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STCW.2/Circ.43
23 February 2012

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

Equivalent Arrangement under article I/13 of the STCW Convention, 1978, as amended

Communication received from the Government of the Netherlands

The Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization has the honour to transmit the information received from the Government of the Netherlands regarding equivalent arrangements under article I/13 of the STCW Convention, 1978, as amended, which is attached 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

Equivalentents

1. The Government of the Netherlands refers to document STCW.2/Circ.20 of 20 January 2009 in which an innovative approach to the management, operation and maintenance of the engine room on board small modern ships in short sea shipping was notified, ensuring that a safety level is maintained that is at least equivalent to the requirements of the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW), 1978, as amended.
2. This innovative approach resulting in a new manning configuration in which the chief engineer can be replaced by the configuration of a dual educated maritime officer at watchkeeping level (with both navigational and engineering competencies) in combination with structural shore based support, has since been applied on 21 ships complying with a number of strict conditions.
3. During a period of one and a half year the Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research (TNO) has collected sufficient data and information to obtain reliable and reproducible results. From these it can be concluded that the safety level maintained on board the vessels concerned is at least equivalent to similar vessels sailing with a conventional manning configuration.
4. In light of the successful completion of the experimental phase with this temporary equivalent arrangement the Government of the Netherlands has decided that this will be succeeded by a permanent equivalent arrangement. Ships flying the Flag of the Netherlands that fulfil the strict conditions mentioned in paragraph 9 can make use of this equivalent arrangement.

Background

5. 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 short sea shipping in European waters and provided with the aforementioned shore support, much of the remaining tasks in the engine room department are small, less complex and do not cover a full work day.
6. Based on these experiences the Government of the Netherlands considered the possibility of an alternative and innovative approach to the management, operation and maintenance for the engine room on board small modern ships in short sea shipping. Within this scope and in close consultation with the Royal Association of Netherlands' shipowners, the Dutch Association of Maritime Suppliers, the Netherlands' trade union of seafarers NautilusNL, the Netherlands Association of Master Mariners, as well as independent and well-known research institutes this issue has been thoroughly discussed and examined.
7. On the basis of this consent the Netherlands' Administration concluded 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, and distributes the workload more evenly between them while at least ensuring a similar level of safety as in the traditional configuration.

8. This resulted in the notification to the International Maritime Organization of a temporary equivalent arrangement STCW.2/Circ.20 of 20 January 2009.

Conditions (reference is made to STCW.2/Circ.20; for the sake of completeness mentioned once again)

9. The equivalent arrangement is applicable if:

General

- The Minimum 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 under the jurisdiction of Member States of the European Union or another State party to the Agreement on the European Economic Area, 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;
- The ships' Safety Management System is amended accordingly.

Notification

10. The Government of the Netherlands to which the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW), 1978, as amended, 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 restrictive conditions is an equivalent arrangement under the "equivalence" provisions of this convention.