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The port and the court



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Rotterdam has one of the largest port areas in the world. Not only in size but also when it comes to storage and transshipment of goods. That makes the Rotterdam port an important player in international trade.

No wonder that the Rotterdam court has traditionally specialized in civil cases in the areas of maritime law, inland waterways law and transport law. To that end, the court has a specialized Maritime Chamber at its disposal.

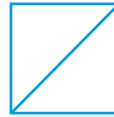
Concentration of maritime lawsuits

As a result of new legislation (01-01-2017) the Rotterdam court has – within the boundaries of EU rules – exclusive jurisdiction in nearly all shipping cases in the Netherlands.

Independent, flexible plus good value for money

Research shows that a good legal infrastructure is of great importance to the economic climate. Independent and reliable administration of law contributes in that way to smooth international trade. The Dutch administration of law scores excellently in that respect – civil law: number 1 in the worldwide Rule of Law Index 2015 – and that also holds for the Maritime Chamber of the Rotterdam Court.

The Maritime Chamber closely monitors that proceedings do not take longer than absolutely necessary. Flexibility and customization are also paramount. In cases that bear no delay – for example when a measure against a sea-going vessel (arrest of a ship) is required or when crew members of a vessel have to be heard as witnesses – the judges of the Maritime Chamber are available 24/7. On top of that it is not uncommon for the Maritime Chamber, because of the international context of many port-related cases, to administer justice according to the laws of another country.



At the same time the costs of proceedings with the Maritime Chamber are relatively low. This results from the way in which proceedings with the Dutch courts are shaped and by the statutory limit of the court fees (maximum court fees for the most expensive case category is 3,900 euro; as at April 2016).

Knowledgeable judges

The Maritime Chamber judges are all very experienced. They have the required expertise, due to their long-term experience as a judge and by following specialized courses, to deal at a high level with cases in the areas of maritime, inland waterways and transport law. The judges keep each other focused by holding monthly conferences discussing decisions and by hearing many cases with three judges. Furthermore, the Maritime Chamber judges regularly make work visits to companies and organizations which operate within the context of the port. In that way they also know what is going on outside the legal domain. In order to further develop this knowledge they often participate in (international) conferences and seminars, both as attendants and speakers.

English language

Many port-related legal cases result from an international context. That is why parties can jointly opt to conduct legal proceedings in English. Documents in the proceedings can be filed in the English language and then the hearing is also conducted in English. Apart from that, summaries of important rulings are published in English at rechtspraak.nl. In this way lawyers outside the Dutch-language area can be informed of developments in Rotterdam.

