

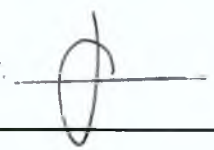
NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



'22 NOV -7 P1 :22

SENATE

P.S.R. No. 279

RECEIVED BY: 

INTRODUCED BY SENATOR RISA HONTIVEROS

RESOLUTION

CALLING FOR THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION INTO IMPROVING THE STANDARDS OF MARITIME EDUCATION IN THE PHILIPPINES FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROMOTING SAFETY AT SEA AND COMPLYING WITH THE PHILIPPINES' COMMITMENTS UNDER THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON STANDARDS OF TRAINING, CERTIFICATION AND WATCHKEEPING FOR SEAFARERS

WHEREAS, it was recently reported that the employment of an estimated 50,000 Filipino seafarers on board European Union ("EU") flagged vessels, as well as the future deployment of Filipinos to these ships, was at risk should the Philippines fail to comply with the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers ("STCW Convention");

WHEREAS, in *Fact & Figures 2021* published by the European Maritime Safety Agency ("EMSA"), out of a total number of 120,590 Masters and Officers from Non-EU countries recognized by EU countries, it is stated that the Philippines supplied the largest number of Officers to EU-flagged vessels with 46,114, followed by Ukraine with 26,057, and the Russian Federation with 17,380;

WHEREAS, Filipino seafarers are a major contributor to the Philippine economy, remitting USD 6.54 Billion in 2021, according to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas;

WHEREAS, the STCW Convention, last amended during a 2010 conference in Manila, establishes the basic requirements for training, certification, and watchkeeping for seafarers on an international level which the countries parties thereto are obliged to meet or exceed;

WHEREAS, Article 3, par. 1 of the European Parliament's Directive 2022/993 on the minimum level of training for seafarers, states that EU member states shall take the necessary measures to ensure that seafarers serving on their ships are trained, as a minimum, in accordance with the requirements of the STCW Convention;

WHEREAS, Article 21 of the same Directive also provides that where there are indications that a particular maritime training establishment no longer complies with the requirements of the STCW Convention, the European Commission ("EC") shall notify the third country concerned that recognition of that third country's certificates will be withdrawn in two months' time unless measures are taken to ensure compliance therewith;

WHEREAS, because of the aforementioned provision, recognition by the EC of the Certificates of Competency ("COCs") of Filipino marine officers is very important to the Philippines, as it allows them to be deployed aboard EU-flagged vessels;

WHEREAS, as part of this recognition process, the EMSA, which was established by the European Parliament for the purpose of, among others, ensuring a high, uniform and effective level of maritime safety and prevention of pollution by EU-flagged vessels, conducts regular assessments of other countries' maritime education and training, and certification systems, including those of the Philippines, to determine whether they comply with the requirements of the STCW Convention;

WHEREAS, other countries audited by the EMSA for STCW Convention compliance have included, among others, the United Kingdom, Japan, Singapore, Indonesia, Turkey, India, Australia, Russia, and the Ukraine;

WHEREAS, during the first audit conducted in 2006, the EMSA concluded that, because of several serious non-conformities or shortcomings, the Philippines did not fully comply with the STCW Convention, a finding that would not be much-altered in subsequent audits of the country in 2010, 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2017;

WHEREAS, from February 24 to March 12, 2020, the EMSA re-assessed the Philippines' maritime education and training, and certification system and noted nine (9) shortcomings, twenty-three (23) grievances, and three (3) specific findings;

WHEREAS, among other shortcomings, the EMSA found that the relevant authorities in the Philippines did not "ensure that the education and training is structured in accordance with written programs, and included the methods and media of delivery, procedures, and course material as necessary to fully achieve the prescribed standards of competence, as required by the STCW Convention and Code";

WHEREAS, the EMSA assessment report also stated that the Maritime Industry Authority ("MARINA"), and the Commission on Higher Education ("CHED") did not sufficiently ensure through their monitoring system that all training and assessment activities carried out by Maritime Education and Training ("MET") Institutions, and Maritime Higher Education Institutions ("MHEIs") in particular, were administered, conducted, monitored, evaluated, and supervise, as required by the STCW Convention;

WHEREAS, most of the shortcomings, grievances, and specific findings appear to be related to the education and training of Filipino seafarers, specifically *vis-à-vis* two tertiary programs administered and regulated by the CHED: Bachelor of Science in Marine Engineering ("BSMarE"), and Bachelor of Science in Marine Transportation ("BSMT");

WHEREAS, as stated by the International Transport Workers' Federation in its publication *STCW: A Guide for Seafarers*, the shipping industry depends on competent, well-trained seafarers to ensure safety of life at sea, maritime security, efficiency of navigation and protection and preservation of the marine environment;

WHEREAS, should the EU decide to no longer recognize the COCs held by Filipino seafarers and, consequently, prohibit them from being deployed on EU-flagged vessels, this risks not only substantial economic disruption, but also substantial damage to the

reputation of the Philippine maritime industry; and

WHEREAS, ship owners and operators might look elsewhere for seafarers to crew their vessels, and the resulting lost ground might prove very hard for the country to regain.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED TO CALL FOR THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION INTO IMPROVING THE STANDARDS OF MARITIME EDUCATION IN THE PHILIPPINES FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROMOTING SAFETY AT SEA AND COMPLYING WITH THE PHILIPPINES' COMMITMENTS UNDER THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON STANDARDS OF TRAINING, CERTIFICATION AND WATCHKEEPING FOR SEAFARERS.

Adopted.


RISA HONTIVEROS
Senator