

Passenger ships: safety rules and standards

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The transport committee has approved two Commission proposals designed to improve both safety on passenger ships and also in the air. With 230 ships on average being lost at sea every year since 1986 involving an annual loss of more than 1000 lives, the committee is anxious to see in place the proposed legislation which will fill a gap which currently exists in international regulations governing passenger ships and high speed craft operating exclusively in domestic waters, i.e. between ports of the same Member State, irrespective of their flags. These vessels are not covered by the existing international safety requirements. The same applies to ships which, in the course of their voyage, do not proceed more than 20 miles from the nearest land. The current situation in the Member States is characterised by a wide variety in national safety regulations. Several amendments calling on the Commission to accept higher standards of safety where they already exist, as is the case in some Scandinavian Member States, were adopted as was another amendment on the introduction of an environmental clause.