

Minister announces investigation following Human Rights Board judgments

News


4 September 2025

#Crewing

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Following the article '[Shipowners threaten to say goodbye to the Dutch flag after discrimination ruling](#)' in the *Financieele Dagblad*, VVD MP Ruud Verkuijlen submitted several written questions to the Minister of Infrastructure and Water Management. In his reaction to the questions, Minister Robert Tieman confirmed the potential consequences of the judgments of The Netherlands Institute for Human Rights.

Although a ruling from The Netherlands Institute for Human Rights is not legally binding, the minister acknowledges that the involved seafarers could use it to initiate a judicial procedure. If an actual legal proceeding results in a negative ruling for the shipping industry, this could potentially have significant consequences for the competitiveness of Netherlands-flagged seafaring ships. In his reply, the minister indicates that it is expected that Dutch-flagged ships might respond by reflagging to non-quality flags.

The Ministry of [lenW](#)  also states that the principle of the country of residence is a globally accepted and recognized principle within the global maritime employment conditions. The minister also notes that such a global standard is essential for maintaining a level playing field in the shipping industry.

To map the consequences of reflagging, the minister has announced an investigation. This investigation is meant to reveal the effects of abandoning the residence principle. It will specifically look at the impact on the Dutch maritime cluster, which currently accounts for about 3.1% of employment in the Netherlands and 3.5% of the gross domestic product.

“It is desirable for the research results to be known before the parliamentary elections on October 29.”

The KVNR is pleased that the Ministry of IenW, in the response to parliamentary questions, indicates that the Netherlands endorses the country of residence principle. According to the KVNR, the involvement in this matter by both the parliament and the minister shows that there are genuine concerns about the potential adverse consequences of a possible legal procedure.

The KVNR therefore welcomes the minister's promise to conduct an investigation into this. *"However, it is important to emphasise that it is essential to produce a thorough investigation report quickly,"* says KVNR director Annet Koster. *"It is desirable for the research results to be known before the parliamentary elections on October 29."*

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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