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THE NETHERLANDS IMPLEMENTS NEW RULES IN THE VISA ISSUANCE FOR SEAFARERS AT THE DUTCH BORDER

The Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Manila has announced that the Dutch government will strictly implement new rules and regulations concerning the issuance of visas for seafarers at the Dutch border.

Effective 1 November 2010, the issuance of visa at the Dutch border will be strictly implemented due to the entry in force of the Visa Code (EC Regulation No. 810/2009) on 5 April 2010 and the conclusion of the Schengen evaluation. Article 35 of the Visa Code states that visas can only be issued at the border in the following exceptional cases:

- If the period between the notification to seafarer that he has to embark on a ship in the Netherlands, and his current activities elsewhere at that time, is very short.
- If the seafarer lives far away from the Netherlands Embassy and he has to embark on a ship in a port in the Netherlands on a short term.

Visa applicants must be able to prove that they are unable to apply for a visa prior to their arrival in a Schengen state due to unforeseen or pressing reasons, which can be done by submitting e-mails, letters and other documents. **Visa applications at the border will be refused if the applicants cannot prove that it is impossible to apply for a visa prior to departure.**

As a result of these new rules, airline companies may decide not to admit seafarers to the flights for failure to present the abovementioned documents. However, the actual and decisive assessment, pursuant to which a visa can be issued at the border, is performed by the border control authorities of the Schengen external border.

The Embassy of Netherlands also announced that a "Blue Carpet Procedure" exists at the diplomatic posts where many seafarers come from. This procedure simplifies the issuance of visas to seafarers prior to their departure. It is also possible to apply for a short stay visa (C visa) for multiple entries and for a longer period of validity. This short stay visa is valid for all Schengen states, so that seafarers are not restricted to the Netherlands in order to embark, re-embark or disembark from a ship.

For the information and guidance of all concerned.