

Maritime safety, pollution: international standards for ships using community ports

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On behalf of the Committee, Mr Jean-Pierre BAZIN (F,UFE) will be welcoming the Commission's latest proposals on ship safety. These proposals are being drawn up in advance of the 1 July 1998 deadline when the ISM (international Management Code for the Safe Operation of Ships) code will come into force for certain categories of sea going vessels. This code will require shipping companies to establish safety objectives and a safety management and marine environmental protection policy ashore and on board ship. However, it appears that many companies and ships will not have obtained or even begun the process of obtaining ISM certificates. The current proposal therefore seeks to tackle this problem by establishing specific procedures for ships that do not carry ISM certificates. The intention is that : - any vessels that does not hold the required ISM certificates will be detained; - however, to avoid congestion in some ports, the detention may be lifted by competent authorities provided that there are no other serious defects; - vessels that have been allowed to leave port in these circumstances will be refused entry into any EU Port until the vessel operator has demonstrated to the authorities in the member state where detention was ordered that the vessels now has valid ISM certificates. Mr BAZIN welcomes the inclusion of the ISM Code in port state control as "probably the most effective means of progressively eliminating substandard ships". He is also pleased that the current proposal is sending a clear message to the shipping industry in general and that there are no plans for an extension of the 1 July 1998 deadline. He would therefore like to see the legislation introduced as soon as possible so that it can be in force in time for the July 1998 deadline.