



Ministry of Infrastructure  
and Water Management



Candidacy of the  
**Kingdom of the Netherlands**  
for re-election to the  
**International Maritime  
Organization (IMO) Council**

Aide-mémoire



# Contribution of the **Kingdom of the Netherlands** in support of **IMO**

# A long track record as an IMO member

Shipping has for centuries played a crucial role in political, economic, social and cultural development within the Kingdom of the Netherlands, both in the European as well as the Caribbean parts of the Kingdom. As a flag state, port state and coastal state, the Kingdom has an enduring interest in safe, secure and sustainable international shipping. The Kingdom of the Netherlands firmly believes that an international industry such as shipping is best served by international regulations. This is one of the reasons why the Kingdom was among the founding members of IMO, and why it fully supports the objectives set out in its mission statement: to promote safe, secure, environmentally sound, efficient and sustainable shipping through cooperation.

The commitment of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to supporting IMO's goals and activities remains undiminished. Since 1959, the Kingdom has had a seat on the IMO Council almost without interruption and has consistently played an active part in Council business. The Kingdom has always been actively involved in, and contributed to, IMO and continuously participates in IMO's technical work through its various committees, sub-committees, working groups and correspondence groups. Over the years, a considerable number of these forums have benefited from having an effective and result-oriented representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands as their chair or vice-chair.

Building on the strong Dutch tradition of cooperation, dialogue and partnership in pursuit of a common goal, the Kingdom of

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the Netherlands feels that, as part of the international shipping community, it has a responsibility to continue developing solutions that can be implemented and enforced globally. Accordingly, the Kingdom views IMO's mission of making progress through cooperation as a way of amplifying its own role in bringing parties together as part of efforts to create workable solutions for the global maritime industry.

*The Kingdom of the Netherlands firmly believes that international shipping supports and contributes to the global economy, socioeconomic progress and development.*



# Commitment of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to IMO's goals

Shipping is an important facilitator of global trade, ensuring that goods arrive at the destination where they are needed. Shipping is also essential for promoting the prosperity and wellbeing of people all over the world. The Kingdom of the Netherlands believes that efficient and sustainable shipping requires the highest possible standards of safety, security and environmental protection. Shipping faces major challenges, such as climate change, digitalisation and a shortage of seafarers. These challenges need to be tackled at global level, which is also the approach taken by IMO. This is why the Kingdom of the Netherlands has an enduring commitment to IMO's goals and is eager to collaborate with member states worldwide to find solutions and work towards making shipping more sustainable, safe and secure.

The COVID-19 pandemic provided lessons that can be used to improve and modernise the work of IMO, as well as to expand the participation of all member states through hybrid meeting facilities and offering e-learning courses. The Kingdom of the Netherlands actively participated in the Council's reform process and was the seventh country to deposit an instrument of acceptance of the amendments to the IMO Convention that expanded the number of Council members. The Kingdom also favours IMO taking a modern approach to the transparency of its work.

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# Sustainable shipping

The Kingdom of the Netherlands, which owes much of its prosperity to the oceans and seas, is calling for an international partnership to support a change of course: steering the world towards a sustainable blue economy, unlocking the full potential of healthy and productive oceans and seas. The Kingdom believes this can only be achieved by sharing knowledge and expertise in order to initiate, amplify and accelerate action to reduce the strain on the world's oceans, while adhering to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Kingdom is well aware of the devastation that the seas and oceans can cause, in particular as parts of the Netherlands are located below sea level. Without reservation, it can be stated that climate change is among the greatest challenges facing the global community and global shipping. That is why the Kingdom of the Netherlands has vigorously participated in the discussions of IMO committees on greenhouse gases (GHG). It has contributed to the development of short-term measures, including in its capacity as a member of the Steering Committees for the 'Procedure for assessing impacts on States' and the 'Fourth IMO GHG Study 2020'. Now the Kingdom's focus is on the further development of the mid-term measures, lifecycle assessment (LCA) guidelines and the revision of the GHG strategy.

Furthermore, given its keenness to share its knowledge, the Kingdom of the Netherlands makes contributions on a wide range of environmental topics, ranging from well-known challenges such as Emission Control Areas, plastic pollution and persistent floaters to newer subjects like the reduction of underwater radiated noise from ships. The Kingdom of the Netherlands was also among

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the first co-sponsors to propose a ban on the use and carriage of heavy fuel oil in the Arctic, which will enter into force in 2024. Furthermore the Kingdom played an important role in addressing the need for further work on MARPOL Annex IV, specifically with regard to the performance of sewage treatment plants. The Kingdom is strongly committed to IMO's work on sustainable shipping, and has forwarded proposals and held a webinar on plastic pollution from net cuttings.

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# Safety and security

An international regulatory framework is essential in order to address new security challenges and ensure safety on board ships for crew and cargo, while giving due consideration to the marine environment. These international regulations need to be flexible enough to allow any modifications needed in order to respond effectively to new developments and innovations. The Kingdom of the Netherlands has much to offer in this respect thanks to the innovative capacity of its 'maritime cluster',

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and believes that maritime safety and security is an essential precondition for ensuring that the maritime transport of goods and passengers retains its appeal. An example of how this cluster has contributed its expertise and knowledge to the goals of IMO is the extensive research on the loss of containers undertaken by the Dutch maritime research institute MARIN. The Kingdom of the Netherlands has brought the results of that research to the attention of the Maritime Safety Committee and its Sub-Committees, such as the Sub-Committee on Implementation of IMO Instruments (III Sub-Committee), not only through well documented submissions but also by sharing and clarifying these results during a presentation at MSC 106 in November 2022.

Similarly, the Kingdom of the Netherlands plays an ongoing active role in many of IMO's safety and security outputs, such as the development of a goal-based instrument for Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS), the development of goal-based regulations,







prohibiting the use of materials containing asbestos, the analysis of marine safety investigation reports and the evaluation of the SOLAS damage stability regulations. The Kingdom of the Netherlands has chaired the Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue (NCSR) Sub-Committee for several years as well as that Sub-Committee's important working group on Navigation.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands has also actively participated in various working groups of IMO Committees and Sub-Committees, such as the Sub-Committee on Human Element, Training and Watchkeeping (HTW), developing new model training courses and reviewing the 1995 International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Fishing Vessel

***The Kingdom of the Netherlands is a founding member of IMO, and it has always taken an active part in Council business.***



Personnel (STCW-F). In relation to the III Sub-Committee, the Kingdom of Netherlands acts as correspondence group leader for the development of guidance in relation to the IMO Member State Audit Scheme (IMSAS) to assist in the implementation of the IMO Instruments Implementation Code (III Code) by Member States. Furthermore, auditors and lead auditors from the Kingdom regularly make an active contribution to the IMO IMSAS programme. Finally, as one of the founding members of the Paris MoU and host country for its Secretariat, the Netherlands (EU)<sup>1</sup> is always willing to share its knowledge and expertise on this subject in the III Sub-Committee.

In order to contribute to maritime safety, environmental protection and cooperation between IMO member states, the Netherlands (EU) is planning to ratify the International Convention on Liability and Compensation for Damage in Connection with Hazardous and Noxious Substances by Sea (HNS Convention). We aim to do so together with our neighbouring states, Belgium and Germany, in 2024. Ratification by the Netherlands (EU) will hopefully encourage other IMO Member States to follow suit.

*The Dutch seaports, including the Ports of Rotterdam and Amsterdam, form a major logistics hub for the international transport of goods to the European hinterland. **Some 600 million tonnes of cargo and 15 million TEUs pass through these seaports every year in 124,000 port calls by ships from across the world, making the Netherlands one of the world's largest port states.***

<sup>1</sup> The part of Kingdom of the Netherlands in the European Union.





# Facilitation

The Kingdom of the Netherlands strongly believes that international shipping supports and contributes to the global economy and to socioeconomic progress and development. The Kingdom has therefore ratified the Convention on Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic and advocates uniformity in relation to formalities and other procedures in order to foster the smooth operation of maritime trade. The Kingdom of the Netherlands has actively contributed to the various amendments to the Convention in order to enhance data harmonisation and the digitalisation of administrative reporting formalities. The Netherlands also supports the development of the IMO Compendium on Facilitation and Electronic Business through active participation in the IMO Expert Group on Data Harmonisation (EGDH).



# Wellbeing of seafarers

Seafarers are essential to shipping, enabling goods to be transported worldwide. The Netherlands therefore actively responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by pursuing efforts in relation to vaccination and facilitating embarkation and disembarkation by seafarers. It also works with private organisations to provide adequate welfare facilities in Dutch seaports.

In its response to the challenge of vaccinating seafarers during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Netherlands recognised the need for a tailor-made programme. In June 2021 all seafarers working on seagoing vessels operating under the flag of the Netherlands or under Dutch management were eligible for this programme, regardless of their individual nationalities. In August of the same year the programme was expanded to include all seafarers calling at ports in the Netherlands. The programme remains operational to this day.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands has done its utmost to enable seafarers to disembark from and embark in their vessels in Dutch seaports, especially in the port of Rotterdam, without too many obstacles. In 2020 it ranked among the leading countries worldwide in relation to successful crew changes, despite the difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic at that time. In order to underline the importance of access to shore-based facilities for seafarers' welfare, the Netherlands – together with relevant stakeholders such as seafarers' welfare organisations – is developing a more futureproof system of welfare facilities.

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**Women occupy almost 20% of positions in the shipping industry.**



# Technical cooperation and partnerships

Over the years the Kingdom of the Netherlands has gained considerable experience and expertise in the fields of shipping (including education and training), port development and vessel traffic management. As part of its bilateral and multilateral development aid programmes, the Kingdom contributes to IMO's technical cooperation activities by making regular donations to various technical cooperation funds. Examples include a donation to the GHG TC-Trust Fund and a contribution to the Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme (ITCP) earmarked to enable candidates from Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs) to study at the World Maritime University. In addition, the Kingdom provides national experts to participate in IMO's technical cooperation missions. The Kingdom of the Netherlands also actively participated in the correspondence group on the Establishment of a Voluntary Multi-Donor Trust Fund to Facilitate the Participation of Developing Countries, Especially SIDS and LDCs in IMO Meetings. The Kingdom was pleased that the Council endorsed the Fund's terms of reference at C 128.

In the spirit of sharing knowledge and best practices – which is essential within the maritime domain and imperative for the development and harmonised implementation of IMO's instruments – the Kingdom of the Netherlands is always willing to cooperate extensively with other IMO member states. Such cooperation may for instance relate to presentations at IMO meetings or webinars.

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# Shipping and the Kingdom of the Netherlands

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## Delta area

As a densely populated, low-lying country, the Netherlands (EU) has learned, over the centuries, to deal with the forces of the oceans, enabling it to build what is nowadays regarded as the world's best-protected delta area. The maritime industry in the Netherlands (EU) generates 3% of the country's GNP and employs 285,000 people in such sectors as maritime shipping, shipbuilding, ports, inland shipping, dredging, offshore operations and maritime services.



# Seafaring nation

The Kingdom of the Netherlands is a major seafaring nation with a fleet currently comprising more than 2,330 vessels, some 50% of which sail under the flag of the Netherlands (EU). This relatively new and modern fleet, which meets the highest quality and safety standards and ranks among the top countries on the Paris MoU 'White List', employs nearly 26,000 people. The Netherlands offers a highly skilled, flexible and multilingual maritime labour force with expertise in all areas, both on shore and on board. Women occupy almost 20% of positions in the shipping industry. The lion's share of the tonnage that sails under the flag of the Kingdom of the Netherlands consists of general cargo ships, container ships and product and chemical tankers. Many Dutch shipping companies operate in specialist areas, such as heavy-load and special-purpose transport, refrigerated and frozen cargo, offshore operations, dredging and hydraulic engineering. The Dutch salvage industry has an outstanding position in the global market. In 2021 it assisted in the successful refloating of the grounded container vessel Ever Given in the Suez Canal.

In order to take care of the seafarers who enable the distribution of goods all over the world, the Kingdom of the Netherlands plays an active role in capacity building. The Kingdom is home to high-quality, internationally oriented maritime institutes and knowledge centres, which are involved in the development of training and model courses and offer top quality education to maritime students. Moreover, thanks to its extensive fishing fleet and experienced fishing-vessel personnel, the Kingdom and the maritime sector recognise the value of well-trained staff, sustainable fisheries and marine environmental awareness.





# Ports and maritime trade

Due to its geographical location, the European part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands is a leader in international maritime trade. The Dutch seaports, including the Ports of Rotterdam and Amsterdam, constitute a major logistics hub for the international transport of goods to the European hinterland. Some 600 million tonnes of cargo and 15 million TEUs pass through these seaports every year in 124,000 port calls by ships from all across the world, making the Netherlands one of the world's largest port states.

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From a coastal state point of view, the Netherlands (EU) borders on one of the world's busiest and most important shipping routes: the North Sea. In the Dutch part of the North Sea alone there are some 260,000 ship movements each year. Recognising the many other uses of the North Sea and its great environmental value, the Kingdom of the Netherlands makes considerable efforts to accommodate and safeguard international shipping by means of marine spatial planning and vessel traffic management, including the establishment of routing measures.







# Caribbean islands in the Kingdom

The Kingdom of the Netherlands includes not only the Netherlands in Europe but also a number of Caribbean islands: Aruba, Curaçao and St Maarten, which are autonomous countries within the Kingdom, and Bonaire, St Eustatius and Saba, which are part of the country of the Netherlands.

Cooperation within the Kingdom in the maritime domain is organised via the Kingdom Maritime Administration (KMA). However, the Kingdom's constituent countries and their own maritime administrations remain responsible for complying with and implementing national and international instruments, standards, legislation and regulations.

Aruba, Curaçao and St Maarten have been recognised as Non-UN Members/Associate Members of the United Nations regional commission for the Caribbean. The SIDS status accorded to these constituent countries of the Kingdom acknowledges the unique social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities that they face. The Kingdom is therefore well placed to recognise and represent the specific needs of Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

*Sharing knowledge and best practices is essential within the maritime domain and imperative for the development and harmonised implementation of IMO's instruments. With this in mind, the Kingdom of the Netherlands is willing to cooperate extensively with other IMO member states, for example by means of presentations at IMO meetings or webinars.*





Kim van Dam



The government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands wishes to continue contributing to the Council's important work, and would greatly value the support of IMO's member states for re-election to the Council in Category (b).

**The Kingdom of the Netherlands:  
your partner for safe, secure and sustainable  
maritime transport.**

