

Traditionally, maritime law - created as a form of merchant law - was of private law nature, and for centuries was characterised by high level of stability. However, together with technological progress, the need for legal protection against the new threats posed by current possibilities of marine resources' exploitation emerged. This was the reason for the significant expansion of regulations of public law nature during the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century, intended to protect the public interests, as well as life, and marine environment. This led to shift of maritime regulations' accent into the field of public law. Simultaneously, private law maritime regulations ought be adapted to the changing shipping conditions of today's reality. Such new challenges include: the electronization of maritime trading and traffic, need to protect the weaker parties to contracts, automation, catastrophic damages at sea, and the domination of mutltimodal transport.

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century national maritime legislation began to lose some of its importance. The reason for this was a transfer of the maritime law creation centres from national legislatures to the international organisations. The regulatory decisions which are now left in the hands of national legislators concern issues not covered by the unification process on a world scale. However, a great deal of private-law aspects remains outside the convention's regulation and control. Moreover, during times of crisis of widespread accession to new international maritime conventions, it is national codification which has begun to take on greater importance. The backlogs in adapting laws to the reality of modern maritime relations have been substantial in some areas. However, over recent years, some countries have implemented significant advances in their national maritime legislations (France, Germany, Spain and Turkey). In other states (Belgium, Poland, Japan), new codes are currently being prepared.

In light of the above, the Author of this project recognises the need for a comparative legal analysis of the problems emerging from contemporary maritime codes. The Author will make use of her experience as a member of the Codification Commission for Maritime Law in dealing with the identification of the problematic issues and the comparison of their various solutions as well as its underlying causes in newly adopted maritime laws around the world. These matters will concern the following fundamental issues: the reasons behind the ideas for new codification; the incorporation of public law into national codes; the influence of civil law 'land' regulations on original maritime law institutions; references to the principles of maritime law and the importance of the custom in maritime codes. The solutions adopted within selected institutions of maritime law will be analysed, including: the opening up of maritime codes to include new objects of seas' exploration - maritime facilities; the methods of development of the ships' registers; the protection of the weaker party to the carriage of passengers and goods; the modernisation of real securities on ships.