



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City



NINETEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. 9603

Introduced by HON. EDWARD VERA PEREZ MACEDA

**AN ACT DECLARING EVERY SECOND DAY OF MARCH OF EVERY YEAR AS
PHILIPPINE-NORWAY FRIENDSHIP DAY COMMEMORATING THE 75TH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN THE
PHILIPPINES AND NORWAY**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines and Norway have a long history of cooperation, established through the maritime sector, eventually transcending to other business, labor migration, and peace and reconciliation efforts.

As a testament to such long standing cooperation, the Philippines and Norway will be celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the establishment of their diplomatic relations this 2023.

Diplomatic relations between the Philippines and Norway have been characterized by robust economic activities, strengthened political ties, and people-to-people cooperation since its inception on March 2, 1948.

The Philippine Embassy in Oslo opened on 30 April 2007 (covering all Nordic countries), while the Embassy of the Kingdom of Norway in Manila opened in 1967.

True to its beginnings, the maritime sector is one of the most important aspects of the Philippines and Norway relations, reflected by the continuous employment of Filipino seafarers onboard Norwegian owned or controlled vessels, and the establishment of the Norwegian Shipowners Association

Philippines Cadet Program. A number of Norwegian shipping companies have offices in the Philippines.

On labor and workforce, Norwegian shipping companies employ about 25,000 Filipino seafarers aboard their ships accounting for one third of the total number of seafarers on Norwegian controlled vessels.

The Norwegian Maritime Authority is currently assisting the Philippine Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) in an attempt to ensure that maritime/seafarer education is in compliance with the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watch keeping for Seafarers (STCW).

On business, economic, and trade relations, the Philippines and Norway are partners in the following vital areas: the energy and power sector, including renewable energy sources, aquaculture, maritime technology, organic farm market opportunities, IT services, telecommunications, academic exchange among educational institutions, women entrepreneurship, and social security, labor, and migration projects.

On immigration and integration, there are approximately 18,000 very well-integrated Filipinos living in Norway with a high level of participation in the workforce while a substantial number of Norwegians are living in the Philippines doing business and charitable work.

In the furtherance of unity and human rights, the Philippines and Norway have always shown mutual support to each other: Norway expressed support to the first-ever national-level UN Joint on Human Rights, a three-year UN joint programme developed to implement Human Rights Council (HRC) resolution 45/33 (adopted on 7 October 2020) which outlined specific areas for capacity-building and technical cooperation for the promotion and protection of human rights in the Philippines.

In reconciliation efforts, Norway has been the third-party facilitator in the peace negotiations between the Philippine Government (GPH) and the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army-National Democratic Front (CPP-NPA-NDF).

In promoting peace, Norway also supports the Bangsamoro peace process. Norway participates as the Vice Chair of the Independent Decommissioning Body (IDB) responsible for overseeing the post-conflict decommissioning efforts of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) weapons and combatants, and formerly in the International Monitoring Team (IMT) that observed and maintained the ceasefire between the GPH and MILF.

In International Agreements and Policy, diplomatic relations between the Philippines and Norway have resulted to the following agreements:

1. The European Free Trade Association (EFTA) Member States, consisting of Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland; signed a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the Philippines in Bern, Switzerland, on 28 April 2016. The EFTA-Philippines FTA entered into force on 1 June 2018 for the Philippines, Norway, Liechtenstein and Switzerland and on 1 January 2020 for Iceland;
2. Agreement on Maritime Transport between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the Government of the Kingdom of Norway (22 October 1999);¹
3. Agreement between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the Government of the Kingdom of Norway regarding assistance to the Maritime Industry Authority (03 May 1996);²
4. Memorandum of Understanding on trade textiles between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the Government of the Kingdom of Norway (07 October 1978);³
5. Convention between and the Kingdom of Norway and the Republic of the Philippines for the avoidance of double taxation and the prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income and on capital (9 July 1987);⁴
5. Agreement between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the Government of the Kingdom of Norway regarding the development of suitable water power schemes in the electricity supply system in selected areas of the Philippines (15 May 1979); and,⁵
6. Air Transport Agreement Between the Philippines and the Kingdom of Norway (08 May 1969).⁶

Norway, in the past 75 years, has shown immense support, participation, and effort, in advancing the Philippines' national development and interest of the Filipino people.

Norway has proven to be one of the Philippines' strongest allies in the pursuit of economic stability, peace and cooperation, and human rights protection.

¹ Norwegian Government Security and Service Organisation, *available at* [www.regjeringen.no](https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/upload/nhd/vedlegg/skipsfartsavtaler/philippines.pdf) <https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/upload/nhd/vedlegg/skipsfartsavtaler/philippines.pdf> (last accessed 10 February 2023).

² Supreme Court E-library, *available at* <https://elibrary.judiciary.gov.ph/thebookshelf/showdocs/35/12514> . (last accessed 10 February 2023).

³ Senate Resolution No. 719 (s-1978), as cited in the Senate Legislative Digital Resources, *available at* <https://issuances-library.senate.gov.ph/treaties/philippine-treaty-series-no-719> (last accessed 10 February 2023).

⁴ SAS Accounting Firm Philippines: www.sas-ph.com, *available at* https://www.sas-ph.com/web_documents/Tax-Treaties-philippines-and-Norway.pdf (last accessed 10 February 2023).

⁵ Senate Resolution No. 739 (s1979), cited in the Senate Legislative Digital Resources, *available at* <https://issuances-library.senate.gov.ph/treaties/philippine-treaty-series-no-739> (last accessed 10 February 2023).

⁶ Senate Resolution No. 491(s-1969), cited in the Senate Legislative Digital Resources, *available at* <https://issuances-library.senate.gov.ph/node/235752> (last accessed 10 February 2023).

IN VIEW OF THE FOREGOING, approval of this Bill is earnestly requested.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Edward Maceda". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Edward" and last name "Maceda" clearly distinguishable.

REP. EDWARD VERA PEREZ MACEDA



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*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines
in Congress assembled:*

Section 1. The second day of March of every year shall be declared as Philippine-Norway Friendship Day.

Section 2. All laws, presidential decrees, orders, rules and regulations, or any part thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed and modified accordingly.

Section 3. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,