tow Length (Subsea/LNG Construction)	Maximum permitted tow length: 90 meters.	The maximum permitted tow length increased to 120 meters.	To improve flexibility for Turkish-flag tugs engaged in subsea and port construction activities.
LPG Vessels – Night Passage	LPG vessels of 150–200m could only pass during daylight.	LPG vessels of 150–200m (in ballast or carrying ammonia) may now transit the Çanakkale Strait at night under pilotage and tug escort.	Operational efficiency while maintaining safety.
Bilingual Checklists	Only Turkish version existed.	Official English translation added to ensure uniformity in practice.	Ease of compliance for foreign-flagged vessels.
Article 15 – General Transit Rules (Çanakkale Strait)	Limited provisions on pilotage and tug escort.	Updated to include detailed pilotage and tug escort requirements for enhanced safety.	Reduce anchorage waiting times and improve traffic flow.

FOR EASY REFERENCE – MAIN POINTS

1. Container vessels $\geq 300\text{m}$: may transit the Çanakkale Strait at night.
2. ETA changes: $\geq 300\text{m}$ passenger/container vessels must notify TBGTH 6 hours in advance.
3. Tow length: increased from 90m to 120m for Turkish-flag tugs (construction/subsea ops).
4. LPG vessels (150–200m, in ballast/ammonia): permitted for night transit with pilot & tug.
5. Checklists: now available in both Turkish & English.
6. Article 15 updated for new pilotage/tug escort planning at Çanakkale.

Issued for your kind attention and reference.

Best Regards,

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