Maritime safety: minimum level of training of seafarers

1996/0240(SYN) - 29/05/1997 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

In adopting the report by Mr Eolo PARODI (UPE, I), the European Parliament has approved the proposal for a Directive with the following amendments: - the present proposal is intended to replace rather than amend Directive 94/58/EC, in order to ensure legal clarity; - Member States must be limited to recognition of certificates attesting to a level of training which satisfies the requirements of the STCW Convention. They may impose stricter standards than those of the Directive; - training standards should ideally be 'harmonized' or 'homogenized' within the Union in order to ensure safety in this field (Parliament in particular proposes the creation of a European training institute for seafarers and measures to attract young people to the maritime profession); - all the provisions and recommendations of the STCW Convention (Parts A and B) will become an integral part of the Directive as soon as it enters into force; - the concept of 'ship flying the flag of a Member State' is redefined as meaning a 'ship registered in and flying the flag of a Member State', and ships not corresponding to this definition are assimilated to ships flying the flag of a third country; - decisions on the definition of near-coastal voyages will have to be taken independently of any committee procedure; - employers must comply with rules and standards on workers' health and safety under national and Community law; - provision is made for 'effective' oral communication on board ships with a view to safety, including a common working language (which must be established and recorded in the ship's log-book and regarded as the 'working language' for all activities). The provisions on working language also apply on board oil, chemical and gas tankers; - Member States must impose penalties if the competent port authorities establish that the master, officers or ratings are unable to furnish proof of their vocational competence; - an officer in charge of the watch may not leave the bridge until relieved by another officer; - the Directive will be reviewed after it has been in force for five years (Parliament also makes provision for cases in which the committee procedure may be used to amend the Directive); - a new annex is added, covering procedures and criteria for the recognition of certificates of third countries; in future, Member States may only recognize and endorse seafarers' certificates issued by third countries for service on board ships flying the flag of the Member State concerned if a large number of conditions (described in the Annex) are fulfilled.