European Vessel Reporting System in the maritime zones

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The Committee on Transport and Tourism adopted the report of Mr. DE PICCOLI (It, PES). As to the rapporteur, it is sad to note that Council and Commission have decided to give priority to safety at sea only after an unacceptably large number of accidents or disasters in Community waters. On 13 September 1993, the Council adopted 93/75/EEC concerning minimum requirements for vessels bound for or leaving Community ports and carrying dangerous or polluting goods. This directive, which will enter into force on 13 September 1995, lays down mandatory notification procedures in respect of vessels transporting dangerous or polluting goods to or from Community ports and in the event of an incident which poses a threat to the coastline or related interests of a Member State. Article 13 of the directive required the Commission to produce new proposals for the introduction of a fuller reporting system for the Community by 31 December 1995. The proposals were also to cover vessels transiting along the coasts of the Member States and include electronic data interchange systems between vessels and shore-based installations. This requirement was met by the Commission with the proposal for a directive, of which the objective is to complete and extend the information system provided for in the above-mentioned directive 93/75/EEC. The European vessel reporting system, known as Eurorep, consists of a general reporting system and a specific system of reporting to vessel traffic services (VTSs). Under this proposal, any vessel exceeding 300 GRT transporting dangerous or polluting goods is required to report its entry into the Eurorep zone to the competent authorities of the Member State concerned and to provide the other information required in Directive 93/75/EEC. The proposal also sets out to introduce a specific system of reporting to VTSs. The Eurorep zone is intended to provide coastal states with information on the movement of ships at a sufficient distance, up to 150 miles from the coast approximately, for effective action to be taken if necessary. Initially, the system of notification for all vessels in transit will only be mandatory for vessels flying the flag of a Member State or which are either bound for or leaving a port in the Community. But in a second stage the system will be mandatory for all ships in transit, irrespective of their flag. The specific VTS reporting system will then also apply to all ships over 300 GTR. Rapporteur De PICCOLI said that this proposal bridges a major gap in respect of maritime safety. But for such an ambitious project as Eurorep to succeed, it is necessary to introduce a comprehensive series of supplementary technical measures involving harmonization of all VTS systems within Eurorep, standard communications procedures and vessel reporting standards. These technical measures must be submitted by the Commission without delay and the rapporteur recommend that this be done before the end of 1994.