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Ref. T2/4.2

STCW.2/Circ.20
20 January 2009

**INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON STANDARDS OF
TRAINING, CERTIFICATION AND WATCHKEEPING
FOR SEAFARERS (STCW), 1978, AS AMENDED**

Equivalent arrangements accepted under article IX

Communication received from the Government of the Netherlands

The Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization has the honour to transmit a Note received from the Government of the Netherlands as set out in the annex.

The Secretary-General would be grateful if steps could be taken to bring this information to the attention of the appropriate authorities.

ANNEX

Statement by the Government of the Netherlands

EQUIVALENTS

1. The Government of the Netherlands is striving to achieve a different approach to the management, operation and maintenance of the engine room on board small modern ships in the short sea shipping. Within this scope and in close consultation with the Royal Association of Netherlands' Shipowners, the Dutch Association of Contractors in dredging and shore and bank protection, the Netherlands' trade union of seafarers NautilusNL as well as independent and well-known research institutes this issue has been thoroughly discussed and examined.
2. As an outcome of this process the Netherlands' Administration will permit that on small and modern sea-going ships operated in short sea shipping, as described below, the chief engineer can be replaced by the configuration of a dual educated maritime officer at watchkeeping level in combination with structured shore based support. With this arrangement safety is considered in a holistic manner, at which factors such as construction and equipment, manning and the management of the ship are seen as interlinked and are considered as part of one integrated system. The Netherlands' Administration is of the opinion that the safety benefits of this arrangement outweigh the loss of the chief engineer's function on board these very specific ships and ensure that a safety level at least equivalent to the requirements of the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers 1978, is maintained.

CONSIDERATIONS

3. Experience of increased reliability, availability and the ease of handling of modern engines and other technical systems on board, together with sufficient back up arrangements and preventive maintenance arrangements ashore, reduce the risk of failures occurring at sea considerably. On board small and modern types of cargo ships operating in the short sea shipping in European waters and provided with the aforementioned shore support, much of the traditional chief engineer functions can or need not longer be carried out on board. The remaining tasks are small, less complex and do not cover a full work day. The Netherlands' Administration is of the opinion that for the subject category of ships a tailor-made configuration is created that well covers the total workload of the master and officers on board those ships while at least ensuring a similar level of safety as in the traditional configuration.
4. Furthermore it is expected that conditions to this arrangement will encourage further innovation in engine-room design as well as in the way ships are operated, both on board the ship and by the management ashore. The required type of oil fuel, either MGO (marine gas oil) or MDO (marine diesel oil) contributes to both the marine environment and the safe operation of the ship.

As being a new manning configuration the experiences of the ships involved (limited to 25 ships under the Netherlands' flag) will be monitored and evaluated.

CONDITIONS

5. The equivalent arrangement is only permitted if:

General

 - The Safe Manning Certificate explicitly indicates so;
 - The ship is neither a passenger ship nor a tanker;
 - The ship is of less than 3,000 gross tonnage;
 - The ship is engaged in the short sea shipping in European waters, implying not exceeding 200 nautical miles of the European coast.

Technical conditions

- The propulsion power is less than 3,000 kW;
- The engine-room is periodically unmanned in compliance with the rules of a classification society and accordingly certified;
- The used type of oil fuel is either MGO or MDO in accordance with ISO 8217: 2005;
- The propulsion as well as the steering power is to be maintained or immediately restored in case of a black out.

Organisational conditions

- The information on board describing routine technical procedures and routine maintenance tasks (user's manual) is easily accessible;
- The helpdesk onshore provides for 24-hour technical assistance;
- The service contract onshore at least provides for preventive maintenance;
- The familiarisation process (reference is made to MSC/Circ. 834 'Guidelines for engine-room layout, design and arrangement') is carried out as part of the ISM system. In the familiarisation process attention is given especially to the consequences of the specific manning configuration of the ship.

NOTIFICATION

6. The Government of the Netherlands to which the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers 1978 has been extended, is of the view that the employment of a dual educated maritime officer at watchkeeping level in lieu of a chief engineer under the above-mentioned precisely described restrictive conditions is an equivalent arrangement under article IX 'Equivalents' of this convention.
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