

Maritime safety: registration of persons sailing on board passenger ships

1996/0281(SYN) - 11/12/1997 - Council position

The Council adopted a common position on a text containing the substance of two amendments proposed by the European Parliament and a certain number of additional provisions. The common position applies to all seagoing passenger ships and high speed craft which carry more than 12 passengers and which depart from a port located in a Member State or undertake a journey from a third country to a Community port. It requires all persons on board to be counted prior to departure. However, passengers on board ships crossing the Strait of Messina may be counted under a simplified system subject to review. Moreover, if the ship undertakes voyages of more than 20 miles, the names, the sex, the age and the possible wishes for special care in emergency situations of all persons on board shall be recorded as well. Member States may nevertheless lower the 20-miles threshold. They may also exempt ships sailing exclusively in protected sea areas from the obligation to record passengers or request the Commission for an authorization to derogate from this obligation for regular services of not more than about 30 miles or for regular services to isolated communities in areas with low average wave heights where adequate navigational guidance, weather forecasts and search and rescue facilities are available. Before departure, the number of persons on board shall be communicated to the master and to the company's registrar or to a shore-based system that performs the same functions. The master shall also receive, before departure, information about possible wishes for special care in case of an emergency. However, Member States may exempt passenger ships operating regular services of less than one hour in protected sea areas from the obligation to communicate the number of persons on board to the passenger registrar. Before the ship sets sail, the Master shall ensure that the number of persons on board does not exceed the number the ship is permitted to carry. Within 30 minutes after departure, the passengers' personal data will be transmitted to the registrar. The number of passengers and the personal data so collected shall be at all times readily available for transmission to the designated authority for search and rescue purposes. The counting system must be in place by 1.1.1999. The system of registration of passengers must be applied no later than 1.1.2000.