Safety management of roll-on/roll-off (Ro-ro) passenger ferries

1995/0028(SYN) - 20/11/1995

Unanimously adopted in the Committee was Mr. Mark Francis WATTS's (UK, PES) draft recommendation for second reading on the common position established by the Council with a view to adopting regulation on the safety management on roll-on/roll-off passenger ferries (Ro-Ro ferries). This proposed Council Regulation is based on a broad consensus amongst the EP, Council and Commission concerning the fundamental aim, which is to promote the safety of Ro-Ro passenger vessels. The item will be on next week's plenary agenda in Brussels. In this second reading, all four amendments were unanimously carried. In amendment 1, the safety management certificate for ro-ro-vessels shall only be valid for five years from the date of issue, provided that an intermediate verification takes place at least every year in order to confirm the proper functioning of the safety management system and to confirm that possible modifications introduced since the last verification satisfy the provisions of the ISM Code. The Council had suggested a period of at least 30 months or more frequently. And in amendment 2, the rapporteur demands that a company, notwithstanding the fact that it holds a document of compliance, should not be allowed to operate a ro-ro ferry on a regular service to or from its ports on the grounds that there is a threat of danger to safety of life and property, or the environment. The operation of such service may be suspended until such time as the danger is removed, whereupon the suspension is revoked. The Council had only mentioned "a risk of serious danger" and had asked for a suspension until the time as the danger is removed. Rapporteur WATTS was delighted that an unanimous Committee had adopted his amendments. "This decision taken by Parliament will be the first one to solve the problems in ro-ro ferries passenger transport. This is one step forward, after what has happened to the Herald of Free Enterprise, the Estonia and many other ro-ro ferries".