European Maritime Safety Agency: response to pollution caused by ships, multiannual funding

2005/0098(COD) - 02/05/2006

The committee adopted the report by Luis de GRANDES PASCUAL (EPP-ED, ES) amending – under the 1st reading of the codecision procedure - the proposed regulation on multiannual funding for the action of the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) in the field of response to pollution caused by ships. MEPs adopted the following amendments aimed at reaching an agreement with the Council and the Commission at 1st reading so that the legislation could come into force without delay:

- it should be stipulated in a new recital that bilateral and regional agreements concluded between coastal states, such as the Helsinki and Barcelona Conventions, provide for mutual assistance in the event of a maritime pollution incident;

- the activities of the EMSA in the field of ship pollution response should not relieve coastal states of their responsibility to have appropriate pollution response mechanisms in place and should respect existing cooperation arrangements between Member States. In the event of a maritime pollution incident, “the Agency should assist the Member State(s) affected, under the authority of which the clean-up operations will be conducted”;

- to ensure greater transparency as regards the management of the resources allocated to the EMSA, Parliament should be informed annually of the financial implementation of the detailed plan for the Agency’s pollution preparedness and response activities;

- the Commission should carry out a mid-term evaluation of the regulation.

The committee also tabled other amendments making it clear that the Agency’s role was to provide additional means and not to replace actions by the Member States. Such assistance should include a centralised satellite imagery service for surveillance and the early detection of pollution. MEPs also introduced a new article providing for close monitoring of the commercial and state response capacity in the Member States so that the requirements for additional operational assistance in the various regions of the EU could be defined. Lastly, they wanted the Commission to be able, on the basis of the proposed mid-term evaluation report, to propose amendments to the regulation to take account of scientific progress in the field of combating pollution from ships, particularly with regard to liquid noxious substances.