

Maritime safety: monitoring, control and information for traffic, package Erika II (repeal. Directive 93/75/EEC)

2000/0325(COD) - 06/12/2000 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE : to establish a Community monitoring, control and information system for maritime traffic with a view to improving the safety of shipping and preventing pollution from ships. **CONTENT** : the present proposal a Directive is part of the second set of Community measures of maritime safety following the sinking of the oil tanker Erika (the first set of measures were adopted by the Commission on 21 March 2000). The European Union must therefore acquire the means to monitor and control more effectively the traffic off its coast and to take more effective action in the event of critical situations arising at sea. The proposal provides in particular for: - improving the identification of ships heading for European ports and monitoring all ships in transit in areas of high traffic density or hazardous to shipping, and requiring ships sailing in Community waters to carry transponder systems so that they can be automatically identified and constantly monitored by the coastal authorities; - extending the reporting requirements already provided for by Directive 93/75/EEC to other dangerous or polluting goods and in particular to bunker fuels carried on board, given the highly polluting nature of these products; - simplifying and harmonising the procedures relating to the transmission and use of data on dangerous or polluting goods carried by ships, notably through the systematic use of electronic data interchange (EDI); - requiring ships calling at Community ports to carry black boxes (or voyage data recorders), in order to facilitate the investigation of accidents; - stepping up the development of common databases and the interconnection of the stations responsible for managing the information gathered under the Directive; - ensuring closer monitoring of ships posing a particularly serious threat to maritime safety and the environment and requiring information about them to be circulated among Member States, to enable the latter to identify dangerous situations sooner and take preventative action necessary in respect of such ships; - enhancing the powers of intervention of Member States, as coastal States, where there is an accident hazard or threat of pollution off their coasts (territorial waters and the high seas). Member States will thus be able to order the re-routing of a ship posing a threat to their coasts, to instruct the ship's master to stop a pollution risk, to put an assessment team on board or to impose mandatory pilotage or towage of the ship; - requiring Member States to take measures to receive ships in distress in ports of refuge, and prohibit ships from leaving ports in exceptional weather conditions involving a serious threat to safety or the environment.