

Port reception facilities for ship-generated waste and cargo residues

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The committee adopted the recommendation for second reading (codecision procedure) by Theo BOUWMAN (Greens/EFA, NL) approving the Council's common position subject to a number of amendments. With the recent disaster on the French coast involving the vessel ERIKA in everyone's mind, the committee welcomed the proposals to improve the availability and use of port reception facilities, with the aim of reducing the illicit discharge of waste and other pollutants to a minimum and thus protectecting the marine environment. A number of amendments were adopted on the introduction of a fee system, exemptions for certain types of ships and environmentally-friendly ships. A key amendment called for the introduction of a hefty fee to be paid by all ships, whether or not they used the reception facilities. This tax would account for 90% of the real cost of waste treatment. If ships had to pay such taxes anyway, they would have no financial interest in discharging waste at sea, especially as they would have to pay a fine if caught.