

The closure of the Philippine Consulate General (PCG) in Frankfurt would affect a major portion of about 40,000 Filipinos and their families living in Germany. They are continually confronted with a number of issues on their work, residency and immigrant status. For such issues and needs, travelling all the way to Berlin causes added hardship and financial strain.

Philippine Consulate General Frankfurt has not only ably catered to Filipinos living in Frankfurt and neighbouring regions but has made credible representation of the country in trade fairs such as Ambiente, Tendance, Christmas World and the world's biggest International Book Fair. Frankfurt is the largest economic and financial center of the European Union. Most of the world's banking and finance institutions are represented here. Not only is Frankfurt the seat of the European Central Bank, but also Germany's Central Bank. Especially now that Germany is the central and strongest figure among the Euro-economies and in the European Union, in general, Frankfurt remains a major hub for trade, banking and finance. Further, the Frankfurt International Airport continues to be the main entry and exit point of Europe.

Frankfurt Philippine Consulate General, which was opened in November 2008 and started operating in March 2009, was established to rationalize the closing of the Bonn Office in 2008 and the Hamburg Consulate-General in 2009. It is not difficult to imagine that opening a diplomatic mission is an expensive undertaking, not only involving the transfer of foreign service staff and their families but also the cost of refurbishing offices in accordance with the various consular services offered, such as issuance of passports and visas, document authentications and notariats, etc. An estimated 12,000 actions for consular services were rendered in 2011 alone. Closing a diplomatic mission after only three (3) years of existence may not only put the Philippine government in an unfavourable light especially with the host government, but also provides negative fodder to political cynics and disheartened Filipino citizens and their German relations and friends.

We appeal to President Aquino to reconsider his approval of the Department of Foreign Affairs Secretary Albert del Rosario's decision to close the Frankfurt Philippine Consulate General. With this, we call to mind the President's "motto" at his inaugural speech, "**Kayo ang Boss ko**".

We trust in the President's sincere aspiration to serve the Filipino people and to continue in promoting the welfare of all Filipino citizens at home and wherever they may be in the world. Maintaining the Philippine Consulate General in Frankfurt would be a concrete manifestation and application of this noble theme.

*Mabuhay and GOD Bless you, Pangulong NOYNOY!*

\*\*\*\*\*

(Attached: Lists of Signatories)