Towards a new maritime strategy

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The Committee regrets the lack of progress towards enhancing the competitiveness of the EC shipping sector since 1989 and stresses that the consequence of the absence of positive measures is plain to see in the continued decline in the tonnage on EC registers and in the employment of EC seafarers. The Committee believes that a competitive and efficient maritime transport sector is an indispensable element for the global competitiveness of the EC economy, not only because of the latter's dependence on such transport for the carriage of its industry's goods and materials, but also because of the contribution to the broader economy made by the whole range of shipping-related activities. Against this background steps should be taken to: - neutralize the competitive advantage enjoyed by lower cost substandard ship operation and manning by imposing sanctions on such operators; - ensure that EC shipping operates in a free market and can compete for the carriage of cargo and passengers on equal terms; - alleviate cost burdens imposed on EC ship operators (particularly by way of taxation and social on-costs) which their competitors do not have to bear.