

KVNR responds to letter from mass claim foundation: principle of residence under pressure

News

10 November 2025 #Crewing Downloaded on 30-05-2026

The Royal Association of Netherlands Shipowners (KVNR) has taken note of the letter recently sent by the lawyer of the Equal Justice Equal Pay Foundation to a large part of the Dutch maritime companies. This letter claims that there is illegal unequal pay for Filipino and Indonesian seafarers onboard of Dutch ships. The letter references two rulings by the Human Rights Board on August 18, 2025. In these rulings, in two individual cases initiated by a seafarer from Indonesia and one from the Philippines, the Board concluded that the prevailing international practice for compensating seafarers, namely based on the price level in the country where they live, is not justified.

The KVNR has previously expressed its great surprise at the non-binding ruling of the Human Rights Board and warned of the potential risks for the international position of Dutch shipping and the further undermining of the level playing field in international shipping.

Shipping is by nature an international industry. This has led to an increasingly international labor market over the past decades. Since seafarers stay onboard the ship for their work and spend their leave in their country of residence, an international system has emerged of compensation based on the price level in the seafarer's country of residence. Each country or monetary region has a different social structure, legal system, and tax policy. To have a fair system without wage discrimination, the country of residence is considered. Costs of living, after all, vary from country to country.

In 1997, a case similar to the one for which a ruling was published on August 18, 2025, was heard by the Equal Treatment Commission. At the time, this predecessor of the Human Rights Board still shared the view that the prevailing international system was justified and that it is also regulated under the oversight of the International Labour Organization.

The KVNR is convinced that the application of the principle of residence is still justified and that Dutch maritime companies apply this principle lawfully, as do competing companies in other

countries.

The [Minister of Infrastructure and Water Management](#) has also ordered a study into the impact of abandoning the principle of residence on the entire Dutch maritime sector.

Annet Koster (Director KVNR): *'This study is expected to clarify how severely the entire maritime sector will be affected if the principle of residence is abandoned. Therefore, it is crucial that we continue to oppose this, in cooperation with the broader maritime sector, to preserve a maritime future in our country and to mount a joint defense in this matter.'*

18-08-2025

KVNR surprised by judgement of the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights

Today, the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights ruled that the established international practice in the maritime sector of compensating seafarers based on the cost of living in the country where they reside



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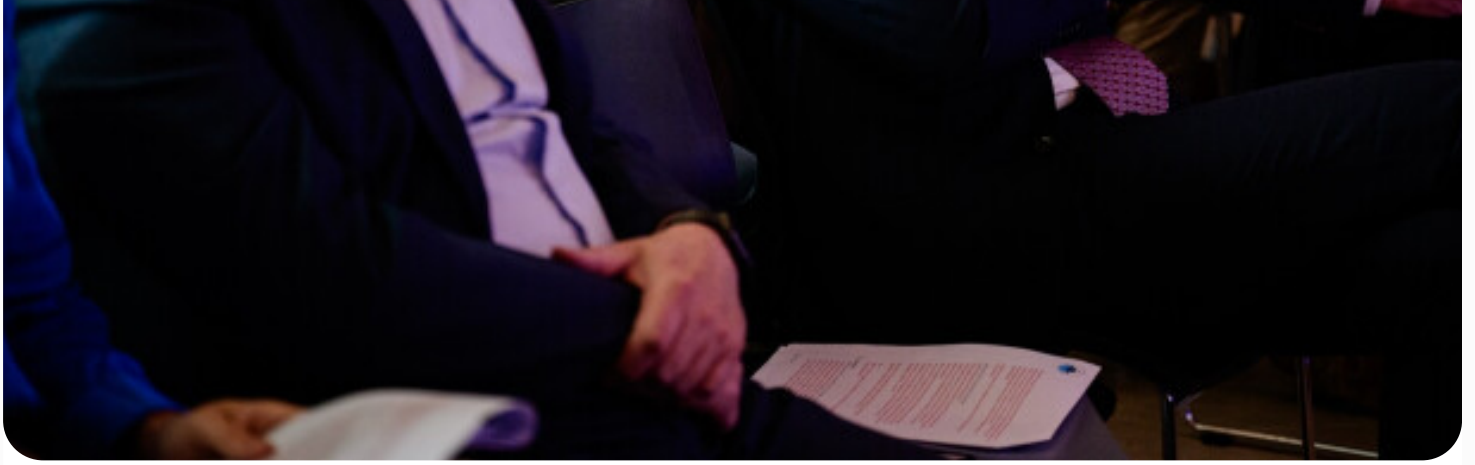
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