Maritime safety: discharge by the Member States of their obligations as flag States in accordance with the IMO Conventions

2005/0236(COD) - 23/11/2005 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to improve safety at sea, to prevent pollution and to protect seafarers by ensuring that Member States comply with the IMO Conventions.

PROPOSED ACT: Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council.

CONTENT: according to the Commission, this Directive acts as the missing link in relation to the other legislative instruments dealing with maritime safety. It is being presented in order to make an IMO Code on mandatory instruments as well as a flag-State Audit scheme compulsory. The ultimate aim being to harmonise the methods for implementing the international maritime conventions in the Member States.

In presenting this proposal, the Commission is fulfilling the wishes of the Member States, who in Copenhagen 2002, requested that a Community system be put in place to monitor Member State obligations arising from international instruments to which they are a party. Not only will a harmonised application of standards improve safety at sea and prevent a distortion of competition it will also be of huge benefit to the environment. Current, sub-standard shipping standards, which account for many of the environmental accidents at sea, can be attributed to the lack of IMO enforcement capabilities.

Lastly the Commission’s ultimate objective is to make the flags of the Member States more attractive, thereby transforming the European fleet into a quality fleet, while at the same time maintaining a competitive environment vis-à-vis third countries. The proposal has no impact on the Community budget.