Maritime safety: standards in respect of shipping using Community ports, package Erika I

2000/0065(COD) - 20/11/2000

The committee adopted the report by Mark WATTS (PES, UK) amending the proposal under the codecision procedure (1st reading). The committee broadly endorsed the aims of the proposal but felt that, if the directive was to have the desired impact, it should be firmer on banning certain vessels. Accordingly, while backing the Commission's suggestion that ships which had been detained more than twice in the course of the preceding 24 months in a Member State port should be banned, the report stipulated that this should apply no matter what the ship's age rather than only to ships older than 15 years as the Commission was suggesting. The committee also wanted vessels which chose to fly the flag of a blacklisted state for three consecutive years to be banned as well, in order to discourage irresponsible use of flags of convenience which did not respect IMO Conventions and Treaties. It also argued that ships should be fitted with voyage data recorders (VDRs) for the purpose of providing information for use in an accident investigation, and adopted an amendment calling for vessels not equipped with VDRs to be refused access to Community ports. Member States should devote sufficient resources to port state control to ensure adequate implementation of the proposed directive, which meant ensuring that they had the requisite number of specialist inspectors. Lastly, the committee wanted the directive to make it clear that the extra costs incurred in detaining a ship in port whilst awaiting or undergoing repairs or valid certification should be borne by the ship's owner or operator and not by the detaining port authority.