

Maritime transport: ship and port facility security

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The committee adopted the report by Rosa MIGUÉLEZ RAMOS (PES, E) amending the proposal under the 1st reading of the codecision procedure. It said that the emphasis should be on preventive measures and amended the Commission's proposed definition of "maritime security" to reflect this. It also amended the Commission's definition of the "single national authority" responsible for the security of ships and port facilities, and instead proposed a "focal point for maritime security", meaning the body "designated by each Member State to serve as a contact point for the Commission and other Member States and to facilitate, follow up and inform on" the application of the maritime security measures laid down in the regulation. A number of amendments also sought to reflect the fact that administrative structures and the allocation of internal tasks differ widely from one Member State to the next. As regards the proposed deadlines, the committee said that the deadline of 1 July 2004 set by the IMO should apply to measures involving international shipping but that Member States should have until 1 July 2005 to apply the special security measures for Class A passenger ships in domestic traffic. Moreover, although the Commission had proposed extending the IMO's security regime to domestic ships that are not Class A passenger ships, and to their associated port facilities, MEPs felt that this decision should be left to individual Member States. They accordingly proposed that, after a mandatory security risk assessment, Member States should decide the extent to which they apply, by 1 July 2007, the provisions of the regulation to other categories of domestic ships, their companies and the port facilities serving them. The Member States should notify such decisions when adopted to the Commission and should review them at least every 5 years. The committee also extended to domestic maritime traffic the exemptions for certain ships that the IMO applies to international maritime traffic (such as warships, troopships, cargo ships of less than 500 gross tonnage, etc.). In other amendments, the committee deleted the provision allowing for inspections to be unannounced and introduced new articles referring to the rules on confidentiality and the dissemination of information in connection with security inspections, the inspection reports and the answers of the Member States.