Maritime safety: minimum level of training of seafarers

1996/0240(SYN) - 23/04/1997 - Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report

The Committee was of the opinion that nothing should be done which might in any way undermine the integrity and enforceability of the revised STCW Convention at international level and considered that a European directive giving effect to the revised STCW Convention could complement this Convention provided: - it did not cause any unnecessary duplication of requirements and would not require frequent revision; - it would not create legal uncertainty or a legal conflict between the international and national obligations of Member States who were also Parties to IMO Instruments; - it was fully in line with the undertakings of the Commission, as contained in the Communication on Safe Seas (COM(93)66 final); - it did not prejudice the aims the IMO articulated when it adopted the revised STCW Convention; - it did not contain any provisions which could be interpreted as permitting any watch-keeping arrangements which contradicted the provisions of the revised Convention. The Committee was also of the opinion that the amending directive should fully reflect the clarification provided by the transitional provisions of the revised STCW Convention and the implementation dates for the various requirements which had been agreed within the IMO. As regards the recognition of seafarers' certificates issued by third countries, the Committee agreed with the new text of Article 9(3) as it complied with the requirements of Regulation I /10 of the revised STCW Convention. Finally, the Committee noted that neither Directive 94/58/EC nor the 1978 or 1995 STCW Conventions applied to fishing vessels and that a parallel convention had been adopted by the IMO (the STCW-F Convention). It urged the Commission to encourage the Member States to ratify the new convention in order to ensure a harmonised EU approach on the standards of training and certification of fishing vessel crews.