

PH submits report on corrective actions to EMSA findings

Labor and Employment Secretary Rosalinda Dimapilis-Baldoz announced yesterday that the Philippines has submitted its report on the corrective actions taken with regards the deficiencies noted by the European Commission's Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) in the country's maritime education, training and certification system.

"The Philippine government has already submitted its report," Baldoz said. "It was coursed through the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA). Ambassador Enrique Manalo of the Philippine Embassy in Brussels submitted it on August 26 to Deputy Director Zoltan Karatsay of the Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport (DG-MOVE) of the European Commission, on behalf of the Philippine Government," Baldoz added.

"The timely submission of the report demonstrates the country's commitment to comply with the deficiencies and ensure that the quality of education and training and competencies of our seafarers are safeguarded." Secretary Baldoz further said.

She explained that in addressing the deficiencies, the Maritime Training Council (MTC) gave serious and prompt attention to the major issues raised in the EMSA report, such as those relating to maritime administration, especially with regards the monitoring of maritime education and training institutions (METIs), quality standards system, requirements for seafarers certification, requirements for on-board training, implementation of the Management Level Courses, and the improvement of the maritime training institution's equipment and facilities.

It can be recalled that the visit of EMSA inspectors in the country in 2010 revealed some deficiencies, such as those mentioned above. The European Union (EU) expressed concern that the employment of Filipino seafarers on board European-flagged ships might be jeopardized if these deficiencies are left uncorrected.

Aside from the corrective actions mentioned in the report, the MTC is undertaking the preparations for the Philippine compliance to the Manila amendments to the STCW Convention and Code.

These include the review of existing legal and administrative instruments, as well as ensuring compliance with the education, training, certification and medical standards provision of the Manila Amendments.

"With these, we are confident that the EU will continue to recognize our system of education, training and certification and thereby ensure the employment of Filipino seafarers on-board their ships," the labor and employment chief said.

Philippine Overseas Employment Administration data shows that the Philippines in 2010 deployed a total of 347,150 seafarers to 1,112 accredited principals. Of this number, 81,761 were officers, 124,765 were ratings, and 133,082 were non-marine seafarers. In 2009, 24 percent of the total seafarer deployment was listed under EU member-state's flag of registry.