Community ports: vessels carrying dangerous or polluting goods (amend. Directive 93/75/EEC)

1996/0231(SYN) - 26/02/1997

Within the Committee on Transport, there were 27 votes in favour and 2 against the report by Mr NOVO BELENGUER (ARE, E) on the proposed amendment of Directive 93/75/EC according to additional standards concerning the safety of maritime transport, as approved at international level. The rapporteur unreservedly supported the proposal's three objectives. Nonetheless, he expressed certain concerns: with regard to the scope of the directive, which did not cover vessels transporting dangerous goods whilst transiting the territorial waters of the Community, for example from Africa to Russia; with regard to the deadlock with the IMO concerning the restrictive requirements relating to the routes used for the transport of radioactive substances by sea. In this respect, Mr Novo Belenguer called on the Commission to coordinate the positions of the Member States on the initiative to be taken in the IMO, verifying which of the sea areas along the Community's coastline were particularly vulnerable. Furthermore, it proposed that all vessels (irrespective of whether or not they stopped at a Community port) should notify their intended route to the coastal Member States along the route. According to the rapporteur, the statistics justified this preventive measure as they demonstrated that half of all oil slicks in the past 30 years had occurred in the waters surrounding the Union. Some of the amendments tabled related to the carriage of dangerous substances on ships used to transport passengers. In the light of this problem, the Commission was called on to put forward a proposal strengthening checks on vessels transporting both dangerous substances and passengers in Community waters. Moreover, shipowners and ships' masters should have to notify the port state authorities of the number of crew members and publish a passenger list.