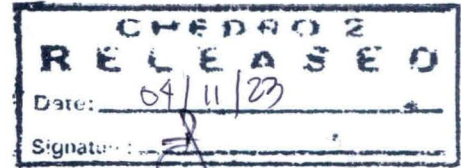




Republic of the Philippines  
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
**COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION**  
Region 02



**REGIONAL MEMORANDUM ORDER**  
**No. 078, series of 2023**

**FOR :** ALL PRESIDENTS/OFFICERS-IN-CHARGE/HEADS OF MARITIME  
HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (MHEIs) IN REGION 02


1. ISABELA COLLEGE OF ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY
2. UNIVERSITY OF CAGAYAN VALLEY

**SUBJECT :** PRESS RELEASE FROM THE CHED CHAIR: "FILIPINO SEAFARERS  
WILL CONTINUE TO BOARD EU-FLAGGED SHIPS, REFORMS TO  
CONTINUE AT FULL SPEED"

**DATE :** APRIL 4, 2023

Attached for the information and guidance of all concerned is the press release from DR. J. PROSPERO E. DE VERA III, Chairman, Commission on Higher Education entitled "Filipino Seafarers will continue to board EU-flagged ships, reforms to continue at full speed".

Wide dissemination of this memorandum is desired.

  
**ATTY. MARCO CICERO F. DOMINGO**  
OIC-Director IV

Encl.: as stated

Kindly rate the delivery of our services through the link below:  
Link: <http://bit.ly/CHEDRO2CSS>  
Your response shall help us improve our systems  
and procedures so we can better serve you.  
Thank you.

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Press Release  
03 April 2023

## **Filipino seafarers will continue to board EU-flagged ships, reforms to continue at full speed - CHED**

Filipino seafarers can now continue to work on EU-flagged vessels, after the European Union (EU) decided to extend the recognition of the Philippines' seafarer training and certification system, following a rigorous review process.

The decision by the European Commission (EC) to continue the recognition of the Philippines' compliance with the Standards of Training, Certification, and Watchkeeping (STCW) Convention will avert job losses for roughly 50,000 Filipino seafarers.

EU's assessment of the measures taken by the Philippines in relation to the findings of the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) gained positive response, saying that Philippines' measures demonstrated concrete progress and improvement regarding the compliance with the requirements of the STCW Convention.

Since 2006, the Philippines' compliance to STCW standards has been raised by the EU and the EC had warned in 2021 it would withdraw its recognition of Filipino seafarers' certificates unless serious measures were taken by Philippine authorities.

From 2006 to 2010, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2017, the country's highest recorded shortcomings were 76. In 2020, we were able to reduce the findings to 9.

"CHED under my watch, has partnered with MARINA to aggressively address the findings on the STCW compliance. Initiatives on curricular reforms, examination and assessment, ship board training, and capacity-building training for CHED, MARINA and Maritime HEIs were undertaken. A five-year moratorium on the opening of new maritime programs was imposed to make sure the review of all maritime schools can be undertaken before we add new ones," said CHED Chairman Popoy de Vera.

"This is a huge victory for the country. Now, after so many years, we finally get a note that our compliance efforts are recognized by the EU," he added.

De Vera said that this was made possible because President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr. prioritized the resolution of this issue by tackling it in at least two cabinet meetings and instructed CHED, MARINA, DoTR and other agencies to work together to address all compliance issues. The President also went to Brussels last December to discuss the issue of Filipino seafarers with European authorities.

“We thank Transportation Secretary Jaime Bautista and MARINA for preparing the detailed compliance report with all the voluminous attachments so the EU can see that we are serious in answering the observations,” De Vera said.

The EU lauded the Philippine authorities including CHED for their efforts to comply with the STCW requirements and stated the need to continue a steady improvement in the areas indicated in the EU Report.

“CHED is ready to work with MARINA and the maritime HEIs to fully implement the needed reforms based on the areas identified by the EU in its letter to guarantee that our graduates continue to be hired in international vessels,” De Vera added.

These reforms include areas in monitoring, supervision and evaluation of training and assessment; examination and assessment of competence; programme and course design and approval; availability and use of training facilities and simulators; on-board training; and issue, revalidation and registration of certificates and endorsements.



**J. PROSPERO E. DE VERA III, DPA**  
Chairman  
Commission on Higher Education