Maritime transport: training and recruitment of seafarers

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The committee adopted the report by Piia-Noora KAUPPI (EPP-ED, FIN) on the Commission communication on the training and recruitment of seafarers. The report stressed the need to safeguard the employment of EU seafarers, to preserve the maritime know-how in the Community and to improve the safety of maritime transport. This all required adequate training at the outset and continuing professional retraining. The rapporteur pointed out that employment and training of seafarers depended closely on the market conditions of the maritime sector. The Commission should provide an analysis of the underlying economic variables relating to maritime transport and of the technological changes in the sector. The committee agreed that responsibility for actions should be shared between the Community, Member States, social partners and the maritime education and training sector. Member States should take action to tackle the drastic shortage of officers, which was likely to get worse. The Commission was urged to pursue discussions on manning, the use of third-country seafarers and the competition pressures in the scheduled passenger transport and ferry services sector in the EU. The social partners should continue to seek solutions that would prevent social dumping. It was important to ensure that officers and crews of EU and third-country vessels sailing the waters of the EU met the ILO standards for seafarers. The report also called for a declaration applying the European Works Council directive to seafarers. Finally, the report called on Member States and social partners to fully exploit all possibilities of funding for maritime education and training through existing Community instruments.