Maritime safety: roll-on/roll-off (Ro-ro) ferries and high speed passenger craft, conditions for the operation

1998/0064(SYN) - 29/04/1999 - Final act

PURPOSE: to lay down a system of mandatory surveys which will provide a greater assurance of safe operation of regular ro-ro ferries and high-speed passenger craft services to or from ports in the Member States of the Community and to provide for the right of Member States to conduct, participate in or cooperate with any investigation of maritime casualties or incidents on these services. COMMUNITY MEASURE: Council Directive 1999/35/EC on a system of mandatory surveys for the safe operation of regular ro-ro ferry and high-speed passenger craft services. CONTENT: The Directive provides that: - the Member States to or from whose port a ro-ro ferry or a high speed passenger craft is engaged on a regular service of more than 20 miles (host states) will subject these ferries or craf to an initial survey prior to their entry into operation and to annual surveys (one extensive survey and one in-service survey) thereafter. The surveys will mainly check compliance with the Convention on Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS); - the host states will have the right to fully participate in enquiries into accidents affecting regular services serving their ports; - voyage data recorders (VDRs) will be fitted on all ships covered by the Directive. In adding the controls by the host state to the controls already exercised by the flag state and the port state, the Directive will introduce a new element of accident prevention which responds to demands for more safety on board ferries following the accident of the Estonia. In doing so, the Directive will harmonise the conditions of competition. The right of the host state to participate in accident investigations will end the present undesirable situation where flag states have the monopoly of investigations on maritime accidents. ENTRY INTO FORCE: 01/06/1999 DEADLINE FOR TRANSPOSITION INTO NATIONAL LAW: 01/12/2000.