

Amendment of the Seafarers Regulation due to the establishment of professional requirements for skippers and mechanics of Dutch Caribbean vessels

Short introduction/motivation

The Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management is preparing an amendment of the "Regeling zeevarenden" (Seafarers Regulation). With this amendment the Minister gives substance to the request of the Executive Councils of the Public Entities of Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba to establish professional requirements for crewmembers of Dutch Caribbean (DC) vessels at the level of a ministerial decree. This regards vessels that are used commercially and sail locally and vessels that sail internationally within the Caribbean trade zone.

Objective of the regulation and affected target groups

The establishment of professional requirements for crewmembers of DC vessels, which are deployed commercially, offers a better guarantee for the safe shipping of tourists at the islands of Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba. It regards cargo vessels and passenger vessels that are used for commercial (water sports) activities.

When establishing these requirements the so-called SCV Code was used, which was adopted under the auspices of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO). This Code is applied on a mainstream basis in the Caribbean trading area.

There is also an economic perspective: the establishment of uniform professional requirements for crewmembers of DC vessels sailing internationally, where foreign ports within the Caribbean trading area are visited, accomplishes that local ship owners are also given the opportunity to offer their services. At present this is rather reserved for foreign ship owners.

Affected target groups:

- Ship managers and seafarers on the BES islands who commercially sail vessels within the Caribbean
- Enforcing authorities

Expected effects of the regulation

Local shipping

The amendment regulation affects the crews of cargo vessels and passenger vessels that are deployed for commercial (water sports) activities, around the BES islands. Having regard to the circumstances a limited package of requirements for these vessels can suffice and having regard to the limited size of the vessels, it is not required to, apart from the requirements that are imposed on the skipper, also impose requirements on other crewmembers.

Hence, it regards a group of approximately 100 to 150 skippers who sail locally. They must, after a transitional period of 3 years after entry into force of the regulation, be in the possession of a 'Boat Master Certificate grade 3', which must be renewed every 3 years, and they must be medically fit. It regards a **one-time training** to qualify for the certificate. The costs to obtain the initial certificate are estimated at approximately \$ 600 up to a maximum of \$ 900 per person,

price level 2018. The exact costs of the training depend on, inter alia, the number of participants, the practical experience and the degree of self-study.

On the one hand, this certificate offers sufficient protection for the seafarers and, on the other hand, the commercial consequences for local ship managers are taken into account.

The costs with regard to the certificate of medical fitness for locally sailing Dutch Caribbean vessels are very low because it was decided to use a lighter variation where a physician fills in a number of questions with the person concerned. The person concerned can approach his general practitioner for this. This method guarantees that sufficient attention is paid to the medical requirements with very limited administrative burdens.

International Shipping

The establishment of professional requirements for crewmembers of internationally sailing DC vessels, where foreign ports within the Caribbean trading area are visited, accomplishes that local ship owners are also given the opportunity to offer their services. This is now rather reserved for foreign ship owners. In this sense it can be expected that the regulation can boost the local maritime sector.

This is estimated to regard a few vessels that shall be put into service in the coming years.

Objective of the consultation

The objective of the consultation is to inform those involved and to consult them about the proposed amendment

To what parts of the regulation is a reaction requested?

It is possible to react to all parts of the draft regulation and the explanatory memorandum.

Via the trilingual (Dutch, English and Papiamentu) link:

https://www.internetconsultatie.nl/wijziging_regeling_zeevarenden_bes