

International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Fishing Vessel Personnel (1995) of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO): signing and/or ratification by Member States

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The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs adopted the report by Sofia RIBEIRO (PPE, PT) on the draft Council decision authorising Member States to become party, in the interest of the European Union, to the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Fishing Vessel Personnel, of the International Maritime Organization.

The parliamentary committee recommended that the European Parliament **gives its consent** to the draft Council decision.

To recall, the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Fishing Vessel Personnel (STCW-F Convention) was adopted by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) in London on 7 July 1995; with 74 participating governments, including those of 22 of the present EU Member States. To date, four Member States to date (Spain, Denmark, Latvia, and Lithuania) have ratified this convention.

Its objective is to ensure that personnel sailing on fishing vessels are qualified (as evidenced by official certificates) and fit for the job (on the strength of a medical certificate), so that potential threats to safety of life and/or property at sea or to the marine environment can, wherever possible, be minimised when operations are being carried out on seagoing vessels. The EU as such cannot ratify the STCW-F Convention, the power to do so being accorded solely to Member States. However, following the precedent set by the Court of Justice as regards external competence (AETR), Member States are not allowed to ratify the STCW-F Convention without EU authorisation.

The decision under consideration is intended to enable Member States to ratify the STCW-F Convention without encroaching on the EU's exclusive competence regarding the recognition of regulated professions pursued by EU nationals on board fishing vessels.