Maritime safety: ship inspections and survey organisations, package Erika I

2000/0066(COD) - 13/12/2000 - Modified legislative proposal

During its 29-30 November 2000 Plenary Session, the European Parliament approved, subject to a number of amendments, the Commission's proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Directive 94/57/EC on common rules and standards for ship inspection and survey organisatons and for the relevant activities of the maritime administrations. The Parliament supports the Commission's initiative to ensure stricter surveillance over classification societies, and to introduce more stringent qualititative criteria any classification society will have to meet in order to obtain EU recognition or to maintain such recognition. This contributes to the strengthening of the present system of Community-wide recognition of classification societies to be authorised to work on behalf of Member States and thereby improves further maritime safety. The Commission is prepared to incorporate these suggestions and amendments which risk confusing the application of the Directive by changing established maritime terminology. The Commission cannot accept a broadening of the scope of the directive to include non-statutory work. Inspections and/or certification work undertakn by a classification society on behalf of a Flag State is the subject of this Directive, which is distinct from commercial work undertaken on behalf of private parties. For these reasons the Commission cannot accept amendments relating to: - the changing of the word 'Community' into 'Union' and, to change the word 'authorise'; - broadening the scope of the Directive to cover also work related to classification certificates; - taking away the obligation for Member States as Flag States to carry out their own assessment of the recognised organisations they have authorised to work on their behalf, in relation to the flagged fleet; - the exact time (24hrs) a classification society must await consultation with the flag State on whose behalf they are working; - the certification of Recognised Organisations who's head office is located outside the EU; - the shipowner/operator; - obliging the Committee set up under the Directive to consult with organisations they are to monitor on an annual basis; - the withdrawal of recognition; - inspection procedures. The Commission does, however subject to some re-drafting, agree with the European Parliament on the need for further transparency and right of information, and on the clarification in relation to requests for recognition of organisations (classification societies), also in relation to limited recognition. In addition, the Commission accepts the arguments to introduce the possibility to revise amounts related to limited liability and, subject to some re-drafting, the amendments relating to impartiality of classification societies and their exclusive surveyors.