

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

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At 4 December 1977, Parliament delivered its opinion at first reading on the proposal for a Council Directive amending Council Directive 95/21/EC concerning the enforcement, in respect of ships using EU ports and sailing in the waters under the jurisdiction of the member states, of international standards for ship safety, pollution prevention and shipboard living and working conditions (Port State Control). The date of 1 July 1998 mentioned in the proposal will allow the substantial amendments made in 1995 to the Convention on the training and qualifications of seafarers to apply. It also coincides with the date the ISM, the international management code for the safe operation of ships will come into force for certain categories of vessels. The updating of this directive is essential, to take account of developments in international legislation. Rapporteur Jean-Pierre BAZIN (F, UPE) welcomes the common position of the Council. He recommends the EP to accept Council's changes to the directive, which are simply editorial changes and clarifications. The main aim in amending the directive is to send flag States, shipowners and operators and the shipping world in general a strong and clear political signal: the Community will not be extending the internationally-set deadline. At the same time, the proposal seeks to establish specific procedure for vessels not carrying ISM certificates. The proposal is one of a wide range of measures the EU has introduced during the last two, three years to improve safety in Community waters.