Maritime safety: registration of persons sailing on board passenger ships

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Recalling the full horror of the *Estonia* tragedy in 1994, the rapporteur insisted that the Commission's proposal should be improved through Parliament's amendments. As a result, he called for the directive to be applied to all undersea railway tunnels, including those for the transport of vehicles by rail over distances in excess of 20 miles (such as the Channel Tunnel). He pointed out in this respect that, during the Channel Tunnel fire in 1996, the rescue efforts of the fire services had been hampered by the lack of precise information about the number of passengers travelling on board the train. Finally, Mr Watts drew the Commissioner's attention to a recent study in the *Which* magazine which contained a worrying list of safety alerts on ferries throughout the Community, particularly in the Mediterranean. Commissioner Kinnock indicated that the Commission would continue its efforts to ensure that passenger safety on board ferries was as high as possible. The Commissioner rejected Amendments Nos 1, 2 and 3 which did not take into account the progress made in terms of safety. He also rejected Amendments Nos 6 and 8 which were superfluous given Articles 8 and 9 of the common position on the transmission of information. Finally, Mr Kinnock rejected Amendments Nos 4, 5 and 7 which aimed to extend the registration of passengers to undersea railway tunnels as, in his opinion, with regard to the Channel Tunnel for example, it was more appropriate for Channel Tunnel safety to be governed by the bilateral regulations agreed between the United Kingdom and France than by Community action.