Maritime safety: ship inspection and survey organisations

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The committee on Transport adopted the report of Mr. LALOR (I, RDE) on the Commission's proposal for the Council directive. Mr. LALOR reminded that theu are good reasons for his report: each year in the period from 1975 to 1991, an average of 380 ships were involved in accidents somewhere in the world. Since 1986 this number has fluctuated around average of 230 vessels a year with a peak of 258 in 1991 and a correspondingly high number of deaths (1204). In 1991, 74% of the vessels involved in accidents were over 15 years old. However, age need not to be a problem if vessels are built, operated and maintained according to international standards. Because of a lack of technical infrastructure and expertise, many flag states are unable to carry out adequate and regular inspections to ensure that ships sailing under their flags meet the required standards of safety and environmental protection. Mr. LALOR - and the Committee - welcomed the proposal for a directive because it now also includes criteria for the hull, machinery and electrical and control installations, i.e. elements which are vital for a ship's seaworthiness and which are not covered in detail by international conventions. Said the rapporteur: "A directive ensures a more uniform implementation of the rules and is always better than an individual approach by the Member States". Finally, the rapporteur also considered it desirable that the Commission should draw up a list of recognized classification societies so that shipowners now whom they are dealing with. For this and other reasons, the Committee adopted the rapporteur's amendments, which are intended partly to clarify and/or render more stringent the definitions used, and partly to stress the need for strict regulations.