

# Maritime Authority

Position

19 November 2024

#Competitiveness

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"A thriving Dutch shipping industry depends on a dedicated maritime authority. The Netherlands is currently losing ground in the global fleet market. Restoring the prominence of a large, strong, and high-quality Dutch flag must become a priority, fostering maritime entrepreneurship."

## Why is this important?

Seagoing ships must meet various requirements to operate. These requirements derive from international conventions, European directives, and national laws. These regulations cover areas such as safety, labor laws, and environmental protection. The **flagstate** + of a ship is responsible to ensure a ship is compliant to these mandatory requirements.

In the Netherlands, the Human Environment and Transport Inspectorate (**ILT**) + oversees Dutch-flagged ships, ensuring they meet these obligations and are issuing necessary certificates and permits. Policy and legislation for seagoing vessels fall under the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management (**IenW**) + , which also leads negotiations with organizations like the International Maritime Organization (**IMO**) + and the International Labour Organization (**ILO**) + . Effective coordination between these bodies is essential to ensure that policies and regulations are being applied as intended.

State of affairs





## Article: The flag and register

Every day, tens of thousands of ships navigate the world's seas, ranging from massive container vessels to the smallest tugs in port, and from fast-moving reefers to slow-moving supertankers.

What many people don't realize, however, is that each of these ships has an invisible connection to a specific country. While this link may seem obscure, it is quite apparent: the flag of that country flies on board the vessel. In the maritime industry, the country associated with the flag is referred to as the "flag state +."

In this article, we will explore why the flag under which a ship sails can be a potential game changer.

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## How should we solve it?

While it seems logical that policy and implementation should align smoothly, in practice, this will often appear to be far more complex. The KVNR seeks to address this issue. All government bodies that are involved in authorizing seagoing ships to operate and transport goods or

**passengers should collaborate effectively. To achieve this, the KVNR is advocating for the creation of a dedicated maritime authority.**

A maritime authority would ensure that the Dutch flag remains attractive, competitive and high-quality, while also stimulating maritime entrepreneurship. Other important topics that must not be overlooked are subjects such as safety, environmental impact, and the social welfare of seafarers.

A more efficient Dutch shipping register would also generate economic benefits, according to a study done by the Economic Bureau of Amsterdam. Their analysis shows that an improved register would increase both the number of ships sailing under the Dutch flag, the employment opportunities and economic value created by the shipping industry.

## **State of affairs - November 01, 2024**

**October 3, 2024:**

**During the Maritime Committee meeting in the House of Representatives on October 3, 2024, SGP and NSC questioned Minister Madlener regarding the current status of maritime policy. In response, Minister Madlener addressed these concerns in a parliamentary letter dated October 16, 2024.**

In his letter, Minister Madlener outlined several initiatives the government is pursuing to enhance the attractiveness of the Dutch flag and improve the maritime business climate. He acknowledged the ongoing decline in the market share of the Dutch flag compared to the global fleet, expressing doubts about the feasibility of maintaining this share.

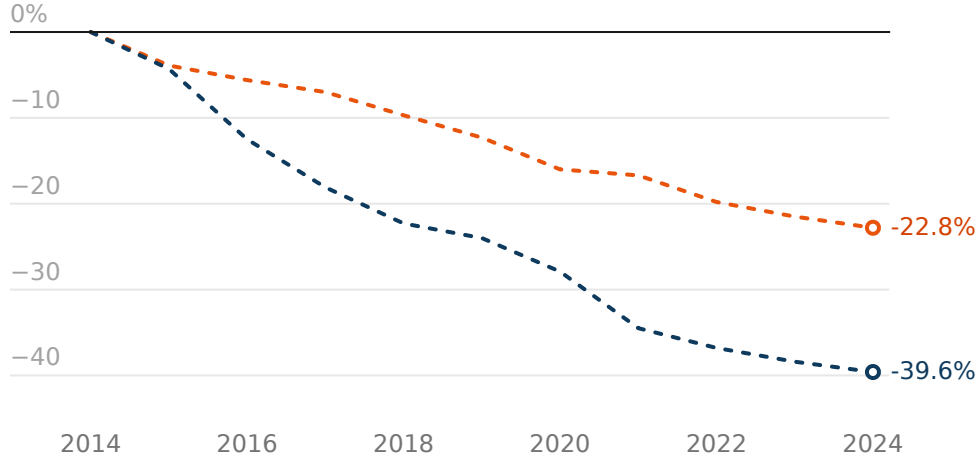
The KVNR finds this response disappointing, as it reflects a lack of ambition to address the issue. In light of this, the KVNR plans to propose its own additional policy measures aimed at reversing this decline and facilitating the growth of the Dutch flag fleet, with the goal of restoring market share.

**January 30, 2024:**

**On January 30, 2024, the Lower House approved a motion put forth by CDA MP Eline Vedder, calling on the government to establish a maritime authority. The motion received support from ChristenUnie, SGP, BBB, and VVD. During the vote, members of PVV, NSC, D66, SP, Volt, FvD, and JA21 also expressed their backing. Consequently, a significant majority of the House of Representatives (119 votes) endorsed the motion, providing a clear mandate for the government.**

## **Relative development of the share of Dutch-flagged ships compared to the world fleet since 2014**

- - Relative development of gross tonnage share compared to 2014 [%]
- - Relative development of the share of number of ships compared to 2014 [%]



NB: Baseline measurement 2014, share of Dutch-flagged ships compared to the world fleet: gross tonnage 0.68% and number of ships 1.42%

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