Double hull or equivalent design requirements for oil tankers

2002/0310(COD) - 30/04/2003

The committee adopted the report by Willy PIECYK (PES, D) broadly approving the proposal subject to a number of amendments under the 1st reading of the codecision procedure. In the light of the recent disaster with the 26 year old single-hull tanker Prestige, MEPs were eager to speed through the proposals and expressed almost unanimous support for avoiding a second reading. The main amendments were as follows: - the accelerated phase-out for Category 2 should also be extended to Category 3 tankers, which are smaller and are often operating in regional traffic. Category 3 tankers would therefore have to be phased out by 2010 instead of 2015; - the committee proposed a new definition of "heavy grades of oil" which, although not as wide-ranging as in the original Commission proposal, nevertheless covered the most dangerous types of oil. The committee hoped that the new definition would make it easier to reach an agreement with the Council; - for the sake of clarity, the committee amended the wording of Article 2 to ensure that the regulation would apply to vessels not only entering, but also leaving, ports and offshore terminals and those anchoring in areas under the jurisdiction of a Member State; - in order not to jeopardise the EU's oil supply, the committee added a new clause providing for a transitional period (until 2008) for smaller tankers with a deadweight of less than 5 000 tonnes; - to ensure that oil supplies are not endangered in the northern regions of the EU (i.e. the Baltic Sea) the committee added a new clause providing for a two-year transitional period for single hull oil tankers equipped with special ice protection equipment, which would thus be able to enter or leave ports or anchorages in ice conditions with a cargo of heavy fuel oil, provided that the oil is transported only in their central tanks.