

European Maritime Safety Agency: competence

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The committee adopted the report by Emmanouil MASTORAKIS (PES, GR) broadly approving the proposal under the 1st reading of the codecision procedure, subject to a number of amendments seeking to clarify and define the Agency's responsibilities: - on the sensitive question of widening the agency's remit to include security issues, the committee said that the regulation ought to define clearly the limits of the assistance which the Agency will provide to the Commission in this area. It therefore introduced a new provision referring to the proposed regulation currently under consideration on enhancing ship and port facility security, which assigns certain inspection tasks in this area to the Commission. The amendment stipulated that the Agency would provide the Commission with "technical assistance" in the performance of the inspection tasks assigned to it under the pending legislation and that such assistance would be "restricted to ship and relevant companies and Recognised Security Organisations authorised to undertake certain security-related activities in this context"; - the committee was also concerned to make it clear that the primary responsibility for marine pollution response lies with the coastal Member States and that the Agency's task is to "support on request with additional means in a cost-efficient way" the pollution response mechanisms which should already be in place in those Member States. The Agency should, furthermore, respect existing cooperation between Member States in this field. One amendment also made it clear that pollution response steps shall be taken under the authority of the Member State concerned, given that the principle of subsidiarity applies in this field.